

Bye Bye Virginity

Stasee is your typical shy, quiet teenage girl until the night her brother's best friend Damen Hertz decides to finally acknowledge her existence. In a desperate attempt to gain his acceptance she allows him to take the one thing every girl values most...her virginity. After that night, Damen

constantly begins accepting her while they're alone and then rejecting her in front of his peers.

Stasee's frustration and confusion continues to grow, as do her feelings toward the man who continues to break her heart.

He claims that he cares for her, but will his need for his peer's acceptance prevent him from ever treating Stasee the way he should? And if he finally realizes the

stupidity of popularity over love, will Stasee still be waiting for him?

Chapter 1

I walked out of the bathroom and began to slowly make my way down the narrow hallway. My hands were tucked deep into the pockets of my little pink pajama pants in an attempt to keep my

fingers warm. The night air
was chilly and as I
silently made my way back to
my bedroom I
couldn't sway my mind away
from the thought of
sliding back under the warmth
of my plush
blanket. I was only sporting a
tiny little black tank
top and already I was starting
to feel the goose
bumps rising up on my arms.
The house was silent. The
only noises were the
sounds of the wind howling

fiercely outside the window and my older brother's epic snoring echoing down the hallway. My parents were away for the weekend, gone on some major golf tournament, which left the house to me and my brother. Not that it was much of a surprise, being left unsupervised was the norm as my parents were hardly ever home. If they weren't away for golf then it was business or

another vacation,
either way they were really
only home a few days
a month.

Before they departed, they had
left implicit
instructions that we were not
allowed to have any
friends over. Naturally, my
brother decided to
rebel against my parent's
authority and invite his
utterly hot friend over for the
night. I honestly
didn't mind the eye candy and
my parents would

be none the wiser. Also, it didn't hurt that the guy was unbelievably sexy and one of the most popular guys at our school, Kersha High. I couldn't help but stare at him with quiet reverence and awe every time I saw him, even though he barely even acknowledged my existence.

As I reached my bedroom door I turned the knob and walked into my warm and cozy bedroom. My

heart skipped a beat and my breath was caught in my chest as I realized there was someone sitting on my bed. It took me a moment to realize who it was as relief washed over me. It was only Damen, my brother's friend. He was wearing a pair of black and red plaid pajama pants with a tight white muscle shirt. I could see every perfectly chiseled muscle through the thin fabric of his shirt,

which instantly caused me to breathe in sharply. His tousled brown hair was about an inch long and stood up on all ends, indicating he had probably been tossing and turning in bed for hours. Then suddenly the relief transformed itself into mild confusion. I mean, sure, I was relieved that it was Damen in my bedroom and not some creepy stranger danger crawling in through the window,

but I thought to myself, 'what was Damen Hurtz doing in my bedroom?'

"D-Damen?" I stuttered as I took a few more brave steps into my bedroom.

"W-what are you doing in here?"

And there it was, my very first words ever spoken to this demi-god, Damen Hurtz. Although Damen had been my brother's friend for years I had never exchanged any sort of verbal dialogue with

him before. Hell, I'd never really spoken to any of the student body at Kersha High.

"I couldn't sleep," he finally replied.

I frowned, my eyebrows raised in confusion. "So you decided you come into my bedroom?"

"Well, I wanted to come see you," he answered quietly as he stood up and began to walk toward me. Instantly, I felt my heart begin to beat more

rapidly and my palms begin to get clammy.

"M-me?" I asked, still completely dazed and somewhat confused. I mean why would he want to see me? Damen was two years older than me and completely out of my league. "But why me?" He took one last step that brought him only inches away from me. "I can't get you out of my mind, Stasee," he whispered near my ear. His

hand reached toward me as his
fingers traced
along the outline of my face.

The second his
rough skin brushed against
my cheek a shiver of
desire ran down my spine.

I stood there completely
stunned speechless as I
continued to just stare into his
deep brown eyes.

My heart continued to thump
until it was racing at
an abnormal and unhealthy
rate. I wondered if it
was possible to have a heart

attack at my age.

"Stasee," he began to speak in this whispery deep

voice. He placed both his hands onto my hips

before pulling me closer to him. "I can't explain

the way you make me feel."

"I-I...uh, b-but you...I'm not, uh." I stuttered, not

being able to even remotely turn any of my words

into a coherent sentence.

"Shhhh," he whispered. "Don't say anything..."

He pulled me even closer to

him as he lowered his head and lifted my chin. Before I even had a chance to comprehend what was happening, he pressed his lips gently against mine. At first my eyes grew completely wide. This was nothing compared to what I had imagined my first kiss would be like. Somehow it seemed far better now that it was actually happening! Merely a second later the

shock of him kissing me
had subsided and my lips
instantly began to move
in unison with his. He gently
glided his hands
under my bottom and picked
me up as my legs
wrapped around his pelvis. He
pulled me into a
tighter embrace, our lips stuck
together like
magnets to metal.

Damen began to walk us
toward my bed as I felt
his tongue slowly invade its
way into my mouth.

He began to draw circles on my tongue with his.
He tasted sweet and tangy.
Instantaneously, my whole body began to melt as the hunger to continue overpowered any sensible thoughts I might have had of stopping. I eagerly wrapped my arms around his neck and pulled him in closer as I deepened the kiss. I felt him grinning against my mouth and he emitted a small giggle as he gently

laid me down on my bed.
Slowly, he began to
move on top of me while
pressing his body harder
against mine.

He rested one hand on the bed
to hold himself up
as his other hand went under
my tank top and
slowly began to massage my
breasts. His cold
hand touching my warm
breasts brought a
delighted shiver down my
spine as I arched my
back and moaned loudly

against his mouth.

Damen then broke the kiss and brushed his lips against my chin before going down my neck and toward my collar bone, leaving a line of tingles in its place. We both began to breath heavier as our cravings for each other grew stronger.

He brought both of his hands down to the bottom of my shirt. Panicked, I quickly forced my arms down toward his wrist and

was about to stop him.
But his lips then found my
neck, which caused my
arms to grow slack. I sucked in
my breath
enjoying the sensations of his
lips against my skin
and before I knew it, he had
slid my shirt right off
of me.

I watched him as he sat up and
pulled his own
shirt off. My hands seemed to
have a mind of
their own as they reached up
and rubbed his bare

chest. Slowly, my hands began to work their way down to his eight-pack. He came back down toward me, his mouth finding its way back to my breasts before slowly making his way down my stomach stopping at my navel and moving lower still. Every time his soft lips touched my skin a feeling of erotic pleasure would soar through my body.

I could feel him begin to pull

down my pajama bottoms, but paid no attention to it. I was so lost in the feelings and sensations of his lips against my skin. Suddenly, I could feel the cold breeze against my bare legs as I glanced down and noticed both of us were lying on my bed completely naked. For the second time since we started this alternate reality, a jolt of fear pierced through my body. I felt like a

wanton woman
losing control and not wanting
it to stop. I only had
thoughts of
Damen and his warm, wet
mouth and
soft lips on my body and this
primal aching need.
He must have noticed my
sudden change of mood
because he came closer to me
and brushed my
hair out of my face.
"Are you okay?" He
whispered. His breathing was
loud and uneven. His eyes

shone with sexual energy as he looked deep into mine.

"I-I've never done this before," I replied with a whisper. I looked back at him and my pupils began to dilate from desire.

My heart continued to thump even more rapidly inside my chest. One question continued to circulate through my mind, what was I doing? It felt as if someone had possessed my body and I

no longer held any control
over my limbs. The
unimaginable feelings Damen
was awakening
inside me had completely
taken control, leaving
me vulnerable to each touch.
Damen continued to look at
me while his
breathing grew even more
ragged. He pressed his
lips gently against mine
instantly causing my body
to grow weaker. His mouth
then found its way to
my neck as instant tingles shot

through my body.

"You have nothing to be afraid of."

Chapter 2

Damen then moved on top of me, placing his body between my legs. My heart was racing a million miles an hour out of excitement, fear, and pleasure. I had never had sex

before. Well,
truthfully I've never even
come close, probably
because I was only sixteen and
never had an
actual boyfriend. I wanted to
tell him to stop, that
I wasn't ready and that this
wasn't the way I
wanted my first time to be.
Every time I would open my
mouth trying to
protest, trying to tell him no, I
couldn't. The only
sound that left my lips was a
loud muffled moan

of sheer and utter pleasure. I knew there was no stopping him, no matter how much I wanted him to stop—I couldn't manage to get myself to say anything. My body was in complete disagreement with my mind. The pleasure principle overruled the logic of my mind. I opened my eyes, finally realizing that Damen was watching me with concern masking his face. "Do you want me to stop?" He

asked.

My mind was screaming YES!
but when I looked up
at Damen this sudden need for
acceptance pierced
through me.

Damen was very well known
at my high school
while I was nobody. I was just
some loner-girl
who didn't have even one
friend. And as I laid
there on my bed with Damen
Hurtz lying on top of
me, actually wanting me,
actually acknowledging

my existence I couldn't seem to say no to him.

It should have been so easy.

After all it was just one small word, three letters, and one syllable. All

I had to say was 'Yes, yes I want you to stop!'

But I couldn't do it. My sudden need for his acceptance, for his approval overpowered my own morals and integrity.

I finally closed my eyes and softly shook my head.

"No," I said softly. "Don't

stop.”

* * * *

The next morning, I had woken up to the cool morning breeze hitting my naked body. I began to force my eyes open as I soon came to realize I was lying on my bed completely naked. The sun was shining brightly through my bedroom window, which forced me to squint. Instantly an image of Damen flashed through my mind.

I hurriedly glanced at the other side of my bed, only to find that the spot he had fallen asleep in was now cold and empty. His clothes that were once strewn on the floor were now gone, erasing all physical evidence that he was in my bedroom last night.

For a second I thought that maybe last night had just been a figment of my overactive imagination.

I stood up to my feet and pain

shot through my
body. A tenderness which
began at my...down
stairs area, confirming that I
did indeed lose my
virginity last night.
I reached down and picked up
my pajama bottoms
off the floor and quickly
pulled them on. I then
reached for my black tank top
that was lying on
my bed and pulled it on over
my head. I knew that
my memory of last night
couldn't have been a

dream. But the mystery regarding Damen's disappearance forced me to abandon the comfort of my bed.

My first thought was that he would be downstairs

in the kitchen, possibly getting some breakfast or grabbing a cup of coffee.

Following the only explainable possibility there was, I left my

bedroom and headed toward the stairs. Once I

reached the bottom stair, I

continued to walk through the foyer and into the kitchen. Relief washed over me when I noticed the refrigerator was open and that there was a tall figure standing on the other side of the door. All I could see was their brown hair. Relief and excitement had taken full reign over my body. Though, it disappeared just as quickly as the door closed revealing my brother, Trent. In his

hands was a jug of orange juice, a plate with pancakes, a bowl of cereal and a bacon and egg sandwich. My brother was one of those lucky people with a metabolism that would allow him to constantly eat and not gain a pound. I hated him for it!

"Where's Damen?" I asked, walking over to him and grabbing the orange juice. He tried to grab it back, almost dropping all of

his food in the process. Finally, he decided it was probably best to put his arm full of food down first.

"He went home," Trent said casually as he placed all his food down on the kitchen table. "Why?" He questioned me.

