**In the End**

**By Quetzal Suriano**

"BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP BEEEEEEEEEEEEEP BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP!" That terrible sound is what I wake up to EVERY morning. I groaned and rolled over in bed groping around on my side table for the little machine. I found the "Off" button and pressed it. "I hate mornings!" I said getting up and stretching. "I hate everything!" That was a lie, a really big lie.

I walked to my overly large walk in closet, picking up the pair of clothes I had picked out the previous day. I pretty much spend my after school afternoons on the computer, listening to music, doing homework and looking through my very fashionable clothes for a outfit for the next day. I had picked out a pair of black ripped - every - two - inches skinny jeans with a semi long chain running along the left side of the thigh. I had also picked a black and red Asking Alexandria tee shirt, and a pair of black converse. I put it all on, plus my sequence of BOTDF, AA, SWS etc band bracelets. Then, like every day, I straightened my hair and flipped it to the side. I looked at myself. I had never thought of myself as attractive, I was skinny and had thin - ish red hair, dyed of course, I also had bright vibrant, yet broken looking eyes. I had been mistaken as a girl on several occasions. I used to do everything I could to make myself look 'manly,' but as soon as I realized it was no use, I gave up and now try my best to be confident in myself. I looked at myself in my body mirror again, I looked decent, not great, but decent.

9 more seconds, and Nanna would have been angry. I sat down,

"Morning Nanna." I said looking up at her. Nanna was our housekeeper, and the person who runs the house. Also my motherly figure. Everyone in town was afraid of her, she can be scary. But she’s also the one who took care of me when my mom passed. She was the one who tried her best to clear away all the sympathy drenched apple and cinnamon pies left on our porch after the funeral before I saw them all. Nanna slid a plate of fried eggs and bacon in front of me.

"Niko you oughta get rid a that awful red hair a yours." She said. I didn’t answer, she wasn’t expecting an answer anyway, she said it every morning.

I finished off my eggs. looking up my eyes went instantly to the closed and locked door of my dad’s study. staring at the door wishing my mom was here, wishing my eyes could break down the door that kept my dad away from me. Forever. A loud honk sounded outside, I stood up.

"Kirstens here." I said to Nanna. "Bye love you!" I said kissing her cheek and running outside.

As usual Kirsten was blasting his crap band from his also crap speakers. I climbed into the front seat,

"Hey GG!" He said. I laughed, since the fourth grade we called each other GG and SS. I called his SS, ‘cause he’s straight and he calls me GG, ‘cause I’m gay.

"Did you hear about the new guy in school? Like actually new to town!?" I opened my mouth to respond ‘no’, but was cut off by Nanna’s loud voice.

"Kirsten Simon Linsten, don’t you be playin’ that loud music here! Don’t you think I won’t tell your mamma what you was doin’ in my basement when you was nine years old!" He flinched, nobody called Kirsten by his full name except his mom and Nanna.

"Yes Nanna!" He yelled back to her, though he didn’t turn down the music. Nanna’s eyes narrowed and she walked back inside, slamming the old screen door behind her.

Kirsten and I laughed and he pulled away from my curb like a madman, he always drove like one, but then again I’m not sure if he is sane.

“What did you do in my basement when you were nine years old?” I asked, still giggling.

“What DIDN’T I do in your basement when I was nine years old?” He laughed out.

Kirsten started talking again. "Like I was sayin’, have you heard about the new kid in town?" I shook my head no.

"No, but he must be insane to move to Ester."

Nobody MOVES to Ester. Or leaves. Most people here spend their lives trying to get away from here, and nobody ever actually does.

"Yea, I agree, our town sucks!"

"Anyways, what’s his name?"

"Jayy, with like two Y’s. Jayy Palmer."

"Oh, how do you know all this anyways?"

"Listened to my mom talking on the phone, she made him sound like a cold - blooded killer."

"Why? What did she say?"

"She was all, ‘oh he’s dangerous, I don’t want my son anywhere near him’"

"How is he dangerous? She doesn’t even know him!"

"Yea but the one thing I haven’t told you, most important thing ‘bout him."

"What is it?"

"He - he moved here into old Lesti’s house. He’s her Nephew"

Kirsten said it like there was no chance of anyone liking him now. Old Lesti is pretty much - according to everyone except me - the Boo Radley of Ester. Lesti was an old women, she stayed in her house all the time, I’m pretty sure nobody had seen her since before I was born. I’m Sixteen.

"Why does that matter? He could be nice."

Kirsten looked at me like I was insane.

"Nice!? Anyone who moves in with old Lesti, cannot be nice."

I rolled my eyes.

"You’re way too quick to judge."

The car came lurching to a stop. I looked up, we were at the old pale colored school. I sighed and crawled out of the car. Kirsten walked over to me, "I think he’s supposed to be here today." I knew who he was talking about. Jayy, Old Lesti’s Nephew. I rolled my eyes and started walking, he didn’t walk with me. "You coming SS?" I asked. "Yea," he said, "Right behind you."

- Two hours later, after math and chemistry -

I stood at my locker turning the small dial, ‘1357.’ Somebody bumped into me, I took a step back into the locker next to mine. I looked up, everybody had cleared to the sides of the hall. Coming down the middle of the hall was a semi tall boy, the NEW boy. He was around 5’11, skinny but not too skinny, he had completely black hair, fluffy at the bangs. He would’ve been absolutely gorgeous, if it hadn't been for THAT. His eyes were a icy, glassy color of blue, he had a small lip piercing on the right side, bottom lip. There it was again, I looked at everything else about him, but my eyes couldn't stay off of it. His smile - though his soft lips weren't pulled into a real smile - went most of the way across his face. It was cut into his face, scabbed over and yet still there.

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I slumped into my usual seat, front row no one around me. I hate history. I felt a chair leg hit mine and looked up. My eyes met large glassy blue eyes, they looked remarkably like my own. My eyes traveled to that large expected cut in smile, Without being aware it I started to inch away from him. I looked back into his eyes and detected sadness, I instantly felt bad.

“I’m sorry, I’m Niko by the way.” I said sticking my hand. He smiled

“I’m Jayy, nice to meet you, I’m new here.” He said taking my hand in one of his own. I laughed

“I pretty sure everyone knows your new.” I said in a joking voice. “Were not too welcoming to newcomers here.” I let go of his hand.

“Yeah, I noticed.” He muttered dryly.

Miss Sanchez walked in clearing her throat.

“Class!” she said loudly. No one listened. “Class!!” Still no response. “CLASSSSSS!!!!!!!” She screamed this time. Everyone stopped talking, when Miss Sanchez was in one of her ‘Moods’ no one dared to mess with her.

“Ah that’s better. Now everyone please get out your *To Kill A Mockingbird* and turn to page 102. I hope you all did your homework last night?”

I nodded to no one and got my book out, flipping pages. I glanced at Jayy and realized he made no move to get out a book.

“Um? Jayy?” I asked. He looked startled.

“Hmm! Yeah?”

“Where’s your book?”

“Oh - uh. I don’t have one.”

“Ask Miss Sanchez for one, she has extra copies.” I told him.

“Okay, be right back.” I nodded and pretended to busy myself with my book. Jayy walked to her desk. I heard him talking and strained my ears to hear.