I could feel panic begin to set in as I took the lid off the orange juice and began to chug it right out of the jug.

It took a couple of seconds

before I could find my voice. "I don't know, just didn't see him this morning," I lied. My stomach began to twist and turn causing a sharp pain to emerge deep inside my gut. I had to concentrate hard on not allowing the tears in my eyes to fall. All I could think about was how he used me. How he came to my bedroom, had sex with me and left me alone. How he took my

virginity from me like it was nothing important. He didn't even have the decency to wait until I woke up before he left. No, he didn't do any of these things, instead he crept away in the middle of the night or whenever he left, like I was some one night stand. Like I was some slut he picked up at a party!

"Yah, he seemed to be in some kind of rush this morning," Trent said,

interrupting my thoughts. I looked up at him just as he started inhaling his food. "Orange juice," he mumbled between mouthfuls while pointing to the jug.

I passed it over to him while watching in disgust as he then took a couple of swigs out of the jug. I couldn't help but think about the amount of food that was probably being spat back into the juice jug.

"Yah, he looked like he saw a ghost or something.

He looked pretty freaked out this morning." Trent finally managed to say once he swallowed his food.

"Oh," I barely whispered out. I felt like someone had just ripped my heart out and was now stomping on it, jumping up and down.

But honestly, what did I expect? Damen was one of the most popular guys at

my school. Every girl wants him, has had him, has been used by him or will never have him. I'm only in grade ten, a sophomore. He's a senior and not just any senior, but a very popular one. Obviously, he realized the mistake he had made and had no choice but to run away. I was definitely not the prettiest girl in school or even the prettiest in my grade. I was nothing, a no body.

I was Trent's annoying little sister and that was all I'd ever be. It was stupid and naive of me to think anything was going to happen between me and Damen. But, even so, the fact that I had given up my virginity so easily forced me to run to my bedroom, fall on my bed and bawl my eyes out in embarrassment, disappointment and shame.

Chapter 3

The rest of my weekend had been extremely boring and mainly full of reading and re-reading books that I had taken out from the library. When I wasn't reading, I was generally stalking my brother around the house. I would eaves drop on his conversations over the phone and spy on him hanging out with his friends

outside. On more than one occasion I had asked him where Damen was and what he was up to. Apparently, Trent hadn't heard from him since he fled our house on Saturday morning. It was now the beginning of a new week, Monday, meaning I had to go to school today and also that I had to see Damen.

My heart was racing as I got ready for school, pulling on a pair of black

skinny jeans and a big pink sweater with snoopy on it. I reached for my Batman backpack and headed down stairs.

"Hurry up, Stasee!" My brother called from the front door, "Or I'm leaving without you and you'll have to walk!"

I ran down the stairs and followed Trent through the door and toward his bright red '72 Chevy pick-up.

Sure his truck was old, a

classic, but it was completely rebuilt from its engine to its body. It probably looked better today than it did in 1972.

I jumped into the passenger seat as Trent jumped into the driver's seat before starting up the engine. He drove down the road and headed toward Kevin's house. He pulled over to the side of the street and parked. I scooted over into the middle of the truck as Kevin

jumped in beside me.

"Hey Dude!" He called over to Trent, "You missed a pretty sweet party this weekend. Candise went swimming topless!"

"Hey Kev," Trent laughed, "Yah, Derrek was telling me about it, heard there was quite a bit of sluts there."

"Oh dude, you don't even know!" Kevin said while slapping his knee in excitement.

I just sat there staring out the

window as my brother began to drive. This was my life, always surrounded by people talking about their oh-so exciting weekends, whilst mine is always the exact opposite.

Kevin continued, "Jessica and Tiffany were all over Damen again, I mean stripping for him, making-out with each other and lap dancing!"

At the mention of Damen's

name my head
snapped up and I looked
toward Kevin, my heart
racing like crazy. Damen came
to my house Friday
night, took my virginity and
then went out
partying?! I had this feeling
that he, most likely,
did stuff with all those skanky
girls and completely
forgot about
me! I could feel a knot begin
to form
inside my stomach.
"Did...Damen do anything

with them?" I asked
with a shaky voice.
Kevin turned to look at me as
his eyes grew wide
with shock. "Holy crap, she
talks?!" The blond-
haired boy teased. He reached
over and rubbed
the top of my head like I was a
fluffy little lap
dog, "Hey Trent's little sister,
barely even noticed
you there!"

It was so annoying how they
never paid any
attention to my existence. I

mean Kevin knew my name, he had known me for ten years and still he referred to me as 'Trent's Little Sister'.

'I mean, just because you are good looking, play sports and have the girls falling all over you does not give you permission to be such a stuck up prick!' I thought angrily to myself while wishing I was actually brave enough to say that to him.

Unfortunately though, that

was just how all my brother's friends were. They were the popular kids-a part of the in-crowd and I was a ghost. I had no label; not a jock or a cheerleader, not a geek or an emo, not a punk or a bad-ass. I was nothing, a label-less loner who walked around with no group to fit into. "No actually," he finally answered my question before turning his attention back to Trent, "Which

is weird. Tiffany and Jessica were pretty much begging for him to notice them and yet, he denied them. He's been acting pretty weird lately."

"You've noticed that too?"

Trent asked, "He stayed at my place Friday night and then ran off in the morning without even so much as a 'see ya later'. He walked right passed me and just took off."

"Well, whatever his problem

is, he had better get his head out of his ass before the game against the Whiskers this Friday." "No doubt." Trent agreed. I reached for my batman backpack and hugged it tightly against my chest. Even though I knew nothing was going to happen between Damen and me and even though I knew he was a dumbass, it was rather comforting knowing that he didn't do anything with Jessica and

Tiffany. Who, I might add, are the most popular girls at my school.

"Batman and Snoopy? What are you eight?" Kevin teased me while pointing toward my backpack and then at my sweater.

"Hey dude, leave my sis alone." Trent butted in.

"I was only teasing her." Kevin smirked.

"Well don't." My brother's face was completely serious, in overprotective mode as we pulled up to

the school and parked in our usual spot.

"Sorry man."

"Don't say sorry to me, say it to my little sis."

Although my brother and I come from totally different worlds at school and hang with completely different crowds (and by that I mean he actually hung out with a crowd) Trent has always made it his job to watch over and protect me. That was probably one of

the main reasons why all of the popular people paid no attention to me. I wasn't cool enough to hang out with them, though; they also couldn't tease or bully me because of my brother. So, instead, they choose to ignore me altogether. "Sorry, Trent's little sister." He said.

I simply rolled my eyes and jumped out of the truck after him.

"Whatever." I muttered rudely.

'Talk about the worst apology ever!' I thought to myself. I waved good-bye to my brother and then headed up toward the school.

* * * *

The bell rang, indicating it was now lunch time. I slowly began to pick up my books from my desk. I was eager to get out of history class because, honestly, history was by far the most boring class there was. But, what I hated

more than History
was lunch time.

"Don't forget to read through
pages twenty-five
to thirty tonight. Also, I'd like
everyone's papers
on the Great Depression on
my desk by tomorrow
morning!" Mr. Calnon called
out to everyone as
they scurried out of class. I
lingered back, not in
any hurry to get to the library.
I was almost a
hundred percent sure that
everyone at Kersha

High, except me, looked forward to lunch time.

Lunch was the time of day I hated the most

because I sat alone and read for the entire hour.

Every day, lunch time reminded me of what a complete loner I was.

I walked down the hallway and headed toward the library.

I still had to take back the four books I

had taken out for the weekend.

I was about ten feet away from the library when a door suddenly opened up in my face. A hand reached out from the darkened room and grabbed onto my arm. I felt my body being pulled through the doorway against my will. I didn't have a chance to even think about what was happening and once the door shut everything went black. Someone had pulled me into

what I figured was
the janitor's closet. The lights
were off and I
couldn't manage to see who
the perpetrator was.

Fear was beginning to work its
way through my
body as my heart began to
pound loudly inside my
chest.

"H-He-Hello...?" I stuttered,
speaking into the
blackness.

"Shhhhh..."

Chapter 4

My heart rate began to accelerate faster with each silent second until suddenly, with a blinding feeling, a light flickered on. I looked around the room curious as to where I was. There was a bucket and mop in the corner, shelves full of cleaning supplies and a huge variety of different

sized brooms. All these objects combined only proved my suspicions correct. I had, in fact, been pulled into the janitor's closet. 'Well, now that I've figured out the 'where,' it's time for the 'who' and the 'why?'" I thought to myself as I began to look around.

I turned my attention to the shadowy form in the corner of the closet. I reached behind me picking up the first object my hands

closed around just in case this mystery person's plans were unfriendly.

The first thing my hands fell upon was a bottle of Windex which I decided to abandon because, honestly, what was I going to do with Windex, clean him to death?

The next thing my fingers wrapped around was a duster in which I actually decided to keep because it had a good-sized wooden handle.

"Who are you?" I demanded trying to keep my voice even while attempting to sound intimidating, however, failing horribly. I watched as the shadowy figure started walking toward me. I tightened my grip on the duster, preparing to swing mightily, but then the light shined down on him, revealing who he was. I felt my hands open up as the duster fell to the ground; I stared at Damen in

disbelief. I heard the
duster hit the floor and yet it
sounded miles away,
far off in the distance. All my
fear then
disappeared and was replaced
by a state of shock.

I stood there unable to move,
completely
bewildered as to why he was
here or, more
importantly, why he had
pulled me into the
closet?

"Look...Stasee, I need to
apologise." He spoke

softly as he took another step toward me with his hand held out.

The thought of him leaving me alone Saturday morning finally snapped me out of my startled daze. Not to mention the fact that he had never even attempted to call me all weekend and how he left me hanging with no explanation.

I raised my right hand and slapped him as hard as I could across the face:

One...

Two...

Three

times in quick succession

while tears of

rage and humiliation blinded

me.

I watched in satisfaction as his

eyes bulged out of

their sockets before he used

his left hand to rub

the red welts on his cheek.

"I guess I deserved that..." he

replied.

Using my left hand this time, I

raised it and with

every ounce of strength I could summon, I smacked him hard on the other cheek. I watched as his head turned to the side from the force of my slap.

I know I may have gone to crazy-town, I mean it's not like we were dating or had any commitment towards each other, much less a relationship.

Either way, any guy who is rude enough to take a girl's virginity and then skulk

off into the night
while she's sleeping, deserves
what he gets, if not
more.

I looked up at him, both his
cheeks had welts and
the muscles in his jaw
pulsated. It almost looked
as if he had been stuck outside
in the middle of
winter for an entire day.

"Why did you leave me like
that?" I asked angrily,

"How could you do that to
me?!" My voice grew
louder and angrier by the

minute.

He lowered his head in shame, staring at the ground before he began to speak; "I'm sorry Stasee..." He began, "It's just, I've...Well, I've never slept with anyone before."

"That is such a lie! You've slept with lots of girls!"

I was so furious that he had the nerve to stand there and lie straight to my face.

"No, Stasee I haven't." He

repeated, "Sure I've had sex with a few girls but I've never actually slept in a bed with them. When I woke up in the morning with my arms around you...I freaked, I got scared and ran away. I didn't know what else to do."

"Oh yah? And you didn't even have the decency to call me?"

"I figured you didn't want to talk to me," He finally lifted his head and looked into

my eyes, "I
couldn't
get you out of my head all
weekend...I just had to
see you again."

He reached up with his hand
as he placed his
fingers under my chin in an
attempt to lift my
head up. The second his
fingers touched my skin,
tingles shot through my body
as my breathing
began to quicken. I stared
back hard, trying to
read his eyes and see through

his lies, yet all of
his body language screamed
sincerity and
remorse.

He took another step closer to
me and I could feel
his breath against my face. His
hand left my chin
as both of his arms wrapped
around my waist. My
stomach began to flip around
as I felt my body
heating up.

I watched his face inch closer
to mine until I felt
his lips lightly brush against

my own, tentatively,
as if asking permission. It was
as if some sex-
crazed-nymphomaniac had
then taken over my
body. I wrapped my arms
hastily around his neck
and forced his body hard
against mine as our kiss
began to deepen. I felt his
arms tighten around
my waist until both our bodies
were intertwined
leaving no space in between.
His hands began to roam up
every inch of my

body which left no place untouched. In that same moment I buried my fingers in his hair and tugged on the back of his head. My body was vibrating in the satisfaction of his touch; never had I imagined something that could feel so indefinably pleasing. Finally, I pulled my arms back as I rested them on his chest and, with all my strength; I pushed him away forcefully, nearly causing him to tumble

over. He caught his balance just in time to look up at me as I reached down to the bottom of my sweater and pulled it up over my head. His eyes narrowed before lightening up in excitement. He then pulled off his shirt and revealed his perfect rippling eight-pack. He quickly came back to me as he began ripping off my shirt and then my bra; leaving both of our torsos completely naked. He

began to feel up my
body again, only this time,
with his lips. An
unbearable sensation
exploded through my body
as my patience seemed to be
holding on by barely
a thread. I couldn't handle the
foreplay for even
one more second as the
ineffable memory of last
time continued to flash across
my mind.

I was just in the process of
unbuttoning his jeans
when he froze.

"What-are-you-" I tried to speak between gasps but his hand covered my mouth quickly forcing me into silence.

That's when I heard the keys jingling on the other side

of the door. I pushed Damen out of the way

as I reached to the floor in attempt to grab my

clothes. Damen did the same as we both

continued banging into each other and the

shelves; knocking over brooms and mops and spilling bottles of cleaning supplies. All in an attempt to quickly put our clothes back on.

"Who's in there?!" I heard an old, scratchy voice yell through the door. The sound of a deadbolt clicking open reached my ears the same second I pulled my sweater on and fell to my bottom with a crash.

The door swung open

exposing Mr. Gergosh, the school janitor. He was tall and bony and probably in his sixties. He had a shag of white hair with a long matching beard and kind of resembled a really skinny Santa Claus. He looked at Damen who was standing by the shelves fully dressed with a little smirk on his face. Then, he turned his glance down to me (who was sitting in a pool of spilled cleaners, hair in a

tangled mess on my head and my sweater inside out!).

"Oh you kids!" Mr Gergosh said, shooing us out of the closet. "You crazy kids, with all your hormones going nutty inside you. You're always running around finding little hiding spots to smooch together." His voice was scratchy as if he'd been smoking all his life. I got up off the floor, instantly realizing my butt

was soaked from the cleaners that had been knocked over. We managed to walk out of the closet with some dignity, both of us holding in our laughter.

"This is my closet, if you want to

go...go...smooching each other, then go find some other place." He continued to talk, "Out, Out!"

The second me and Damen were out of the closet we began to run down the

deserted hallways.

Everyone was either still in the cafeteria or

outside basking in the sun. I could hear Mr.

Gergosh mumbling something about kids these

days and sex before marriage.

Once Damen and I were out of Mr. Gergosh's sight

we leaned against the wall and began erupting in

laughter. I slid down the

locker behind me and fell

to the floor as he did the same.

"D-did You-" Damen tried

speaking between his
laughter. "Did you s-see Mr.
Gergosh's fa-face!"

My laughter rose higher as the
image of Mr.

Gergosh's expression ran
through my mind. He
looked completely shocked
and even a bit
disgusted.

"Yah-" I tried talking this time.
I was laughing so
hard that I had to put my hand
on Damen's
shoulder to try and keep
myself balanced. "Look

a-at my bu-butt!" I laughed, "I fe-fell in the puddle!" Damen's laugh then roared louder, "and m-my swe-sweater is on inside ou-out!"

"Ewww!" A girl's voice interrupted our laughter. I looked up and saw Candise glaring down at us with Tiffany on her left side and on her right was Jessica. The trio of Malibu Barbies stared at me in disgust. Their faces scrunched up, marring their

features and their perfectly applied makeup.

Candise continued speaking, "Damen, what are you doing?"

Damen jumped up to his feet as his face flushed red. It was almost as if he was embarrassed to be seen with me.

I felt my heart sink.

"Nothing!" he said while not even glancing my way, "Wow, its class time already. I should probably go!" Without so

much as a peek over at me, he ran down the hall and left me sitting there all by myself.

The moment Damen had disappeared around a corner, Candise crouched down closer to me and began to speak again with so much venom in her voice; "Look girl, I don't care if you're Trent's little sister or not, Damen is mine so you'd better stay away from him!"

"He's not yours!" Both Tiffany

and Jessica said in unison.

"Excuse me!" Candise said turning her attention to them, "Did you not see the way he completely ignored you two at the party? Give it up already!"

With that, she tossed her mane in the air and began to walk down the hallway. Tiffany and Jessica stood there for a second, staring blankly at the wall, before turning around

and running after
her.

That left me sitting on the
floor soaking wet,
feeling completely
embarrassed and ashamed by
my stupidity and, once again,
alone.

Chapter 5

The sun was setting as I stared
out my bedroom
window. The sky was a

breathtakingly beautiful
shade of pink as the sun faded
out of sight on the
horizon. I let a loud sigh
escape my lips as I
thought about my day at
school. I still couldn't
decipher the mixed signals
Damen had been
sending me. Maybe there was
a man code to crack
to understand this type of
behaviour?

After the little incident in the
janitor's closet and
the verbal warning from the

bitch squad, I hadn't seen Damen for the rest of the day. He tried to tell me he liked me and denied Tiffany and Jessica's seductive advances; indicating I was more than just a conquest. But then, just when I thought maybe something could happen between us, he turned around and proved me wrong once again.

I walked over to my bed and flopped down with

frustration. Ever since Friday night, I couldn't seem to get this stupid boy out of my head. I

mean, sure, he took my virginity away, but that still did not reserve him a spot in my heart! Any guy who could treat a girl with such disrespect deserves nothing more than to be punched right in the face.

'TICK'

The sound of something hard hitting glass

interrupted my thoughts as I rolled my head to the side and looked at nothing but the night sky through my window. Must of just been my imagination, I thought to myself as I went back to staring up at the ceiling; willing the answers to be written there or praying for a divine intervention.

'TICK'

The sound came again, causing me to spring up into a sitting position. I stared

out my window as if
expecting to see something.
But, frankly, I was on
the second floor so what was I
intending to see? A
blind woodpecker, who
couldn't tell the difference
between glass and wood,
perched on my window
sill chipping away at the
glass? Yah, I highly doubt
it!

At that precise moment, the
sound came again for
a third time.

'TICK'

Only this time, I had managed to see what was causing it as I watched a little pebble hit my window before gravity had taken over and forced it back down to the ground. I sat on my bed completely dumbfounded, staring outside with narrowed eyes. It took a fourth pebble to tap against the glass; jarring me from my confused trance.

I jumped to my feet and ran

toward the window,
not exactly sure what I was
looking for. At first,
for no particular reason, I
looked up to the dark
night sky which was covered
in bright stars.

Eventually, my eyes found
their way to the
ground, deciding pebbles'
falling from the sky was
maybe a little too farfetched.
It took a couple of seconds for
my eyes to adjust
to the darkness, while slowly I
began to see the

outlines of everything in the yard. I could see every tree, bush, vehicle, person, flower-

Wait! Back it up a second! I thought to myself, A person?! What is a person doing in my backyard?

I looked down again, Oh. My. God! They're staring up at me!

I forced myself to calm down while trying to convince myself it was probably one of my brother's friends. They, most

likely, didn't know that Trent and I had switched rooms a few weeks ago. I concentrated harder on the outline of the tall, wide being before realizing right away who it was.

Damen? I stared down at him with a wide-eyed gaze.

My heart skipped a beat as I gazed down at him lustfully. Although I wanted so badly to hate him and wished so deeply that he

didn't have this power over me, it was impossible. No matter what I wanted, or what I wished, every time I saw him he always managed to leave me breathless and wanting him.

I shook that feeling off as I considered my options. My first thought was to shut my bedroom light off and go hide in my bed, under the covers until he gave up and left. I would have done it too

if it weren't for the fact that he had already seen me and was waving fiercely like a caffeine-crazed crack head. Plus, I had a few not-so-nice words I wanted to confront him with. I opened my bedroom window and stuck my head out as I began to whisper loudly down to him.

"What do you want?!"

"Come down here!" He whispered back.

"Why?!"

"Because I need to talk to you!"

"Well what if I don't want to talk to you?"

"Please just let me explain!"

He was looking up at me with pleading eyes.

If it had been any other guy, or if the past couple

days hadn't happened, I

probably wouldn't have

even went to my window in

the first place. And I

definitely would never even

think about doing

what I was just about to do.

Except it wasn't just

any other guy, it was Damen.

And the past couple days had happened. Plus, as much as I hated to admit, I couldn't say no because Damen already had me wrapped around his finger; ready to pursue any wish he commanded.

I rolled my eyes before sticking my hand out and pointing my index finger at him in such a way of saying, 'one second'. I looked up at the large tree which towered over our house.

I wondered how my brother managed to scale it in order to sneak out on countless occasions.

This tree was actually the reason as to why Trent and I were forced to switch rooms in the first place.

My brother repeatedly snuck out of the house using the tree and ran off to parties and other forbidden places, according to my parents. They had decided that the room with the latter-like-

tree would be better suited for me, seeing as I was a loner anyways.

Where was I going to run off to, the library? Or out for a midnight slurpee?

I saw a branch that was only inches away from the left side of my window and decided that would probably be the easiest escape route. I climbed out my window and crawled onto the branch, finding my way to the bottom of the tree with

ease. I was about three feet from the ground when I felt Damen's arms grasp my waist. My stomach fluttered the same way it always did when he touched me and my heart sped up. He lifted me up in the air and then placed me gently on my feet. I still stumbled a little bit, but that was because my knees had gone weak and rubbery from being near him. The second I caught my

balance I turned around
to face him, anger from this
afternoon still
lingering inside me.
Suddenly, without any second
thoughts, I pushed him hard
in the chest with
every ounce of strength that I
had. He must have
been expecting it because,
even with all the
strength I had in me, he had
barely even flinched.
I tried again and again, and
then one more time.
Each time I got the same

result, which was nothing! A half smirk had taken over Damen's face as he watched me in amusement. I huffed loudly as I finally gave up. I folded my arms against my chest and glared at him.

The smirk finally faded from his face as he took a step closer to me.

"Look Stasee-"

I cut him off before he could go any farther, "Stop Damen! Just stop."

"But-" he tried again.