“Um, hi Miss?” Jayy said, Miss Sanchez didn’t look up.

“Yes?”

“I don’t have a book. I was told you had copies?”

“Yes I do.” She looked up, I saw her eyes widen when set on his face. “You are the new kid aren’t you?” She asked. He nodded

“Yea I am.”

“Well,” she said faking a smile. With a snotty unwelcoming voice she said. “Welcome to Esters, young man. Here you are.” She presented him with a book.

“Thanks.” He said and set back to his desk. When he was about 5 feet from me he mouthed something to me.

*“What a - ”* And then he mouthed something that also shared the meaning of a pregnant female dog. I almost laughed but choked it in, knowing Miss Sanchez would ask me what I was giggling about, and I am a TERRIBLE liar.

“Alright! Everyone today we will be reading aloud, Kelly Ginge, I want you to start. From the top of page 102, please.” I heard Kelly sigh and turn a page, she cleared her throat and started to read.

*“When we were small, Jem and I confined our activities to the southern neighborhood, but when I was well into the second grade at school and tormenting Boo Radley became pass6, the business section of Maycomb drew us frequently up the street past the real property of Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose. It was impossible to go to town without passing her house unless we wished to walk a mile out of the way. Previous minor encounters with her left me with no desire for more, but Jem said I had to grow up sometime.”*

I started to space out, after awhile I felt someone tap my shoulder. I looked up looking for the source.

“Niko?” It was Jayy.

“Oh! Yes?”

“Class - it’s over.”

“Oh. Thanks.” I said with a smile. I got up and started to gather my belongings, he kept on staring at me. I looked at him with a ‘can I help you?’ Look. His eyes widened slightly.

“Oh gosh, I can go if you want me to. I really don’t want to embarrass you.”

“Oh no, stay, please, I want you to.” He nodded and resumed staring at me with wonder as I gathered my belongings.

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As we walked down the hall towards my locker I couldn’t help but keep sneaking glances at the half scary half beautiful boy next to me.

“So, Jayy? Where is YOUR locker?”

“It’s right next to yours, remember?”

“Uh, no I don’t remember.”

“Oh, I was right next to you this morning.”

“Oh.”

He stopped and I looked at him.

“We’re here, to our lockers I mean.”

I blushed realizing he was right.

“Right, I knew that!” I spun the dial 4 times till my locker popped open.

“What’s your next class?” I asked Jayy.

“Math, you?”

“Science, hey - ” I cut myself off, as to not embarrass myself.

“Well, Niko I guess I’ll see you later.” He said with a small smile.

“Yeah, later Jayy!” I said instinctively reached in for a hug. His eyes widened, as soon as I realized what I was about to do I pulled back lightning fast.

“Oh god, Jayy I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable.”

“N - no its fine, really.”

“Okay good. Anyways see you later.” I felt an arm slip around my waist, turning my head I saw it was Kirsten.

“Hey buddy!” I said smiling, I looked back at Jayy.

“Jayy this is my best friend Kirsten. Kirsten? Jayy.” I said motioning between them.

Kirsten frowned,

“What happened to your face?” I widened my eyes.

“SS! Don’t ask rude questions like that!”

“What? I’m wondering?” Jayy cleared his throat.

“Niko, its fine, really.” I couldn’t hide my surprise, but I held back. Kirsten looked at Jayy expectantly.

“SS, be nice please.” I begged him.

“I well GG, I promise. I’m not THAT mean.” I rolled my eyes.

“I know that!”

“Uh guys?” It was Jayy.

“I’m sorry Jayy, what did happen to your - uh, well face.”

“Uh, my mom was a little, physco.” He said with a sad sigh. I felt my eyes get moist.

“Oh Jayy, I’m so sorry.” I took a step towards him. Kirsten said

“What do you mean ‘was’?” I snapped my head towards him.

“It’s okay Niko. I can handle it, it was awhile ago anyways.” I put my arms around him, feeling his scabbed face rub against my unflawed one. I pulled back saying,

“You don’t have to say anything you don’t want to.” He smiled and nodded, I took a step away from him.

“Well the first time it happened, it was my mom. But of course it healed.” He stopped talking as though there was nothing else to say.

“And?” Asked Kirsten dragging out the word.

“Oh, sorry I thought from there it would be obvious what happened. Anyways since you guys don’t get the rest I suppose I could tell you. If you REALLY want to know?” He stated it as a question. Kirsten nodded eagerly, as much as I wanted to know I tried to act cool.

“Well after that the look kinda, grew on me.” Jayy said this with a smile, a real large smile. He started stroking the rough scarred skin on his face with a certain fondness. The bell rang and I jumped. looking around I realized how many people had stopped and were staring at us with a glint in their eyes. I had obviously forgotten that we were standing in a populated area.

“We have to get to class now guys” I said shooing away the people who were staring.

“Yea, good Idea.” SS said giving Jayy a weird look.

Jayy nodded and grabbed his books from his locker.

“See you guys later.” He muttered hurrying away. He brushed my hand in the process sending tingles up my spine.

“I told you, the kid’s weird, and creepy.” Kirsten said. For some reason when he said that anger boiled up inside of me, and I couldn’t keep it in.

“God Kirsten! Seriously!?!” He looked at me in surprise.

“Dude! What is up with you lately?” I laughed a not very humorous laugh.

“What’s wrong with me? YOU’RE asking what’s wrong with ME?!” At this point we had stopped walking and were having a face down in the hallways, although no one was around anymore.

“Yea, dude seriously. I’m worried about you man.”

“Why? ‘Cause I’m hanging out with one ‘weird and creepy’ kid?”

“God, Niko you are the last person I would’ve expected this from.”

“Ya know what, Kirsten? I am so done with you. You are so judgmental about EVERYTHING! I always thought you were different from everyone else. When you said that was a new kid in town I was SO happy, I thought ‘hey another person to be friends with!’ I thought you would feel the same way. I guess I thought wrong.” I turned to go, but felt his hand on my shoulder. I turned and looked at him.

“*What?”* I snarled.

“Niko I’m sorry. I really am. Can you forgive me?” He asked me with a pleading look. I thought back; Kirsten and I had been best friends for a LONG time, since kindergarten to be specific. Kirsten, SS. That face so familiar and friendly. Kirsten. The one who will almost always be there for me. Kirsten. A hopeless flirt. Kirsten. The one who I want to forgive so badly, but can’t seem to find it in my heart to be able to. I looked at him.

“Sorry isn’t good enough.” I said and walked away.

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“Nanna! I’m home!” I yelled out to the empty air. I was out of breath; since me and Kirsten had a fight I didn’t have a ride home anymore. Tomorrow I knew I would have to take the old Volvo my mom always used to drive. The one she crashed and died in. That was always the first thought that would flash through my mind whenever I would drive it or even looked at it. Thinking back to that day the same flashback came into my mind.

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*“So, Niko what kind of cat do you want?” My mom asked me, glancing slightly to her side at me.*

*“I don’t know, a cat.” I told her. Her soft bell - like laughter filled the old red Volvo.*

*I looked into her warm chocolate brown eyes. It always felt like she was looking into my soul or something when her brown eyes met my blue ones.*

*“Let’s get one with blue eyes like yours, okay?” She asked me, smiling. I smiled back and nodded. I averted my blue orbs from her brown ones and looked out the front of the window. A large blue and orange truck with 4 load trucks - with advertisements for some kind of diaper - pulled behind it was swerving hazardly toward us. I looked at my mom, she was still looking at me obviously not paying attention to the truck coming towards us.*

*“Mom?!” I half shouted. She looked at the road, her eyes got huge and she yelled at me too put on my seatbelt, I obeyed. I felt the car jerk to the right lane, but the truck had now splayed across the whole entire road was tipping on its side, about to come crashing down. Mom pressed the gas, our car started to speed backwards. She was screaming something at me, but I was much too paralyzed to understand her words. The truck came down, all the way. I heard the roof of the car crunch and I started to struggle with my seatbelt. As soon as I heard the tiny little click of my seatbelt coming undone, I started to sprawl myself out over the two seats of the car. I felt my head come down on my mom’s lap.*

*“Mom?” I asked quietly. No reply. I started to panic. I heard sirens coming from the distance. Around one minute later, a the deep voices of policemen surrounded the area.*

*“Hello? Is anybody in there?”*

*I tried to croak out words but I was in shock and couldn’t respond. I felt my eyelids growing heavier and heavier and then they shut and I was surrounded by darkness.*

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I opened my eyes and saw Nanna’s concerned face over mine.

“Niko, ‘you okay?” I nodded slowly and started to stand up. I had blacked out again and I knew it. “Niko, I want you to go to bed right now. I’ll be up in a few minutes with some chicken soup.” I was excited for that part, Nanna was a *superb* cook. I started my way up the stairs to my bedrooms. The walls of my room were plastered with posters of places that I had always wanted to go, such as Alaska, Hawaii, Germany, and France. Also with posters of my favorite bands, BVB, BOTDF, SWS, AA, Alasena etc.  I walked to my closet, picked out a pair of plaid pajama pants. I stripped off my shirt, put it in my hamper, and got in my bed. I hadn’t realized how tired I was until I closed my eyes and slipped into my very own dreamland.

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*I drearily opened my eyes to the sound of a continuous beeping. I looked around at all of the machines hooked up to body. The room was painted all white - the ceiling and walls. Nobody was in the room with me and I was lying in a hospital room in an uncomfortable bed. I heard hurried footsteps echoing outside and a semi - tall nurse  with amazingly green eyes walked in.*

*“Oh, good! You’re awake.” I nodded groggily, still in a confused stage of half - sleep. “How are you feeling?” she asked me. Hurting, I told her. She nodded sadly and sat down on the chair next to my bed.*

*“Where’s my mom?” I asked, slightly panicked. The nurses eyes were filled with sadness and pain.*

*“I’m afraid Miss Nancy, I mean, Miss Simpson, didn’t survive the crash,” the nurse told me. I burst into tears.*

*“You’re lying!” I yelled at her, refusing to believe the truth. She shook her head and got up, placing her hand reassuringly over mine.*

*“I’ll leave you to yourself,” she said and walked out.*

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I woke up drenched in sweat. I’ve had the dream more than once, each time having to relive the worst moments of my life. The door opened, and Nanna walked in with a steaming bowl of hot chicken soup. I sat up, smiling at her kindly.

“Nanna, you’re the best.” She smiled back.

“I know I am Niko, no need to tell me again. Now you just lay back and relax. Here’s your soup.” She told me, handing me the steaming bowl.

“Thanks Nanna.”

“You are welcome, put the bowl on the side table when you done. I’ll get it later.” She told me, I nodded and she walked out.

As I ate I started to think about the dream. Every single time her eyes stun me, and every single time I don’t warn her in time. And every single time, she dies again. And *every single freaking time* I blame myself for her death and I know that my dad - on the rare times I get to see him - blames me for it as well. My cat Candy, jumped on my bed meowing obnoxiously loud.

“Hey, Candy.” I muttered scratching behind his ears. My cat was weird. He ate everything he could get his little white paws on. I took a hot piece of chicken from my bowl and set it on the bed in front of him. He started to lick it and slowly nibble on it. I smiled and finished the hot broth from the soup then set the bowl on the side table like Nanna had asked me to. Yawning, I lay back onto my multiple pillows and took my iPod out of the draw on my table. I had funny *Adventure Time* ear buds, they had the faces of Finn and Jake on them. I turned on my small device and started to scroll through my bands. Blood On The Dance floor, Black Veil Brides, Mayday Parade, All Time Low, Pierce The Veil, Alasena, BrokeNCYDE, Paramore and so on. I stopped on Sleeping With Sirens and turned on the song *Stomach Tied In Knots,* by them. As the first notes of the song streamed into my ears I started to sing along.

“Oh, my stomach’s tied in knots

I’m afraid of what I’ll find if you want to talk tonight

Oooo Oooo

See the problem isn’t you, it’s me I know

I can tell, I’ve seen it time after time

And I’ll push you away (mmm)

I get so afraid, oh, no

And I can't live without you now

Whoa - oh - oh

I can’t even live with myself

Uh - uh - uh

And I can't live without you now

Whoa - oh - oh

And I don’t want nobody else

I only have myself to blame

But do you think we can start again?

'Cause I can't live without you

All my stomach’s tied in knots

I’m afraid of what I’ll find if I see you with him tonight

Oooo Oooo

See problem isn’t you, it’s me I know

I do this every single time

I’ll push you away (ooh)

I get so afraid, oh, no

And I can't live without you now

Whoa - oh - oh

I can’t even live with myself

Uh - uh - uh

And I can't live without you now

Whoa - oh - oh

And I don’t want nobody else

I only have myself to blame

But do you think we can start again?

I only have myself to blame

But do you think we can start again?

I only have myself to blame

But do you think we can start again?

I only have myself to blame

Let's start again

Let's start again

I can't live without you

Oh - oh Oh - oh Oh - oh

Oh - oh Oh - oh Oh - oh

Oh - oh Oh - oh Oh - oh

Oh - oh Oh - oh Oh - oh

And I can't live without you now

Oh - oh

I can't even live with myself

Oh - oh - oh

I can't live without you now

Oh - oh

And I don't want nobody else

Oh - oh - oh

'Cause I can't live without you now

Oh - oh

I can't even live with myself

Oh - oh

And I can't live without you now

Oh - oh

'Cause I don't want nobody else

Nobody else

Nobody else

I can't live without you

Oh oh”

The song ended and my face was drenched in tears. My last boyfriend had sung me that song when he had asked me out. Then he cheated on me. I sighed at the bad memory and leaned back, I still loved the song though. I heard Kellin Quinn’s sweet voice start to sing the first lyrics of *Roger Rabbit* in my ears. I yawned and started to pet Candy, she meowed and walked onto my chest curling up and starting to pur. I smiled and closed my eyes, drifting into sleep.