"But nothing!" To my surprise my voice was stern,

"You did it to me again! You just left me sitting there; you left me with those bitches!"

"I know...and I'm-"

"Sorry?" I asked. "You're always sorry, well guess what Damen! Sorry's mean nothing if you don't actually mean them!"

I watched his eyes lower from looking at me to staring at the ground. He

occupied his hands by playing with the hem of his shirt. I had so many other things I wanted to say to him. I wanted to keep yelling at him and telling him exactly how all of that made me feel. I wanted to so badly, but as I stood there watching him a knot had formed in my stomach and all I wanted to do was comfort him.

Wait! I shook my head, confused by my own

thoughts. Comfort him?
He was the one who was
supposed to be
comforting me and yet there I
was, near seconds
away from apologizing to him.
Seriously, how did
he manage to turn all this
around on me and make
me feel like the bad guy?
I walked up to him and placed
my hand on his
shoulder as I watched his head
slightly lift up. We
both just stood there; staring
into each other's

eyes. We stayed like that for a while until Damen finally broke the silence.

"Look Stasee, I know I messed up..." he said

before adding, "Again. But I want to make it up to you and that's why I came here."

"Oh yah?" I removed my hand from his shoulder, once again folding my arms.

"And how do you plan on doing that?"

"It's a surprise..."

Chapter 6

"Don't peek!" He said for the hundredth time.

"I'm not..." I whined. Even if I attempted to open my eyes I couldn't see anything, there was a blindfold covering them.

"How much longer?" I asked. I was starting to get a little impatient.

"Not much farther, just keep walking."

"It's kind of hard to stop when you're pretty much dragging me behind you!"
About an hour earlier...
When I finally gave in to Damen, we got into his 2009 GMC truck and he put a blind fold over my eyes before we drove away from my house. Well not exactly my house, seeing as he parked a block away in an attempt to keep my parents oblivious to him coming over and kidnapping me in the

middle of the night. My parents were never around and yet the one night they did come home, Damen had decided to show up at my house. Although, I highly doubt they would even notice my disappearance because, even though they were home at the moment, they were still completely caught up in work. We drove for about half an hour before we finally came to a stop. I listened to

him as he got out of the truck and came over to my side; helping me down to the ground. Now, for the past twenty minutes we have been walking along a trail and up a hill. Well, I figured so anyways because that's what it felt like; I could tell we were walking up a hill and I could also feel the dirt under my shoes.

Damen's fingers were wrapped around mine while his other arm was wrapped

around my waist;
helping me to dodge all of the
obstacles in our
path. I was still so frustrated
with him because he
didn't only leave me once...but
twice and yet it
was impossible to stay mad at
him for a long
period. By rights, I should
have been callous with
him and his random mood
swings.

"Okay, now stop here." He
interrupted my
thoughts. "And whatever you

do, don't move!" His
voice
was so urgent and so serious
that I knew it
wasn't a good idea to even
think about moving.
I heard the sound of
something solid hitting the
ground on a lower level than
where I was
standing.
"Damen!?" I held my breath.
"I'm fine," he chuckled;
although his voice came
from somewhere below me. "I
had to jump and I

didn't think my feet hitting the ground were going to be so loud." I felt his arms wrap around my waist as he lifted me into the air. I still couldn't see anything but the blackness of the blind fold and it sucked! I mean, did he honestly find it necessary to blindfold me? I hated not being able to see.

I felt my feet begin to touch the ground as Damen turned my body around so

that he was standing behind me. His arms were still tightly wrapped around my hips and my waist. I felt his breath on my neck which sent a shiver up my spine. He began to whisper lightly into my ear as the shivers escalated throughout my entire body.

"Okay Stasee..." he began, "Before I show you this, you have to promise not to tell anyone about it."

I tried to speak, but when I opened my mouth no words came out so instead I just nodded. He was still breathing against my neck, making it impossible to pay attention to anything else other than the way it was making my body feel. I could feel his breath inching closer to my neck before his lips pressed gently against my skin. Fireworks instantly erupted inside my head.

A soft moan escaped my lips as he continued to kiss my neck. I felt him remove his arms from around my stomach as they made their way up to the back of my head. He pursued with his mouth, grazing his lips against my neck while his fingers untied the blindfold. I can't tell you the precise moment the blindfold fell off my face because, even after it was gone, my eyes stayed closed. I was

so caught up with
the way Damen's lips filled
my body with pleasure
that I no longer cared about
the surprise. I turned
around to face him as my arms
wrapped around
his neck. His arms then
snaked around my waist
and his hands rested on my
behind.

He glanced over my head at
what, I'm assuming,
was the surprise he brought
me here for.

"Aren't you going to look?" He

whispered to me,
staring down into my eyes.
"No...I don't care...I just want
to-" I stopped
talking as I stared up at his
full set of perfect lush
lips. He pulled me hard
against his body as if
knowing exactly what I was
about to say. I
tightened my arms around his
neck and our lips
connected fiercely. We stayed
embraced like this
for awhile, although it still felt
too short before he

pulled
away. I groaned in protest,
trying to pull
him back to me, but he
seemed pretty content on
that being the end of the kiss.
"Stasee, just turn around and
look." He begged.
I sighed loudly, not wanting
the kissing to end and
definitely not caring what it
was he wanted me to
see so badly. I rolled my eyes
at him before finally
turning around. I froze the
second I looked around

at the incredible, stunning
sight before me.

We were standing high, high
up on the cliff of a
huge hill, staring down at the
Town of McLennan.

We were so high up;
McLennan looked like
nothing
more than a city for Polly
Pockets. The moon was
shining brightly, reflecting off
the ocean that
surrounded the small town.
The most astonishing
thing about it all was the stars.

Being so far away from town, so far from civilization, the stars shone so brightly that we didn't even need any sort of light source to see each other. It was magical.

I felt Damen's shoulder rub against mine as he came to stand beside me. I stood still, staring out at the beautiful sight before us.

"What do you think?" He asked.

"How...How did you find this place?"

"I went for a hike one day and stumbled across it,

I come here a lot...You know, to think and what

not. It's kind of like my secret place, that I wanted

to...Um...share with you." He spoke lightly.

I didn't reply to him, there was no need to. I knew

he could tell exactly what I was thinking just by

the look on my face. I was stunned speechless as I

peered
out into the beautiful night
sky, knowing
nothing in the world would
ever compare to this
moment; this exact moment in
time.

I looked down and saw a big
fluffy blanket that
was laid on the ground and
beside it was a small
stereo.

"What are you planning to
happen here?" I looked
upward from the little set up
and eyed him

curiously.

"You know, just a little romantic getaway..." He smiled as he walked over to the Stereo and turned it on. A song that I instantly recognized began playing out of the speakers.

'The Fear You Won't Fall' by Josh Radin.

The soft lyrics echoed through my ears as I stared at

him in shock, 'this was one of my favourite songs, how did he know?'

He walked over to me,
offering me his hand.

"Would you like to dance, my
lady?" He faked an
English accent trying to sound
like a man from the
1800's.

"I...I don't know how to..." I
admitted.

"I'll teach you." He said as he
wrapped his arms
around my waist and pulled
me against the
hardness of his body. I then
wrapped my arms
around his neck as he pulled

me in even closer. I
rested my head against his
chest and we began to
sway back and forth, slowly,
to the beat of the
song.

"So, am I forgiven yet?"

Damen whispered in my
ear as we continued to dance.

"You're getting there." I lied,
knowing in my heart

I had forgiven him the
moment he came to my
window tonight.

Damen bent down and
pressed his lips against

mine as the song came to an end. We ended up moving over to the blanket and lying down. The rest of the night we sat there staring up at the sky and talking. Just talking! We talked about everything; from our families to books to past memories. Weirdly enough, we had a lot in common; from music preferences to different novels we've read.

"What?! Damen Hertz reads

comics?!" I almost yelled as I erupted into laughter.

"What's the big deal? You just admitted to reading them too!" He looked insulted.

"Yah, but that's me. I mean, it's expected from me." I laughed louder.

"Whatever, you're just mad because Superman could take Batman any day."

He folded his arms across his chest as he looked over at me.

"You wish! Honestly, how

many times has Batman
kicked Superman's ass?!"

"Yah...Only when Batman uses
Kryptonite and
that's pretty much cheating!"

"Well what is Batman suppose
to use? He is only
human after all." I stated as I
looked up into the
sky finally realizing that the
sun was beginning to
rise. I jumped up into a sitting
position.

Damen quickly turned to look
over at me with
worried eyes. "What's

wrong?!" He asked.

"I

need to get home...Like now!

My parents are

going to kill me if they notice

I'm not home!" I

quickly got up off the ground.

Damen

muttered, 'crap,' under his

breath as he

gathered everything up off the

ground before we

scurried off the cliff and down

the hill.

We

managed to make it to my

house within
twenty minutes this time. I
turned toward Damen
and quickly gave him a peck
on the cheek. I was
just about to run off when he
grabbed my arm
and pulled me back toward
him. Our lips connected
and
at first I didn't kiss him back,
but soon his
kisses became more urgent.
Our lips began to
move in unison as I grabbed
his shirt and pulled

him closer to me, deepening the kiss. A couple of seconds later I pushed him away and my breath came in short, shallow gasps as I ran off toward my house. I quickly climbed back up the tree and stumbled into my bedroom. Relief washed over me when

I noticed my door was still shut, indicating my parents hadn't come looking for me yet.

I

flopped down on my bed,
breathing deeply as I
thought about my completely
perfect night with
Damen.

Chapter 7

The lunch bell rang,
awakening me from my
dreamless sleep. I was never
one for sleeping in
class, even as much as I
disliked history I would

never take advantage of a chance to learn something new. Though, as hard and uncomfortable as my seat and desk were, I couldn't manage to keep my eyes open or my head off the desk as I slept all the way through History class. I guess I have nobody to blame, but myself, it wasn't exactly smart of me to stay up all night with Damen on the cliff and then go to

school without the tiniest bit of sleep. I probably could have faked sick and slept half the day away, but I was far too excited to go back to school and see Damen.

The only problem was that it was nearly lunch time and I still hadn't seen him once. Although that is understandable, seeing as he is a senior and none of our classes are remotely the same. I

pulled myself out of my desk before stretching my arms up high in the air and yawning. I grabbed my books off my desk as I headed for the door; trying to make a quick exit.

Obviously, I wasn't fast enough as Mr. Calnon came to stand in front of me and blocked my path.

"Miss Rainie," he folded his arms across his chest, looking at me with impatience. "Did my class bore you?"

"Oh, no Mr. Calnon. Not at all." I lied, "I just, well, I'm just a little bit tired today and I apologize for that. I promise it won't happen again."

"Very well," he replied. "Don't let it happen again because I will not tolerate that kind of behaviour in my class. You are excused." He waved his hand dismissively.

I ran out the door before he could change his mind and

send me to detention. I went to my locker to drop off my books. I decided I was going to do a little tour around the school in search of Damen. It took awhile, but I finally found him standing outside the front entrance of the school. He was standing under a tree talking to Kevin and Candise. Tiffany and Jessica were lying on the grass, soaking up the sun.

The butterflies in my stomach fluttered as my eyes fell on him; his perfect lean body was standing up with such straight posture. His dark brown hair was a perfect mess on top of his head and his dark brown eyes looked almost black from so far away. He also wore that sexy half smirk on his face. The kind that made a person look stuck up and yet it could melt any girl's heart; this girl's

heart.