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*I finally let the tears come. My mom, MY MOM, was dead, gone, passed away, checked out early, in heaven and it was all my fault. If I had just warned her earlier of the truck. Maybe she would still be alive right now, holding my hand.*

*“NURSE!?!?!?” I yelled. The same lady came trotting in.*

*“Can I help, Mr. Simpsons?” Yes, my last name is Simpsons.*

*“Yes, if you don’t mind me asking. What was the most fatal injury my mom was inflicted with?” I asked her, trying my very best to be polite. Her eyes held obvious sympathy. I didn’t want her darned sympathy! The nurse – “Carly” is what her name tag said - sat down and patted my hand.*

*“During the crash the roof of the car came down on her head, causing her neck to break.” I felt more tears on the verge of flowing down my face.*

*“Thank you nurse Carly. Would you please leave me for awhile?” She nodded and walked out, her brown curls bouncing behind her.*

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I sat up in bed, lightning fast. I groaned and went  back down. My ear buds were still blasting in my ears and now playing *Goodbye, Goodnight for Good* by Alasena. I sighed and started to get up seeing as it was morning and my alarm was beeping. I stretched and yawned as I walked to my closet. I looked through all my hanging clothes looking for my band tees. I picked out a Woe, Is Me shirt and slipped it on along with a pair of grey skinny jeans with a checkered white and red belt and all my bracelets.

“Good morning Nanna!” I said stretching out the word ‘good.’ I was in a really good mood and I didn’t know why.

“A good mornin’ indeed, Niko. At least for you.” She responded. I looked up at her with a questioning look.

“Why isn’t it a good morning for you?”

“Niko, your daddy is in some trouble.”

“What *kind of* trouble?”

“Some money troubles, and I have to clean it up for him, *as usual.”*

“What *kind of* money trouble?” I kept on prying as she slipped my usual plate of fried eggs and bacon in front of me.

“Nothin’ you need to know about.”

“Nanna, he’s my dad. I’m old enough to know anyways, you really don’t need to protect me anymore! I’m not the same little boy I was when my mom passed!”

“Niko Jefferson Simpson, don’t you dare raise your voice at me!” she shrieked, I shrank back. It’s terrifying to have Nanna yell at you. Turning back to my plate and stuffing a whole egg in my mouth I retreated back from our argument. Nanna got the message and went back to the stove,

“Go outside and wait for Kirsten, I’ll see you after school.” That’s where she was wrong, Kirsten was mad at me. I nodded and got up taking a piece of bacon with me. It was final, Nanna was now mad at me.

“Yeah, see you after school Nanna.” I walked outside and slammed the door behind me, starting my long walk to school.

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I walked to my locker, putting away my chemistry books. I heard the subtle clang of someone leaning on the locker next to mine. I looked in the direction of the noise.

“Hey Niko!”

“Oh, hey Jayy,” I said with a friendly smile. He looked concerned.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” He asked me tilting my chin towards him, his fingertips barely brushing me.

“N - nothing,” I turned my head away from him. The bell rang and I took my books from my locker.

“It’s time for history,” I mumbled, waiting for him despite myself. He grabbed his books and we started to walk.

“Mr. Simpsons, Mr. Palmer, you’re late.” Miss Sanchez stated.

“Yeah, sorry we got caught up talking to the Janitor.” I lied and everybody knew it.

“Just take your seats please.” We both nodded and walked towards our desks. As we sat down Jayy leaned towards me whispering in my ear.

“You are a *terrible* liar.” I felt his scabbed face brush my cheek as he pulled away, sending shivers down my spine.

“Class is dismissed.” Miss Sanchez yelled over the sound of crinkling paper and the slamming of books. I got up and gathered all my stuff, waiting for Jayy.

“Hey Niko!” Somebody squealed in my ear. I flinched. Savannah. I turned around to face her.

“Savvy! Always nice to see you.” I said with fake enthusiasm.

“Ahahaha! Gosh, Niko,” she said grabbing at my hands. I pulled them away from her, “You are just  so funny!” I put my hands behind my back and balled them up. Savannah was a tallish blonde haired blue eyed pretty girl who was all legs and always flirted with me despite the fact that she knew of my sexual orientation.

“Savannah, please leave me alone, I really don’t like you.” I told her, using her full name this time. Jayy walked up to me and Savannah, taking me hand, which I let him do.

“Niko, who is this lovely lady?” He asked me.

“Jayy, this Savvy. Or Savannah. Savvy, this is Jayy.” I introduced them, she looked disgusted.

“I know who he is!” Savannah snapped.

“Oh, good!” I exclaimed. “Well, me and Jayy are gonna go to lunch. So see you later Savvy.” I told her, walking off.

“Oh my! Who’s is *that?”*

“Savvy, she flirts with me, though I’m gay.”

“Your gay?”

“Yeah, do you have a problem with that?” I snapped at him.

“No, not at all. So am I, actually.” He told me blushing. I smiled.

“Now you can help me with being everyone’s gay bestie!” I said, in the gayest voice I could pull off. He smiled and laughed saying,

“I don’t know if anyone would want me to be there gay best friend.” I could tell he wasn’t joking. Smiling I gave him a small pat on the back, he looked at me with wide blue orbs and my insides melted.

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I slid into the cheap padded booth at McDonalds Jayy attempted to slide into the one next to me but failed. I laughed and said,

“Like a ninja, Jayy, like a ninja.” He gave me a glare but his real lips broke into a grin.

“So, why aren’t you hanging out with Kirsten anymore?”

“Uh - we had a fight.” He nodded in understanding.

“When I was younger I had a fight with my best friend. Her name was Lillen, she was the most excepting person ever, or so I thought. But when my mom.... did this to me,” he motioned to his Glasgow smile, “I thought I could talk to her about it. But she just told me that I was a freak and then said we weren’t friends anymore. I haven’t really had friends since then. I’m honestly afraid to let someone in. I can’t afford to get hurt anymore.” He told me with a sad look. I took his hands in mine.

“Jayy, I’m so sorry that happened, but you can’t spend your entire life not letting anyone in. You’re human, you have to take some risks in life. Even if that means getting hurt.” I squeezed his hands reassuringly.

“I’ll tell you what. If you let me take you out to dinner tomorrow night, I will let you into my own little messed up world. What d’ya say?” He asked me. I smiled slightly and nodded.

“Tomorrow night it is then.” He said. I got up and said,

“I have to get home, pick me up at six o’clock. See you then Jayy!” I turned around and smiled to myself. I want in on this boy, and I will stop at nothing to get it.

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“Nanna, this is Jayy, Jayy? Nanna.” I told them both. Jayy had a handkerchief on, covering his cuts. Nanna looked at him with a suspicious look. Jayy stuck out his hand,

“Hello miss, it’s a pleasure to meet you.” His eyes twinkled. Then Nanna did something I had never seen her do to someone she had just met. Nanna *smiled* at Jayy, she took his hand.

“Aw, Jayy, the pleasures all mine.” She told him. Patting me on the back she said,

“Now you boys go and have fun!” I was still in shock.

“Uh, Niko?” Jayy tapped my shoulder, I snapped out if it and blushed.

“Yeah, let’s go. Bye Nanna, I love you!” I told her walking by and out the door.

“Nanna’s so sweet!” Jayy exclaimed. I smiled.

“Yeah, I love her.” I told him. He nodded and said,

“I wanna meet your parents as well.” My eyes darkened like the storm that was moving in.

“Yeah, I don’t think that’s gonna happen.” I mumbled. with a questioning look he asked me,

“How come?”

“Well my mom passed away last year, and well my dad sorta checked out early.”

“You mean, he’s dead?” He asked me softly.

“Oh god no! He just never comes out of his study. Ever. I don’t exactly have anyone to live for.” Jayy turned towards me. I had just now noticed that we had stopped walking. Jayy ran his fingertips along my jaw line.

“Niko, I’m so sorry. But you have to stay strong.” He told me. I looked back at him with a steady gaze.

“But, who do I have to stay strong for?”

“You have Nanna, your Dad, Kirsten, all of your friends.”

“Nanna, as much as I love her, I can’t do it for her. Kirsten is so mad at me right now I don’t even know what to do. And my dad, he never stayed strong for me. He blames me for my mom’s death. And before she died, he let me know how much he hates it that I’m gay and how much of a disappointment I was and still am, every single day.” Jayy looked at me.

“Well then you have me.” I looked into his piercing blue eyes, they were so breathtaking and I wondered if my eyes had that effect on people.

I smiled at him and said, “Well then, I guess I’ll have to stay strong after all.”

\*\*\*

Jayy politely opened the car door for me to climb in, which I did. When I had seen the car he had I’d nearly dropped to my knees and asked it to marry me. He had the car I’ve wanted since I was like 5: A black, red and white Mustang. I lovingly stroked the leather seats until Jayy got in the driver’s seat.

“So, where are we going for dinner?” I asked Jayy. He scoffed and looked at me with a crazed look in his eyes that made me a little nervous yet at the same time made me excited and wonder what was going on in that head of his.

“It’s a surprise, silly.” He told me, I felt butterflies flying around in my tummy and I giggled a little. He looked at me and I blushed.

“What are you giggling about?”

“Nothing you need to know about! Mr. Nosy much?” I told him. He rolled his eyes saying,

“No, I was just wondering! Gosh.” I laughed and nudged him with my shoulder.

The car stopped and I looked out the window.

“Where are we?” I asked Jayy looking at him. He said,

“Were really close to where our dinner awaits. I promise it’s just a short walk.” I huffed.

“You’re gonna have to carry me. I’m afraid my legs both broke during the drive.” I told him with a big goofy smile on. He rolled his eyes but lowered to a crouch close enough so I could climb on his back.

“Climb aboard your trusty steed.” He laughed out. I grinned and did as I was told. Jayy stood up and I squealed and whispered in his ear,

“Please don’t drop me!” I felt the vibrations as he chuckled.

“Your are much too precious to drop, my dear.” He told me, just loud enough for me to hear but no one else. I was happy I was on his back, because if I was sure my face looked like a strawberry. My joy was cut loose because right after he said,

“Niko, I can practically *hear* you blushing.” Of course this just made me blush harder. I leaned my cheek against the back of his shoulder and closed my eyes, enjoying the feel of his soft v - neck. After a while he stopped and I looked up, we were at my all time favorite place to eat: Tandoori King. The best Indian place EVER. I jumped off of Jayy’s back, turning to him I said,

“Oh my gosh, Jayy, how did you know that this is my favorite restaurant?” He smiled a mischievous smile and an unnerving glint in his eyes.

“I have my ways.” He told me matter-of-factly. I squinted my eyes,

“You’re stalking me aren’t you?” I asked him. He chuckled,

“No.” He said simply. I nodded and took his hand in mine,

“Well, lets go in then.” I told him, pulling him towards the door.

\*\*\*

“Um – hi,” the lady at the desk said to us. I nodded and Jayy, who was wearing a handkerchief to cover his mouth stepped forward.

“Table for two please.” He said.

“I’m sorry, what?” The lady asked him. Jayy sighed and repeated himself.

“I’m sorry sir, I can’t understand you when you have that thing covering your mouth,” she told him. He was losing his patience with the lady. I stepped forward saying

“He said ‘Table for two please’” The lady looked at me with momentary disgust, which passed quickly. She had obviously wanted to see what was under that little cloth.

“Of course sir, follow me please.” I nodded and replaced my hand in Jayy’s. The lady showed us to the table and we both sat thanking her. After a while another younger looking lady walked up to our table. She was beautiful. Her skin was a bit lighter than the other lady’s and it brought out her bright green eyes. She looked around sixteen.

“Hello! My name’s Clarissa, and I will be your waitress tonight. Can I start you out with some drinks?” She asked a little too fast, telling me she was probably new. I smiled.

“Hi! Ummmm, yeah, can I get a... Dr. Pepper?” I asked her. She nodded and wrote it down, then turned to Jayy.

“Um, just water, please.” She nodded and walked off.

“She’s pretty.” I told Jayy, looking him in the eyes. He nodded in agreement.

“So, why don’t you take that off so I can understand you?” I asked him motioning to the hanky.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.” He mumbled fingering the cloth. I rolled my eyes and reached across the table towards the handkerchief, he moved away from my hand shaking his head. I looked at him and shook my head.

“Jayy, please. You can’t spend your life hiding underneath that cursed piece of cloth. Please, Jayy, for me?” He sighed and said,

“I can’t Niko, people will leave.” I smiled.

“But I’ll still be here, I promise.” I told him.

“I - I can’t.” He stuttered and it was adorable. Suddenly an amazing idea popped into my head, I grinned.

“I have an idea.” He looked at and I quickly added, “It’s a surprise.”

\*\*\*

Me and Jayy had ordered our food to go and left the restaurant, Jayy just wouldn’t stop nagging me about where we were going. As we arrived back at the car I told Jayy to turn around.

“Why?” He asked. I slowly guided him with my hands in a half circle till his back was toward me and I untied the handkerchief from around his head and let it fall into my hands. I folded it in half twice and covered his eyes with it.

“Niko! What are you doing?” He whined at me.

“Just a minute!” I told him a little too eagerly. I finished the knot and opened the passenger door to the Mustang, helping his inside and walking to the other side. I hopped in the car and started her up.

“I love this car.” I sighed at Jayy, who nodded in agreement.

The drive wasn’t long. When we got to the only body of water in all the county I guided Jayy to a large tree and told him to stay put. I walked back to the car and pulled out a blanket that was sitting on the seat. Laying out the blanket, I put the food on the it and stood back to admire the scenery. The lake looked beautiful at night. The moon and stars gleamed off of the murky water and the trees had a way of looking more like they were glowing than giving the scene a scary look. I walked over to Jayy and took his hand leading him to the blanket and seating him than going behind him and untying the hanky, I told him to keep his eyes closed ‘till I said differently. I walked to the other side and sat down.

“Okay, open them.” I told him, he did.

“Niko, I can’t believe you made wait that - ” The words died on his lips.

“Oh my god, Niko! I can’t believe you did all this!” He exclaimed. I smiled softly.

“Of course I did! How could I let you bring me to dinner then not take of the that, that thing?”

“I’m sorry I didn’t. I just, I didn’t want anybody to leave because of me being there.”

“Hey! Be nice to yourself.” He smiled and nodded. I opened my box of Indian and started to eat.

“So, Niko, have you and Kirsten made up yet?” Jayy asked me. I shook my head.

“No, he hasn’t come up to me yet.”

“Have you ever thought that maybe you should talk to him about it?”

“No, it was his fault, he started it, he should be the one to sort it out. If he come and talks to me, I’ll be happy to talk. But I won’t be the one to come to him.”

“Oh.” He said. He could tell I didn’t want to talk about it.