All morning I couldn't stop thinking about how extraordinarily flawless my night had been. Every little detail about the night was beyond perfect. It was like a little fairy tale coming true in my own life. The handsome prince and the poor lonely girl, finally breaking out of her shell, as their love for each other continuously grew stronger. I couldn't wait to picture my happily

ever after!

I looked back up at Damen as my smile grew wider. I had never felt so happy in my life, actually feeling like I belonged somewhere and that someone cared about me. I began to wave at Damen as I continued to walk toward him while wondering how he hadn't noticed me yet.

I narrowed my eyes as I watched Damen's pearl-white smile vanish from his

face as his eyes fell upon me. Right away he turned his gaze away, looking back at his friends and trying to pretend like he hadn't seen me. I was only a few feet away from them when I froze on the spot, staring at Damen in utter disbelief.

'After everything that happened last night, after me forgiving him for the second time, he was doing this again?' I tried to

comprehend the illogicality of the situation, 'He was honestly going to act as if nothing happened?' I felt a sharp pain in the bottom of my gut as my whole body began to heat up, I could honestly feel sweat begin to rise out of my pores. I stood there, staring at them while holding my breath. Well, not exactly holding my breath, it was more like I couldn't breathe altogether. "Hey Dude...Why is Trent's

little sister smiling and waving at you?" I heard Kevin ask Damen. I was still frozen motionless; watching and listening to them.

"Dude, she has some mad crush on me or something...It's kind of cute..."

Damen lied, trying to laugh it off.

"More like creepy!" Candise cut in and turned toward me, shooting darts at me with her eyes. "I mean look at her, staring at us

like that...Creepy!"

She said as she wrapped her arms around

Damen's neck and pulled him closer to her. "Too

bad for her though...you're mine!" She exclaimed

as she pressed her lips against Damen's.

That's when I finally turned my head away. I

couldn't bear to see any more of this lewd display!

It was weird how one second you could be the

happiest person in the world

and then in that exact second you could feel the complete opposite. I felt like a crashing ball had come flying down at me, smashing me into tiny bits and pieces. I always thought physical pain was bad; like it hurt, it really did...But physical pain was nothing compared to this. I couldn't breathe, my chest was burning and my stomach was clenching and causing me so much pain.

I began to repeat the same five words in my head,

'I'm Not going to cry...'

'I'm Not going to cry...'

'I'm Not Going.....'

But, I failed as I watched all my surroundings begin to grow blurry while my eyes filled up with water. I heard Candise, Tiffany and Jessica's laughter behind me as I began to run away.

Waterfalls of hot angry tears rolled down my cheeks, making it impossible

to see anything. I felt
like
I was going to pass out from
the lack of
oxygen. I couldn't breathe, but
I continued to run
anyway. I was just about to
reach the steps that
headed up to the school as I
clenched my jaw
shut, trying to force my cries
down. I knew I
couldn't stop the tears from
flowing but I wasn't
going to let the loud sobs
escape my lips; not yet

at least. Not until I was hidden
somewhere away
from everyone else.

I felt my left foot hit the back
of my right heel as

I tumble to the ground; my
knee's sliding across

the hard concrete walkway. I
could feel the

concrete ripping through my
jeans before peeling

the skin off of my knees. At
that moment, I

shouted a loud cry of pain
from the fall, the

embarrassment, the betrayal

and, ultimately, the
heartache.

I felt someone's arms wrap
around my waist
before pulling me up to my
feet.

"Are you okay, Stasee?" A
deep, sexy voice came
from the person behind me. A
voice I had never
heard before and yet it made
me forget all of my
problems for that millisecond.
I turned around to
face him and, even though he
was just a blurred

image, I knew I didn't recognize him. My would-be saviour had short brown curly hair with sensitive dark brown eyes. He had a square set jaw and his face was completely clean cut. He wasn't anywhere near as muscular as Damen; I could tell he wasn't really into sports and just one of those naturally skinny guys with a little muscle tone. Tears were still flowing out of my eyes, which

only made me that much more embarrassed. I could feel blood oozing out of my knees as I turned quickly away from the boy. I finished running up the stairs and into the school. I sprinted through the hallways, pushing anyone out of my way as I did so. I heard a few rude comments about how weird I was and how me and Trent were so different, which only caused

me to cry harder.

Finally, I made it to the girl's bathroom! I swung the door open and ran into a stall, slamming the door shut and locking it. There were a few girls in the bathroom doing their make-up in front of the mirrors.

"Oh...my...God..." I could hear a girl whisper to her friends, "Did you see her pants, all full of blood? Poor girl, maturing a little late, ain't she?"

"Eww!" One of her friends yelled as they all erupted into laughter.

'Oh Great!' I thought to myself, 'Things couldn't get any worse.'

I stared at the stall door as the overwhelming feeling of depression began to set in. Not only did I have

to deal with rumours going around school

about me being 'Damen's crazy stalker.' But, now everyone would be going

around; saying that I got my period and that it leaked through!

'Honestly the blood is on my knees and legs, how would that be possible!' I just wanted to yell out, but I didn't.

Just last week I was a 'nobody' and no one ever noticed me. No one talked behind my back and everything was fine! Now, I was pretty much in love with Damen and yet I meant nothing to him.

Soon, there would be horrible rumours going around the entire school about me and I couldn't prevent it.

'I just wish everything would go back to normal!' I

thought to myself as I put the toilet seat down and sat on top of it.

I pulled my knees up to my chest and wrapped my arms around them. I rested my head on top of my

bloody knees as my tears continued to flow down my face. Finally, I allowed my bitter sobs to escape my throat as I tried gulping down air between each cry. My tears leaked down my cheeks and I could taste the saltiness of them as they slipped into my mouth.

Chapter 8

The bell rang once again, indicating lunch was now over as I wiped the wetness off my face using my long sleeved t-shirt. I reached down to the toilet paper dispenser pulling a piece of paper off before pressing it against my nose and blowing. I got up from the toilet seat in attempt to pull myself together and yet I felt so betrayed, so used. The exhaustion I felt from my lack of sleep mixed in

with the heart shattering events that had just occurred now left my body in shock.

I felt weak as I stood there reaching for the lock with a shaky hand. It took a couple tries before I could manage to get out of the stall and into the empty bathroom. Everyone was now in class - everyone except me and I intended to keep it that way. There was no way I was going to go back to

class, at least not for the rest of the day. A decision I was quite content with and yet it was something that I would have never considered doing just a mere week ago. I managed to make my way through the school completely unseen, the hallways were deserted and eerily quiet, the only sound coming from the classes beyond the doors. Within a couple seconds I was outside the front doors,

down the stairs,
across the parking lot and
walking down the
sidewalk. I turned a corner as
the school
disappeared out of sight,
leaving all my problems
behind with it.

I pulled my cell phone out of
my pocket before
scrolling through all three of
my contacts and then
clicking on my brother's name
and pressing 'send
a
message'.

'Don't need a ride after school,
I'm walking.'

After I was done writing the
message, I pressed
'send' and continued walking
down the street in
silence. Well, of course in
silence, who else was I
supposed to talk to? Myself?
Yeah then they'd
really have something to talk
about! I have no
friends, I've never had
friends...and the first time
anyone remotely my age even
paid any attention

to me it turned out to be some huge lie.

Okay, stop thinking about Damen!

I could tell myself that a million times but no matter how many times I think it, say it, or wish for it, it's not going to happen. He was on my mind, is on my mind and always will be on my mind.

"Skipping school? That's kind of unlike you." The deep voice rang through my

ears as the image of the guy who helped me up earlier flashed in my mind.

I turned around to see a black SUV idling a couple feet away from me, a curly haired boy had his head stuck out the window looking at me. A cute smile was plastered to his face as he eyed me up and down.

"Jump in." He said, waving his hand towards passenger's seat. "I'll give you

a ride."

"I don't know where I'm going..." I replied, because it was true, I didn't know where I was heading also I didn't know him and I couldn't just jump into anyone's vehicle. I paid attention to those after school specials 'Stranger Danger!' "Neither do I." "Yah but it's not just that." I folded my arms as I watched the SUV move slowly towards me,

stopping once I was standing right beside his driver's side door. "I don't know you and I'm not just going to jump in your car just because you helped me up from my fall this afternoon."

"OH, you mean you actually noticed me helping you up." He spoke sarcastically with his dangerously sexy voice.

"What's that supposed to mean!" I was offended by his tone of voice, even if

every time he spoke I
got goose bumps.

"I mean, I've gone to school
with you since grade
one, Stasee Rainie. Today was
the first time you
have ever acknowledged my
existence!" This time
he sounded offended, maybe
even a little upset?

I stared at him in disbelief as
he began to speak
again. "...and you still don't
even recognize me."

He shook his head and then
continued. "Just jump

in Stasee...I promise I don't bite. Plus I'm pretty sure you need a good distraction right about now." I was hesitant at first, yet his voice was so inviting and he was right, I did need a distraction - something to get my mind off Damen and everything else that happened at school today. I shrugged my shoulders before walking around the SUV and jumping into the passenger's seat.

I looked over at the boy as a smile of accomplishment appeared on his face.

"I'm trusting you." I said while tossing my schoolbag in the backseat. "So don't try murdering me because I promise I'll come back to haunt you." I teased.

"You...haunt me?" He chuckled, "Stasee, you wouldn't even hurt a fly."

"And how would you know?" I folded my arms

across my chest and scrunched my face up trying to look insulted though I probably looked more constipated.

The boy shifted the SUV into drive as we sped off down the road. The further we got away from the school, the better I began to feel but still I didn't ever want to go back.

"I already told you, I've known you since grade one." His voice broke through my thoughts.

"Yah, But I've never even talked to you, nor do I even remember ever seeing you around."

"No, you haven't ever talked to me but that doesn't mean I've never tried to talk to you..."

I was staring at him completely dazed as he just looked out the window, not even glancing at me as he spoke. Seriously, there is no way I've gone to school with this boy for so

long and never noticed him. He was breathtaking with his cute smile, charming personality, captivating looks and arousing voice.

"When...When have you tried to talk to me?" was all I could choke out.

"When?!" He laughed, "All the time, for years I've tried to talk to you, but it was like you never noticed me, like you tried to block everyone and everything out. The only

people in the whole school who have ever been able to get your attention were the teachers and your brother. If anyone else tried to talk to you...it was like you never noticed..."

I shook my head, not allowing myself to believe him. "No..." I said, "People never noticed me. No one has ever even talked to me, they all just ignore me..."

"Are you sure?" He asked,

testing me. "Or was it you who was always ignoring other people...so focused on your books and school work that you just blocked everything else out."

I sat there just staring at him, wondering if maybe he's not lying, if maybe that was true.

"Here...I'll help refresh your memory." He said, while pulling into a parking lot to Wal-Mart and parking. He turned toward me

obviously thinking
the conversation had become
too intense for
driving. "Grade one - it was
lunch time, and you
pulled a peanut butter and
jelly sandwich out. You
stared at it in disgust before
saying, "EWWW. I
hate P.B and J!" You got up
from your desk all
angry and I turned to you with
my sandwich in my
hand and said, "Here
Stasee...You can have my
Baloney and mustard." But

you walked right by me, like you hadn't even noticed, went and threw your sandwich in the garbage."