\*\*\*

Jayy and I had finished the food and were now just laying on the shore of the lake and looking at the stars. That was the good thing about Esters; the stars were amazing. I heard Jayy sigh and looked over him.

“Beautiful, aren’t they?” I asked him.

“Yeah, probably the only good thing about Esters. Besides you of course.” He told me, I blushed and hid my face in his shoulder.

“Hey, don’t hide. You’re cute when you blush!” I blushed harder.

*“A place where the virtuous hide in fear.*

*A place we see only in our nightmares.”*

My phone sang the song *And Now For The Final Illusion* bye Alasena. Jayy and I both started to hum along.  I sighed and sat up checking the caller ID - it was Nanna. I turned to Jayy and said, “It’s Nanna, so I could ignore if you want.” He shook his head.

“No, go ahead.” I looked to him with a grateful look and answered it.

“Hey Nanna.”

“Oh, thank god, Niko!” She sounded alarmed.

“Nanna? What’s wrong?”

“Niko, it’s your dad. He’s in the hospital.”

\*\*\*

I ran in the door of my small house, leaving Jayy in the car.

“Nanna! Nanna! Where are you?!” I yelled into the house.

“Niko! Let’s go!” Nanna yelled stumbling into the room. I nodded and said.

“Jayy’s giving me a ride.” She nodded and ran out of the door, her face was creased with worry and sadness. I jumped into the front seat.

“Drive!” I yelled to Jayy. The car lurched and sped down the road. We pulled into the small parking lot of the hospital and jumped out of the car. I ran to the front desk and stopped, putting my hands on my knees and catching my breath.

I stood back up and said, “What room is David Simpsons in, please?” The woman at the desk looked up at me and I was struck by how beautiful and oddly familiar she was.

“Just one moment please.” She told me. I nodded and leaned against the desk. Jayy took my hand in his and whispered in my ear.

“Are you alright, Niko?” I looked up into a mirror image of my eyes and nodded, unsure. The lady cleared her throat, even her voice was familiar.

“Um, David Simpson is currently in surgery. He won’t be out ‘till, maybe very early tomorrow morning. Then he won’t be able to see visitors ‘till the afternoon.” She told us. I felt wetness on my face and knew I was crying. Jayy squeezed my hand and wiped my tears away. I turned my head towards the pretty desk lady.

“Do you think you could have someone let either her or me know when he’s out and we can see him?” I asked her, pointing to Nanna in a chair nearby. She nodded.

“Of course.” she said. I thanked her and lead Jayy to were Nanna was sitting and crying. I sat down and took her hand while telling her what the women had said. She nodded.

“Niko, I want you to go home.” She told me. My eyes widened and I stood up.

“What! Why?” I exclaimed, shocked.

“Niko, please. I need time alone. Just please.” She begged me.

“No! I need to be here.”

“Niko! Go! Please!?!” I sighed.

“Fine. I’ll stay at Jayy’s tonight. If it’s OK with him.” I told her. She nodded and I turned to Jayy, who just dragged me out of the depressing building. Just outside the building I broke down on the sidewalk. Bawling I fell to my knees and curled up in a ball on the filthy ground. I felt Jayy’s arms wrap around me, and I lay with my head on his firm chest. He lifted me off the ground and started his way towards the Mustang I was in love with. My sobs racked my body the entire way to his home.

\*\*\*

When I woke up I was at a place I wasn’t familiar with. The walls were painted a dark crimson red color and were covered with posters of bands, some I knew of and some I didn’t. I was lying in the most comfortable bed *ever,* it was like a cloud. I decided that I should probably get up and find out where I was. Crawling out of the bed I stepped on something alive.

“Oh my god!” I screeched, jumping two feet in the air. The person groaned and rolled over.

“Niko?” The person mumbled. It was Jayy.

“Oh gosh, Jayy, I’m so sorry I stepped on you.” I told him blushing. He grinned looking up at me through his long lashes.

“Its fine. I need to get up anyway.” He told me. I nodded and stepped over him.

“Um, do you have a shower I can use?” I asked him. He looked at me and pointed at a door that was attached to his room.

“And you can borrow some clothes.” He told me, getting up. He walked over to the dresser and opened the top drawer. Grabbing a pair of half and half skinny jeans he threw them towards me. I caught them along with the Sleeping With Sirens shirt.

“Thanks Jayy.” I said and walked to the bathroom. I turned the knob and watched as the water came pouring out of the shower head. I stepped into the steaming

small glass room and savored the hot feeling of water on my tense body. I smiled to myself and started humming the song *Unforgiven* by Blood On The Dance Floor. I finished up my shower and stepped into the cold bathroom, shivering I grabbed the fluffy bluish towel hanging on the hook on the back of the door. I got dressed and did my hair with Jayy’s hair products. Walking out of the bathroom and looking around for Jayy, who was sitting on the bed. I walked over to him, his face was coated with sadness.

“Jayy? What’s wrong?” I asked him, my phone was in his hand. I took it from his cold, stiff hand and looked at what was on the screen. Nanna had called. I looked at Jayy,

“Jayy!” I yelled shaking his shoulder. He looked at me with those big blue orbs, tears were cascading down his face.

“Niko it’s your dad. He’s in a coma.” He told me, looking me right in the eyes. I looked right back at him and said,

“You’re kidding me, right?” He shook his head.

“Nanna called while you were in the shower. I thought I should pick it up because of your dad, she told me we should come over right away.” He muttered. I looked at him in shock.

“We - we should go, then.” I said getting up, I was in a mental state of shock. Tears stung at the back of my eyes, but I held them back.

He looked at me in shock but nodded and said, “Yea, we should go.”  He got up and took my hand, I interlocked our fingers and pulled him towards the door. We tapped our way down the stairs passing lots of room on our way down. Jayy told me which room was which each time.

“That’s a guest room, so is that one and that one. Bathroom, guest room, bathroom, storage room, guest room, storage room, bathroom. And this,” he said, reaching the end of the hall, “Is Lesti’s room!” He told me with a grand sweeping motion of his hands. I nodded, I liked Jayy, like *really* liked him, but I don’t know if I’m ready to meet Boo Radley just yet.

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We pulled up at the hospital and I leaped out of the car. I ran to the door and stopped waiting for Jayy who jogged up behind me.

“Jesus, Niko. You are amazingly fast.” He panted. I giggled and ran inside.

“Excuse me miss, what room is David Simpsons in please?” I asked the lady. She was the same lady from last night. She looked up at me with and tired look.

“Room two hundred four. Floor two. Take the elevator, its fastest,” she told us. I nodded and thanked her, flying to the elevator and hardly letting Jayy slip into the machine with me. I jabbed at the button for floor two, huffing in impatience. Finally, the doors opened and I walked out of the door holding onto Jayy’s hand tightly. I stopped at the door of my dad’s room and turned to Jayy.

“J - Jayy? What if he never wakes up?” I asked him a tear slipping down my pale face. He looked at me and wiped my tears saying something that came from the heart.

“Niko,” he said taking my other hand and facing me. “If your dad doesn’t wake up, he’ll miss out on an amazing life. It’ll be amazing because you’re in it. Even if your dad is a little insane, and not no one really knows what goes on in his head, he’s sure of one thing. He loves you, and he loved your mother. So, you need to stay amazingly strong, I know you can do it, because you’ve come this far. So we are going to go in there and see that crazy man. We’re gonna do it for him. Ready?” I looked into those inhumanly blue glassy eyes, and nodded my head.

“Yeah. Yeah I’m ready.” I said. Jayy put his hand on the door handle and looked at me. I nodded and he pushed the door wide open. I peeked around Jayy’s shoulder, into the white room. The walls and floor were all white, and there was a grayish bed in the middle and a chair right next to it that Nanna was sitting in. When I laid eyes on her, I was dumbfounded, she wore the same clothing as last night and had big bags under her eyes. She looked terrible. Don’t get me wrong, normally Nanna was beautiful. She had long auburn hair, and caramel eyes to go along with it. Her frame was small and a tad bit frail looking, she was pretty young as well. She was one of those people that looked terribly out of place in Esters. But right now, she looked older and run down, not the Nanna I was used to seeing at all. She looked up at us and smiled slightly.

“Niko! I am so glad you are here. Sit down!” She exclaimed, standing up and offering her chair to me. She had obviously been up here all night long. I shook my head and guided her back to the plastic hospital chair, sitting her down.

“Nanna, you need to go home ‘n get some rest.” I told her. She shook her head, looking at me with crazed, glazed over eyes.

“No, no Niko, I ain't tired at all. I swear it.” I looked up at Jayy.

“We need to get her home.” I told him, rubbing Nanna’s shoulders. He nodded in agreement, I gave him a grateful smile and stood Nanna up.

She looked confused and said, “Where are we going? No! I oughta stay here with your daddy, Niko!” I had completely forgotten about my dad. I walked to the side of his bed and looked at him - he looked bad. Big purple bags under his eyes, chapped lips and skin. He had worry lines creased into his forehead. I shook my head and pulled away from the bed.

“Let’s go,” I told Jayy, interlocking our fingers. “I don’t like this place, it gives me the shivers!”

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As soon as Nanna’s head hit the pillow, she was out cold. I giggled a little and pulled Jayy out of the room up to my poster - covered one. I flopped on the bed and turned on my iPod, *Stomach Tied In Knots* turned on and I stood up, walking over to my guitar. I sat down on my computer chair and strummed some notes on it. My playing matched the song and I started to sing along.

*“Oh my stomach’s tied in knots*

*I’m afraid of what I’ll find*

*if you wanna talk tonight ooh ooohh*

*see the problem isn’t you it’s me I know*

*I can tell I’ve seen it time after time*

*and I’ll push you away mmmm I get so afraid*

*and I can’t live without you now oooh*

*I can’t even live with myself oooh”*

I kept on singing, but I really thought about the lyrics. They described me with Jayy almost perfectly. As I strummed the last note, I opened my eyes and saw a dumbstruck looking Jayy.

“Was I that bad?” I asked him, giggling a bit. He snapped out of his shock and shook his head.

“No - no! Niko, that was amazing! Where did you learn to sing like that?” He asked me, I shrugged.

“I don’t know. I’ve just always loved to sing.”

“Well you’re amazing at it! Plus, I love that song.”

“So do I. I’ve always been around music. When I was young my mom and dad would always sing around me. I guess their love for music kinda rubbed off on me.”

“That’s cool, and I’m glad it did. Your voice sounds like an angels.”

“Jayy, can I tell you something?” I sat down on the bed.

“What is it?”

“I well, we’ve already been through a lot together. I feel like I’ve known you forever. God even Nanna likes you. You are funny and kind. Look what iIm getting at here is that I like you a lot.”

“Well, I like you a lot too Niko.”

“But I mean I like you *a lot.* No, no, Jayy *I* *love you!”* He looked shocked, and I could feel the blush creeping onto my face.

“I - I’m sorry, I should not have said that. I need a drink.” I said getting up and walking out of my room.

“Wait Niko!” I heard Jayy calling from my room. I pretended not hear him and flew down the stairs, into the kitchen. I opened the freezer, taking out a frozen bag of pea’s and pressing it against my forehead.

“I am the stupidest person ever! I can’t believe I said that.” I muttered, leaning against the fridge. “Oh, Jayy I love you!” I said to myself in a mock tone. Replacing the bag I walked over to the cupboard and pulled out a jar for juice, filling it with apple cider. I walked up the stairs to the door of my room, it was slightly cracked and I could see the light from the room spilling onto the wood floor. I tiptoed towards it but stopped dead when I heard Jayy talking in a hushed voice. I strained my ears, hardly making out the words.

“Yeah, Lez. I know! I’ll be home as soon as possible. No! Look, he needs me here, he’s going through a tough time. I know. Okay. Bye, Lez, love you to. Okay bye.” He was saying. Who’s Lez? Is it his girlfriend? Or is it Old Lesti? I walked into the doorway and saw Jayy sitting on the bed. I walked over and sat next to him on the bed.

“Hey.” I muttered.

“Hey.” He said looking at me and reaching for drink. I willingly gave it him and watched as he raised it to his lips.

“Look, Jayy. I’m really sorry for what I said earlier.” I told him. My eyes followed his movements as he set the cup of cider on my desk. He looked back at me steadily. I closed my eyes as his fingertips traced my jaw line, then want to my lips then he traced the place where my own Glasgow smile would be. The movement sent shivers down my spine.

“C - can you forgive me?” I whispered.

“Niko, never ask for my forgiveness.”

“Why?”

“Because you don’t want it. Besides, I don’t have anything to forgive you for.”

“Y - you don’t?”

“No, because I love you too.” My eyes flew open and I stared at him.

“What?” I exclaimed. He nodded and next thing I knew, his lips were on mine and I was kissing back. As soon as he pulled away, I felt empty and cold.

“I - I’m sorry.” He mumbled, laying back on my bed.

“No, no no. Don’t you dare apologize to me for that!” I raised my voice slightly. He looked at me in surprise.

“Why not?”

“One, that was amazing. Two, you don’t want my forgiveness, often it doesn’t really mean anything.” I muttered and laid my head on his chest.

“Often, it’s just me talking.” I finished off, closing my eyes. I smiled as he started to play with my red hair. I wriggled around, swatting at his hands.

“Quit it!” I complained. He giggled and said,

“But its soft.” I giggled along with him and opened my eyes, looking into his.

“Your eyes are pretty. They look sorta like mine.”

“Yeah, I noticed that, too.”

“I don’t like how I look.”

“Why?”

“I’m ugly. Next to you I look like the grudge.”

“That’s not true at all, you’re adorable.”

“No I’m not. You are.”

“We are not having this argument right now. I wanna ask you something.”

“What is it?” He took my hands as I sat up.

“Niko Jefferson Simpson. Well you do me the honors of going out with me?” He asked me, an adorable look in his eyes. I pretty sure my face was about to split in half from my smile.

“Of course!” I exclaimed, throwing my arms around him. He laughed and hugged me back, I felt long awaited tears spilled from my eyes and cascaded down my face.

“Shhh, shhh, shhh. It’s okay Niko, I’m here, I’ll keep you safe.” Jayy whispered in my ears. I closed my eyes and snuggled into his chest sniffling. I felt myself sinking into sleep and I allowed myself to be taken by it.