I had no clue what he was talking about...at first, but then the memory came back to me. I remembered that was the day my parents had decided to try giving me a different kind of sandwich, but I hated P.B and J, at the time, I love it now. But anyways I

remember stomping off to the garbage to throw it away, I heard some a voice in the distance but I figured they were talking to someone else.

"There were so many times I tried to talk to you Stasee, there's a few times that really stick out."

The boy continued. "Like in grade five - you cut your finger on a piece of glass while we were outside during recess. For some reason I always

had a bunch of Band-Aids in my pockets, curtesy of my parents. I tried to offer you one but you ran to the teacher, completely ignoring me."

Again the memory came to me and yet I figured the distant voice was being directed to someone else.

"Then in grade eight - I noticed you were reading a batman comic, one of my favourites from the Hush volume. I was so

surprised you read comics
and that you were actually
into that kind of stuff.

You were sitting on the floor
beside your locker, I
was standing right next to you,
trying to talk but
you never even glanced up at
me. I felt like I was
talking to a wall."

"Oh..." Was all I could say, I
mean all these years,
this boy had tried over and
over to talk to me and
I had never noticed. All these
years I thought

people just ignored me
because I was different
because I didn't fit into their
groups and yet the
whole time it was me who was
ignoring them?

"So...If I have been ignoring
you all these years,
then why did you keep trying
to talk to me?" I
asked him.

"I don't know, I guess I just
figured sooner or
later
you'd finally notice...and you
did."

I
looked up at him with an
arched eyebrow. I
never noticed, he just told me.
"Sort
of..." He continued, "I mean
today you
actually acknowledged me
when I helped you
up...I think it's because of
Damen, I mean ever
since you and him, you've
seemed to of finally
came out of your shell."
"Me
and Damen?" I laughed,

"Don't you remember...I'm his crazy stalker." I said with annoyance.

"No you aren't, I thought you two were hooking up...weren't you out all night with him last night?"

My eyes bulged out, "How did you know?!" I pretty much

yelled at him. "Are you stalking me?" I felt the need to jump out of the SUV and run

away...fast. His next words left me frozen.

"No...But Damen is my older brother."

Chapter 9

"What?!" I yelled, staring at the boy in disbelief.

"That inconsiderate, deceitful, arrogant, liar is your brother!?"

"Well, if you have to put it that way." He replied

calmly.

I couldn't believe it, this boy seemed so different and yet, so the same. I mean whenever Damen was with just me, he was really nice. Damen was only an ass when we were at school and around other people. I just ditched school to get away from Damen and all his bullshit and now I'm stuck in a car with his younger brother? Great!

"Yah, so you can call me either

Damen's little brother...or if you want Brandon, since that's my name."

"Oh, yah...I totally forgot to ask what your name is." I said feeling a little bit embarrassed.

He laughed lightly at that while turning the engine back on. It looked like he was about to say something, then a knock on his side window turned our attention outside. A blond girl was

standing there with her arms crossed staring at Brandon curiously, before eyeing me. Her hair reached down to her shoulders in perfect bouncy curls. Her eyes were light blue and her skin was a soft ivory color. She was wearing a cute pink blouse, which only added to her adorable features.

Brandon rolled down the window, "Hey Karis!" He said, though she just stood there, not saying

anything. "What's your problem?"

"Ummm...let me see," she spoke with attitude but her voice was so small and cute she wouldn't be able to scare a baby. "You were supposed to meet me outside the school half an hour ago. I started walking and then I saw you parked here...with Stasee? Since when did you start hanging out with her?"

"Since...half an hour ago." He

replied with a chuckle.

"Oh. Well are you going to let me in?" She asked.

Brandon nodded as he depressed the automatic door locks. Karis smiled at us as she opened the door and jumped into the backseat.

"I'm Karis," she said, waving at me with a giddy look on her face.

"Oh...nice to meet you, I'm-" I began before she cut me off.

"Stasee, I know I've gone to school with you for years."

"Oh...I'm sorry."

"Don't worry about it, I'm not at all offended. You don't really pay attention to anyone at school."

She spoke nonchalantly before adding, "Well, that was until this week anyways."

"Yah...apparently." I replied.

"Honestly, I never even noticed. I always thought everyone was ignoring me, I just found out

today it was the other way around..." "What!?" She yelled in surprise while Brandon pulled the SUV out of the Wal-Mart parking lot and back onto the road. Karis leaned on the edge of her seat while poking her head between me and Brandon. "You thought people were ignoring you? Oh my God! Come on Stasee, you are like the most beautiful girl in the whole

school, I mean if
you actually wore clothes
more your age and got
all that hair out of your face,
you'd be like model
material. I don't understand
why you try to hide
yourself all the time, I mean if
I had your beauty,
I'd be flaunting it!"
My face began to flush red at
her words - it was
hard to believe she was
speaking the truth. Every
time I looked in the mirror I
felt nothing but

disgusted, I never really thought I was pretty much less beautiful and her saying I looked better than all the other girls at the school had to be a lie. I was nothing compare to Candise with her perfectly curved body and bronze coloured skin. "I mean if you actually did something with yourself every morning," Karis shook her head as she spoke, "every guy would be kneeling down to

you, worshipping the ground
you walk on!"

"Karis, she doesn't need to
change anything, she's
perfect the way she is!"

Brandon interrupted her,
"Now sit back and put your
seat belt on!" He
demanded.

"Urgg!" She whined, "Fineeee."
Her head disappeared back
into the back of the
vehicle as I turned my head
and looked out the
window. I was exhausted, I
still hadn't gotten any

sleep aside from my little nap in History class and my knees were still scratched up and full of dried up blood. The fact that Damen had embarrassed me completely in front of half the school was still stuck in the back of my mind, and not only that but for the first time in my life I was actually skipping class.

"Stasee?" Brandon spoke softly, his seductive voice vibrating in my ears as I

turned my eyes
towards him. "Are you okay?"
"Yah, I've just had a pretty
eventful day, that's
all."

He nodded in response as his
free hand reached
over to me and gently rubbed
my shoulder. The
feeling of his touch brought a
warm sensation to
my heart. It was nothing like
the way I felt when
Damen touched me. When
Damen touched me I
wanted to pounce on him and

rip off all my clothes
in
the process! Brandon made me
almost want to
cuddle in his arms, hear that
sweet gentle voice
whispering in my ear.
"Yah! I'm still back here."
Karis' little voice broke
through my thoughts as
Brandon removed his
hand from my shoulder. Just
then the realization
dawned on me as I looked at
Brandon and then
Karis.

"Are you two...." dating, I wanted to say, but instead my voice trailed off. Karis began laughing while Brandon just looked amused before he began to talk. "No, Karis wishes we were!"

"HA-Yah right B, I wouldn't date you if my life depended on it!"

Brandon smiled while adding, "Me and Karis have been friends for years, she's more like my sister than anything."

"Oh..." I responded, "Here's another question...Why aren't you guys at school?"

Both Brandon and Karis looked at each other before turning their attention back to me. Karis was the first one to speak.

"We're both ahead in all our classes and whenever we get to far ahead we take a day off school and go have some fun."

"What were you guys planning on doing?" I asked.

"We were going to take Brandon's boat out go for a little spin." Karis answered me.

I tilted my head to the side before adding, "But you aren't anymore?"

"Oh..." Karis mumbled before looking at Brandon and then back at me. "I just thought-"

Brandon cut her sentence short as he looked at me in surprise, "Did you want to go for a boat ride?" He inquired.

"Of course I do!" I answered with excitement.

"Well that settles it." Karis' voice was perky as she clapped her hands together. "To the Boat-Mobile!"

Brandon and I both began to laugh in unison, before repeating Karis' words together with more enthusiasm "To the Bat-Mobile!"

We pulled up to the harbour, finding a free parking spot

that was only a few feet away from the docks. I was going to state how lucky we were to find such a good parking spot empty when I noticed a little sign in front of us that read 'Private - Hertz'. Seeing the name right away reminded me of Damen as it took me a second to realize that Hertz was Brandon's last name as well.

"You own your own parking

spot?" I asked with a huge smile plastered to my face.

"Well, it's my parents - just like the boats my parents'." He replied.

"And they don't care that we're taking it out?"

Karis laughed as we all got out of the vehicle. She came to my side and whispered, "Like they'd noticed. They probably wouldn't even notice if their own house was on fire."

I lowered my eyes as Karis

and I walked around the SUV and met up with Brandon on the sidewalk while making our way towards the docks. "Really? Why?" I asked.

This time Brandon answered me, "My parents are out of town a lot, so busy with work it's pretty much like Damen and I live on our own."

"Yah, My parents are the same..." my voice was full of understanding.

We finally stopped in front of

white Adria 1002
motor boat. I looked it up and
down while nodding
my head in acceptance. "Not
bad, not bad." I said
while admiring the boat. "2x
125hp Yammar
Diesel?" I asked while
following Karis and Brandon
onto the boat.
"Sure is." Brandon answered,
"You seem to know
a thing or two about boats."
He stated.
"I read a lot."
Karis giggled before she

decided to test my knowledge, "What year?" she questioned me.

"2005" I replied without hesitation.

"Hey Brandon, maybe you and I aren't the smartest kids at school.

Apparently we have some hidden competition." Karis yelled toward Brandon who was now untying the boat.

A little smile appeared on Brandon's face though he didn't reply to Karis. I

watched him as he headed up the stairs and towards the steering wheel. "And we're out of here!" He yelled towards us as he started up the motor. We pulled out of the docks as we made our way out onto the water.

We slowly began to gain speed as the warm breeze brushed through my hair. I hadn't been on a boat for years and I had almost forgotten how

nice it felt as the wind blew
against my warm skin.

It was such an incredibly hot
day today which

only

made the boat ride that much
better. I stared out

the boat watching the water
smashing against the

sides

before rolling over and

turning into light

waves. The sun beamed down

on us as the boat

conjured winds that kept our

bodies cool.

Karis looked as if she were trying to talk to me but the boat's motor overpowered her voice as I sat there watching her mouth form into different shapes. Though I couldn't hear her, I felt bad for not responding so I merely just nodded my head at her as I turned around again to look out the side of the boat. I watched the ripples on the water as we slowly began to stop. We were now

out of the harbour and as I looked over to see the town of McLennan it barely looked like anything other than a line of green. I watched as Karis stood up and stretched her arms out, "Need any help with the anchor?" She called out to Brandon. "No," He called back, "It's already in!" Brandon appeared in front of us, he was now wearing a pair of green swimming shorts that reached just

past his knees. His chest was bare, showing off his slight muscles. He wasn't anywhere near as muscular as Damen but his skinny body and small abs were just as inviting.

"Today was the perfect day to take the boat out,"

Karis smiled as she waved her arms in the air in attempt to soak up the sun.

Suddenly Karis began to strip her clothes off as I quickly turned my head away; trying to prevent

myself from seeing anything I wasn't intended to. I heard Karis' giggle from behind me, "Calm down Stasee." She spoke with amusement, "I'm wearing a bathing suit."

I turned around just in time to see Karis standing on the edge of the boat, "Last one in is a rotten egg!" She joked as she leaped into the air before doing a perfect dive into the water, barley even making a splash.

I made my way over to where Karis had jumped off the boat and sat down, allowing my legs to dangle off the edge. Karis resurfaced as her gaze met mine. "Aren't you coming in?" She asked.

"No...I think I'll pass for now." I replied.

"Me too." Brandon said as he came and sat down beside me.

"Fine, but you don't know what you're missing out on!" Karis called out before

she dunked back under the water.

"Honestly Stasee...how can you be wearing that?"

Brandon asked as he pointed toward my black jeans and dark blue long sleeve T-shirt with the Care Bears on it. I had a tank top under the shirt which only made the whole outfit that much warmer.

I shrugged my shoulders, "I don't know...I guess I'm used to the heat."

"Karis was right though, you know about how you seem to try to hide yourself all the time." He spoke quietly while staring into my eyes, "I mean why don't you take off some of those layers and let the sun touch your skin for once?"

"Brandon Hurtz!" I pretended to sound offended, "You just want me to strip for you, don't you?" I teased.

"Well, I wouldn't so much

mind that either." He joked back as I playfully punched him in the shoulder.

"You're going down for that, Stasee Rainie!" He laughed as I jumped up to my feet and tried to run away.

I barely got three feet away when I felt Brandon's arms wrap around my waist before pulling me up off my feet. I watched as he continuously walked closer to

the edge of the boat
as my struggling to get free
increased in intensity
and fervour. I felt his grip on
me slipping as the
feeling of victory rose through
my body, I was
almost free. Just as I thought
that, I felt both
mine and Brandon's body
leaving the boat.

I gripped Brandon tightly as
gravity had taken
over and we dropped into the
water, making a
huge splash. The ice cold

ocean against my
burning hot body was
shocking at first; even so, it
was unbelievably refreshing. I
opened my eyes
under the water, realizing
Brandon and I still had
our arms wrapped around
each other. I could feel
my cheeks flush pink and was
glad that no one
could see my face properly. I
pushed Brandon
away from me as I swam to the
surface in dire
need of oxygen. As my head

surfaced into the warm air, I heard Karis' bursts of laughter only a few feet away.

"So apparently you guys are coming in!" She teased as Brandon came up for air as well.

The second Brandon's head poked up from the water I pounced on top of him playfully, trying to push him back under the water. Brandon splashed the water fiercely, making it harder for me to get

to him. I could see Karis watching us with amusement before I splashed water in her face as well. Karis swam over to us and joined in, all three of us, against each other in a raging water fight. We continued to attack, push, and splash each other, and every so often jump on top of someone for a good half an hour or so. Somewhere within the playful fighting I managed to lose my Care

Bears shirt, leaving me in only my white tank-top and black jeans. All three of us finally lost all energy to move as we pulled ourselves back up onto the boat.

"Nice Bra Stasee." Brandon teased as he looked over at my see-through white tank-top.

"Shut up Brandon, maybe if you didn't toss me into the water with all my clothes on." I tried to sound mad, but you could

hear the light-heartedness in my voice. Weirdly enough I wasn't embarrassed to be seen in my tank-top like that. Honestly, I didn't even care, I don't know if it was because I was getting use to Karis and Brandon or if it were merely because I was too tired to care. All three of us lay on the boat floor, trying to regain our energy. A little while later, we finally got up as Brandon went and

pulled up the anchor,
Karis and I headed into the
boat in search of a
bathroom. Karis had a skirt
she was going to let
me wear seeing as my jeans
had grown two times
bigger and were now falling
off me. I stared in the
mirror after I finished
changing.

When Karis said she had a
skirt, I hadn't thought
she meant a little piece of
fabric. The white skirt
just managed to cover my butt,

making me look like a young whore. I was wearing my white tank-top that was now see-through revealing my black bra.

"Are you still in there?" Karis called out from behind the door.

"Karis!" I screeched back, "I look like a freakin' SLUT!" I opened the bathroom door as Karis' eyes scanned my body. Her mouth dropped open as she stared at me in disbelief.

"Okay, you can just have that skirt because now that I've seen how good it looks on you, it's never going to be the same on me." She said with disappointment, "And Stasee, You don't look like a slut, if your outfit were black, then maybe. The white gives you an angelic look."

Chapter 10

Karis left me standing in the bathroom alone as she disappeared out onto the deck of the boat. I

stood in the same place checking myself out in the mirror. I

looked like a completely different person.

My wet hair was pulled back into a messy ponytail revealing my face for once.

While usually all the clothes I wore hid every curve of my body, these

clothes enhanced them. As I stared into the mirror I felt completely exposed and naked, although at the same time a new born confidence grew inside me. I felt kind of fake and made up. Like this apparition wasn't me; I looked as if I were trying to be someone else. I finally made up my mind and decided to wear the little skirt and see-through tank-top. It's not like I really

had any other options. I made my way up onto the deck of the boat, making my way over to Karis and Brandon. I could feel the boat slowly begin to stop as Brandon found his usual berth at the docks.

Neither Karis nor Brandon noticed me as I stood against the wall, almost hidden by the shadows. Both of them seemed to be staring wide-eyed at something on the dock. From

my position I
couldn't see what they were
staring at. It wasn't
until the icy voice rang
through my ears freezing
both my body and heart
motionless. I could feel
my knees weaken beneath me
as I fought to
remain upright.

"Hey lil' bro, you didn't tell
me you were taking
the boat out. I've been waiting
around here
forever dude!" Damen's voice
echoed through my

ears.

As much as Brandon's deep, sexy voice brought a shiver down my spine it was nothing compared to the way Damen's voice made me feel. Sure

Brandon was nice, even sweet and he was my safest bet knowing that he would never hurt me.

Damen on the other hand made me feel a way no other guy ever can ever could or ever will.

Damen's husky voice vibrated

my ears, calling me
towards him like a siren song
as if I were under
the spell of a love potion.

"Oh...uh...umm...so-sorry
Damen...I...didn't...it
didn't even...cr-cross my
mind." Brandon stuttered
as he stared down at his
brother in shock.

I could feel my legs began to
move though it felt
as if I were floating as I made
my way out of the
shadows and toward the edge
of the boat. My

eyes slowly found their way to
Damen as my
heart clenched inside my chest
almost causing me
to throw up. The pain that was
brought on by
seeing him standing there
forced my eyes to well
up with unshed tears as I
stared down at his oh-
so perfect body.

His square set jaw was
scrunched up into a playful
smirk as his perfectly messy
hair blew lightly
around his head from the

ocean's breeze. His outrageously perfect muscles were outlined through his size too small t-shirt. It was incredibly sexy seeing as the shirt was white and made his flawless, bronze skin stand out like a rose in the middle of a field full of weeds.

Everything about Damen was perfect, like he were a gift from the God's sent to earth to punish girl's

the worse way possible -
heartache. If that was
the case, then so far he is
doing an absolutely
wonderful job. Just standing
there - seeing him
made me want to fall to my
knees, face in my
hands and cry until every last
tear was drained
from my body. I couldn't
imagine how any guy
could possibly make me feel
this way, how he can
force me to sink so low as to
wallow in my own

pathetic misery?

I could feel the lump rising into my throat as I swallowed hard. I wasn't going to cry, not this time, I was not going to give him that satisfaction!

No, I was going to hold my head up high and act as if I didn't care, it was the only way. I knew I was strong and it was now time to prove it.

"Oh...don't worry Damen, we were just leaving!" I yelled out toward him as I

walked over to Brandon and wrapped my arm around his neck.

I watched as Damen's smirk quickly disappeared at the sound of my voice, his face shifted into the look of shock at what I'm guessing was the realization that I was on the boat. My smile widened as I noticed Damen's eyes scan my body from head to toe, stopping briefly at both my mini skirt and then see through

shirt.

"...Stasee...?" He whispered in disbelief. He looked back and forth between Brandon and me as his confusion was quickly replaced by anger.

"Brandon?!" He yelled angrily.

"What..." Brandon asked, pretending he didn't know what Damen was talking about even though we all knew he knew exactly what this was all about.

"So is that how it's going to be

little bro?"

Damen's face was flushed beet red, his entire body exuding rage and unbridled anger!

"Oh get over yourself Damen!"

I shot back as I

jumped off the boat and onto the dock. My mini

skirt inched up a little giving Damen a quick flash

of my underwear. I felt a little embarrassed and

could feel my cheeks begin to redden. I managed

to hide my embarrassment by

waving my hand in front of my face pretending it were the heat that flushed my cheeks pink. "It's not like we were ever together!"

"I never said this was about you!" He retorted back.

I laughed a fake seductive laugh, "You don't have to say it, Babe...It's written all over your face." I whispered into his ear as my fingers ran through his perfectly smooth hair. His

chocolate brown
hair felt like fluff from the
heavens.

STOP IT!

STASEE REMEMBER! HE'S
AN ASSHOLE! My mind
yelled.

I forced myself to come back
to reality while
forcing Damen out of my
mind. I brought my face
up closer to his as if I were
about to kiss him and
the second he closed his eyes
getting ready to
kiss me back, I shoved him

hard in the chest. I
gazed at Damen as he tumbled
over and fell off
the dock before splashing into
the water.

I could hear Karis' laughter
from behind me as I
watched Damen's head
emerge out of the water.

His perfectly brown hair
dripped water down his
face making him only that
much more irresistible.

An unknown emotion crossed
over his face as he
stared up at me while

swimming over to the dock.
Karis grabbed hold of my arm
while pulling me
away. I could still hear her
laughter as I glanced
over my shoulder trying to get
another look at
Damen. He was just starting to
pull himself back
up onto the dock as he
watched us disappear out
of sight. The look on Damen's
face was stuck in
my head haunting me. Most
people say payback
feels good and that its fun, if

that's true then why
did I feel so shitty?
I was so lost in my own
thoughts that I had barely
noticed Brandon trailing a few
feet behind Karis
and I. It wasn't until Karis'
voice broke through my
daze that I realized that
Brandon seemed almost
upset.

"What is up with you two!?"
Karis finally stopped
dead in her tracks and turned
to look at both me
and then Brandon. "K

honestly, that was probably one of the funniest things I've seen all year and you guys aren't even laughing. Instead you two are sulking!"

At the exact moment me and Brandon looked straight at each other as I finally realized that I wasn't the only one who felt guilty, which only made me feel that much worse. I lowered my head in shame as I started down at the ground. I

didn't want to tell Karis that I felt like a bitch for pushing Damen in the water or that the look on Damen's face pretty much destroyed me. That would only prove how much power Damen had over me.

Brandon was the first to speak, "I don't know, Karis... It's just I've never seen my brother look so vulnerable and hurt." Brandon spoke quietly as he

walked over to me and put his arm on my shoulder. "Not that I blame you Stasee, I mean what my brother did to you is way worse, I'm just not used to seeing my brother like that. I'm still just a little surprised." He tried to comfort me and yet it wasn't working, I still felt as bad as ever.

All three of us climbed into the SUV silently, this time I sat in the back seeing as I was no longer in

the mood to talk. I may have been overreacting a little bit, I mean all I had done was push Damen into the water. It wasn't like I embarrassed him in front of half the school or anything that extreme. But still, the fact remained the same, the look of betrayal and vulnerability that masked Damen's face was heart wrenching. I stared out the window of the SUV, watching as we passed by houses, cars and

people though I
barley saw anything. The only
imagine I could see
was Damen with his face
covered in the ocean's
water, his hair dripping
wetness down his cheeks
and his deep brown eyes
staring up at me,
pleading for forgiveness.
"Alright Stasee, we're here."
Brandon's voice
interrupted me as I looked
around, realizing we
were now parked outside my
house.