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*I had spent the day thinking of words that started with the letter ‘D.’ Death, dead, deranged, despair, disgusted, disarranged. Mostly death, though. I was still in the hospital, spending most of my days talking to myself and yelling at nothing, the nurses and doctors thought I was insane. I looked up as Nanna walked in.*

*“Hey Nanna.”*

*“Niko, we need to talk about somethin’.”*

*“What is it?”*

*“Well, the doctors told me about what you has been doin’ the last few days.”*

*“And, what’s that?”*

*“You’ve been talkin’ to you self. Yellin’ at nothin’, Niko, the doctors, and nurses, are worried about you.”*

*“Ha! What do they think I’m actually* insane*?”*

*“Niko! This is serious, they want to send you to a mental hospital!”*

*“W - what? Nanna! You cannot let them do this.” I grabbed her hands, sitting up in bed.*

*“I - I’m sorry, but I have to agree, you’ve been through a lot. I think you could use a break. This is a good thing for you.”*

*“No way! You’re agreeing with them? You think I’m insane. Really?” I was honestly shocked. Nanna’s eyes were filled with sadness and guilt and pain.*

*“No, no of course not Niko. It’s just, you need a break from all the stress, I can see that.”*

*“Get out.”*

*“W - what?”*

*“You heard me! Get* OUT*!”*

*“Niko! Don’t you dare tell me to get out.”*

*“No. No! I told you to get out and you* WILL *get out!”*

*“Don’t yell at me! I will not leave!”*

*“Leave, leave, leave, leave, leave, leave!”*

*“No!”*

*“NURSE!” I screamed, Nanna looked pissed and shocked. My private nurse, Carly ran in, looking startled she said,*

*“What is it, Mr. Simpson?”*

*“Please escort this women out of the hospital. I don’t want her here any longer.” I told her with a pleading look. Carly nodded and walked over to Nanna.*

*“Hello, ma’am,” she said, “I think it’s time to leave.” Nanna looked up and then back to me.*

*“Niko, please don’t do this.” She begged me. At that point, I gave her a cold look that could kill; I was angry and filled with a burning hatred towards her.*

*“Carly,” I said expectantly, she nodded and asked Nanna to leave again. Nanna gave her a look that said, ‘I will not listen to you!’*

*“Ma’am please, I don’t want to have to call security.” Even that threat didn’t budge her, Nanna was a stubborn westerner, born and raised as one.*

*“If you insist, ma’am.” Carly said, walking over to the phone on the wall. She punched in a number and held the phone to her ear. Almost immediately someone had picked up on the other side.*

*“Yes, this is Nurse Carly in room 102 calling for a source of security to escort a young women out of the building.” A pause, “Yes, thank you. goodbye.”*

*She hung up the phone and said,*

*“I’m sorry ma’am but it’s the rules of the hospital.” I closed my eyes and flopped back onto the pillows, closing my eyes.*

*“Thank you nurse, please stay until she’s gone.” I muttered feeling my exhaustion washing over my body.*

*“Of course, Mr. Simpson.” I smiled, loving the feeling of having someone grant my wishes, and then I fell asleep.*

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I woke up with a terrible feeling of regret. I turned my head and was surprised to see the sleeping face of Jayy. My boyfriend. I smiled and pecked his nose, getting up. I stretched my arms and smiled, seeing Candy - my cat - doing the same thing. Chuckling and walking into my closet I looked around. A few weeks earlier I had cleverly put a chair in the middle of the room, and I sat on it now. Looking around I felt tears prick my eyes, I remember coming here when I had just come out and was bullied daily. I would lay in the middle of the floor and cry, that’s it, somehow the feeling of cloth in between my fingers made me feel safe. I wiped my eyes, my fingers came back wet, I hadn’t realized I was crying. Wiping my hands on my pants and my eyes on my sleeves I got up, picking out a Panic! At The Disco shirt along with a pair of leopard print grey skinny jeans I started heading towards the door. For some reason I was happier than before, I skipped out the closet with a smile on my face.

“What’re you so happy about?” Said a very groggy familiar voice. I turned around, slightly startled, yet smiled even bigger when I saw Jayy sitting up and smiling at me. I sat down on the bed next to him and said,

“I don’t know it just seems like a good day!” he laughed slightly and brought me closer, pecking my lips. I blushed and hid my face with my red hair. I felt his cold hands under my chin lifting it up.

“Don’t hide that pretty face. You’re cute when you blush.” He told me. I smiled at him, and he smiled back, a real smile, not a cut in one. Frowning in concern I reached out to touch the scabbed skin on his face, he closed his eyes at contact.

“You need to stop doing this to yourself.” I muttered rubbing my thumb over it.

“I know I do, though you would look pretty cute with one yourself.” He laughed out, in a joking voice.

“Jayy! Don’t joke about that! A few years ago, I probably would have done that to myself.” I said getting up. Jayy looked up at me with a shocked expression, I slapped a hand over my mouth.

“Crap, crap, crap. I should not have said that!” I whimpered. He stood up and grabbed at my wrists, I pulled them away and ran to the bathroom, locking the door. I slid down the door, dropping my clothes on the ground I put my head in my hands.

“Why am I such a screw up?” I wondered. I knew my dad was disappointed in me, he didn’t like me being gay. He didn’t even talk to me anymore, or to anyone, considering he was in a coma. The worst part was I don’t even have anyone to talk to about it. I was lost in my own world, and I didn’t have anyone who really understands me, someone who knows what I’m going through, someone who’s been through the same thing. Suddenly I realized I’m all alone. I closed my eyes and put my head against the door. At that point, I stood up and did something I still don’t regret,  I made the right choice because I didn’t want to feel what I was feeling anymore. I felt my body hit the floor and felt my eyelashes fluttering against my cheek bones. My own reality came crashing down around me. I could hear glass of sanity shattering in my ears. I truly was insane now, I was also dying. I had never been afraid to die, I had always welcomed the idea of death. It sounded peaceful, like floating underwater you can’t hear the loud voices of small children anymore. Or maybe it’s just floating in a dark abyss of black. I liked the first idea better. I felt myself being swallowed by a intense heat, yet somehow it comforted me. The last three words I ever spoke were dedicated to the person I loved more than anyone. Jayy.

“I love you.” I whispered, fading into the darkness.

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*That’s the story of Niko Jefferson Simpson. He gave up because he was all alone. Or so he thought. As for Jayy, Nanna, Kirsten and Niko’ father, I’ll tell you what happened to them. Niko’s father died the day after Niko passed away, though hopefully he’s with Nancy now. Kirsten married a young woman named Ellen and had three kids. In honor of his best friend, he named his last born child, a small boy with fiery red hair, Niko. Nanna got a job assisting the blind, yet she never forgot the Simpson family, all three passing away in a tragic way. Jayy was the one to find Niko’s body in the bathroom, and after only weeks he was driven to insanity with sorrow. After a while he was released from the mental hospital he had been placed in, only to be found hanging in a warehouse, dead. Even though this story is a sad one, It’s also a wake-up call. You always have someone to stay for, you can’t give up or give in. You are you, you are different you are a special person with imperfections and perfections. Don’t give up because you feel alone or lost because it’s just not worth it. There will always be that someone that needs you more than you think they do. If you give up, they might. I’m here and I need you to be here with me.*

*~ THE END~*