"Oh." I said as I grabbed my back pack and tossed it over my shoulders.

"Well...uh, thanks for taking me out on the boat, I really did have fun." I said while forcing a smile. I opened the door and I began to descend from the vehicle.

"Oh!" Karis said pretty much jumping into the back of the SUV and wrapping her arms around me while her blonde curls bounced up and down. "I

had
so much fun with you today! It
was so nice
actually having a girl around
for once, I'm usually
just stuck with Brandon but
today was fun! And
don't worry so much about the
whole Damen
thing I know you and Brandon
are like all upset
about it and for absolutely no
reason I might add!
But seriously, Damen
deserved it, no doubt and
he'll be over it by tomorrow,

so don't fret." Karis was talking so fast I could barely even manage to understand a word she was saying. "But honestly, we should hang out again! One Tree Hill is on tonight, I really love that show you should seriously come over and watch it, P.S you don't have a choice in the matter I'll pick you up at 7:30. Okay?" Karis pulled me back into a hug before I could even answer her

but her crazy excitement made me laugh. Honestly, how could anyone manage to talk so fast? "Karis, remember - stop and take a breath!"

Brandon laughed as he pulled on her shirt and hauled her to the front of the vehicle. "I'll see you at school tomorrow Stasee, I really did enjoy hanging out with you." His rough sexy voice was sincere as he looked over to me as a little smirk

played its way onto his face before he pulled out of the driveway.

Karis stuck her head out the window as they began to drive down the street, "I'LL PICK YOU UP AT 7:30!!" She yelled out. I smiled to myself as I began to make my way to the front door of my house. Even though there were multiple emotions running through my body, the fact that those two could still make me laugh

continued to amaze me.

"Stasee.."

I jumped out of fear, as my heart stop for a second.

"Trent!" I yelled and hit him in the stomach with my backpack, "You scared the crap out of me!"

Trent folded his arms as he stared up at me and spoke sternly, "We need to talk."

Chapter 11

We need to talk? I asked myself as I stared down at my older brother sitting on our front door steps.

What in the world would Trent need to talk to me about? And why did he look so disappointed? The look that masked Trent's face was the spitting image of my father's facial expression whenever I did something bad or wrong.

"Okkkayyy?" I said in a questioning tone as I sat down on the step beside my brother. "What's this all about?"

He answered me with only one word, "Damen."

I had to mentally kick myself as I stared down at the sidewalk in shock. How did I not see this coming - Trent was my brother, Damen was one of his best friends, I should have known he would eventually find out. In a way I

did although I never expected him to find out so soon. Even so I attempted to pretend I didn't know what he was talking about.

"What about Damen?" I questioned, even though I regretted asking it the second it left my lips due to the anger that appeared on my brother's face.

"Don't play stupid with me Stasee Anne Rainie!"

Trent spoke low with anger in a HEROIC effort to

declare the seriousness of the situation.

"Okay Trent, just let me explain-" I decided to tell my brother the truth, there was no point in hiding it any longer.

"Let you explain? What is there to explain, I think I've got a pretty good idea already." He barked back.

"Yah, but I really do like Damen and it's not his fault-"

"Oh. I know it's not his fault

Stasee," He cut me off. His voice as sharp as ever, "Look, I know he's probably a good looking guy to you and sure he's popular."

This time it was my turn to cut him off. "It's not just that. He's also nice," I confessed before adding, "sometimes."

"Nice?" He demanded, "Damen Hurtz!?" A loud, sarcastic chuckle vibrated through his throat.

"Even if Damen was nice,

which for one I've never seen him be nice to anyone, how would you know?"

"Because, I've seen him be nice to me!"

How would I know? Wasn't this what Trent wanted to talk to me about?

Me and Damen hanging out, becoming sexually involved. Yet, he's standing there questioning me on how I would know whether or not Damen is nice. I stared at

my brother as confusion
passed through me.

I know because I've hung out
with him at least
three times now! I wanted to
yell, but didn't.

"He's been nice to you?" My
brother questioned
me, staring at me like I was
crazy. "Stasee, you
need to stop these delusions! I
don't know what
has gotten into you these past
couple days but
honestly it has got to stop."
Trent spoke sternly

while getting up off the stairs and staring down at me. "Damen is not a nice guy, he is not your boyfriend, he will never be your boyfriend, and mostly You-Have-Got-To-Stop-Stalking-him!" He yelled the last part out one word at a time so loudly I'm sure all our surrounding neighbours heard him.

"What!?" I literally screamed this as loud as my lungs would allow. "Me...st-st-

stalking him!?"

Was Trent serious? I thought angrily. Did he honestly just accuse me of stalking Damen?

My own brother, my own flesh-n-blood actually believes all the rumours that are being circulated throughout the school about me. The worst part of it all was that I wasn't stalking Damen, if anything it's the other way around!

Who came to MY bedroom,

and waited on MY bed
for me that Friday night? My
mind continued to
yell.

Who pulled ME into the
janitors closet?

Who came to MY house and
threw rocks at MY
bedroom window?

Who took ME from MY house
in the middle of the
night?

Who brought ME to their
"Special" place?!

When I ran away from the
school to get away,

WHO ended up showing UP?!
The answer to all these
questions is: DAMEN,
DAMEN, DAMEN, DAMEN!!
And yet, apparently it is too
impossible to imagine
Damen being the one who's
going after me, so
instead people are coming up
with this ridiculous
story about me stalking
Damen?! It was
completely and utterly
outrageous because not
only does pretty much all of
Kershaw High think

I'm stalking Damen but now
so does my older
brother.

Things couldn't get any worse!

"Don't sound so surprised

Stasee." Trent's voice

lowered to a more nonchalant

tone. "And don't try

denying it either, I've added

up all the clues which

lead to the same

conclusion...You having an

unhealthy crush on Damen."

"Clues?!" I jumped to my feet

as anger began

boiling up inside me. I've

never wanted to punch
my brother in the face as much
as I wanted to at
that exact moment. "What
clues?!"

"Stasee, Calm down. I'll tell
you..." Trent spoke
carelessly which only added to
my anger. I stood
there glaring at my brother, I
could feel my
cheeks burning red and my
face scrunched up
wildly. He continued to speak,
"It first started
Friday night, I kept catching

you staring at
Damen, which I guess is
normal but still. Then,
Saturday morning you asked
me where Damen
went and after that you
continued to bug me all
weekend with questions about
Damen. Monday
morning when we picked up
Kevin you never
spoke one word to him, like
always, but that was
until he mentioned Damen's
name. For the first
time ever you actually said

something to Kevin,
you asked him if Damen slept
with Tiffany and
Jessica." Trent paused to look
over at me and a
look of triumph covered his
face.

The anger that once roared
through my body had
now vanished and was
replaced by shock and a
dawning realization. Even
though I knew I wasn't
stalking Damen I was
beginning to see why my
brother would think I was.

Trent continued, "Then people at school kept catching you trying to talk to him, like that time at his locker during lunch break. Then at lunch break again outside by the tree. Now, you're hanging out with his little brother? Stasee, I love you and all but this stuff is not looking good. All your life you've never really talked to anyone but me, mom, dad and other adults. Then suddenly all

this crap happens with Damen
and now you're out
god knows where with
Brandon Hurtz and Karis
Kindle?"

"Okay, I know this all sounds
bad Trent." I said
finally agreed with my
brother. He was right all
these clues did make me seem
like Damen's little
stalker, if only people knew
what actually
happened behind the scenes.
"But I'm not stalking
Damen...I swear."

"You do like him right?" His question sounded more like an accusation.

"Yes, but he likes me too!"

Okay, that was a lie. I didn't know for sure whether or not Damen liked me. His bipolar attitude was completely contradictory causing me to believe something one minute and then the complete opposite the next.

"Stop being delusional.

Damen does not like you, Stasee!"

"Why!?" I screamed back,
"Why is it so hard to
believe? Why is it Damen can't
like someone like
me?!"

"Because he's mine-" The
second the words left
Trent's lips he shut his mouth
and stared down at
me, completely shocked by his
own words.

I too just stood there staring
up at my older
brother who towered over me.
His last three
words continued to echo

through my ears as I only managed to spit out one word, "What...?"

"Nothing!" Trent said quickly as his cheeks flushed completely red and I swear I could almost see sweat begin to form on his forehead.

"Trent...are you Ga..." I cleared my throat,

"Trent...Do you like Bo..." I cleared my throat again, no matter which way I attempted to ask the question I still couldn't

finish asking it. I looked up at my older brother, knowing he understood what I was trying to ask. I watched him as he inhaled deeply before exhaling out and then nodding his head once - up and then down. I felt my heart began to race fast, not because I really cared that my brother was gay it was more because of how shocked I was. Then something else crossed my mind as panic

soared through my body, "And Damen?"

Trent shook his head before opening his mouth to speak. "No...I don't think so...I'm pretty sure he's not." His voice was so small, like he thought maybe I was disappointed in him or that he had somehow let me down? "I guess I'm the one with the unhealthy crush on him." "You know Trent, there's really nothing wrong with that." I tried to reassure

him.

He looked down at me as if I were a kid who knew nothing. "Sure Stasee, there's nothing wrong with me being gay, I'm sure mom and dad would love it if their one and only son liked boys." He spoke sarcastically and then added. "Either way, please Stasee, promise me you won't say anything to anyone!?" He pleaded.

I

had never seen my brother

look so defenceless
so exposed and vulnerable, I
nodded my head. "I
promise..."

Chapter 12

Trent and I moved into the
living room finding
ourselves a spot on the couch.
I sat on one end
while Trent sat on the other.
The fireplace was
burning brightly illuminating

the dark room in which all the windows were covered with maroon coloured curtains blocking out the sun.

I looked over at my older brother, visually scanning his body. He didn't look gay, he didn't act gay and as much as I really didn't care it was still so hard to believe that my brother was actually attracted to men. My brother was a jock, he played football and was

actually good at it, all his friends were guys and he didn't care about how he looked.

Some days he'd get out of bed and grab clothes off the floor, throw them on and leave for school.

All my life I thought gay guys were all flamboyant, do

their hair in the morning, put make up on and

say things like Oh. My. God.

And No she didn't.

You know, only had girlfriends and giggled when a hot guy walked by, tried to change their voice into a high-pitched screech. But Trent's not like that, he is the complete opposite, he acts and looks and is like any other straight man. He knows everything there is to know about cars and trucks; I mean he actually rebuilt his own 72 Chevy all by himself!

I think that's why the fact that

my brother is gay
bugs me so much. Usually
when someone close to
you is gay, you know it, even
if they don't admit
it, you and everyone else still
know the truth.

Though, it's not like that with
Trent; if I were to
even try to tell anyone Trent's
gay no one would
believe me, I doubt anyone
would even believe
him if he said it!

"What are you thinking
about?" Trent voice broke

my thought, he sounded sad
and yet his voice was
almost
shaky. "A good way to get rid
of me, to
disown your gay brother?"
"Oh shut up Trent!" I said as I
threw a side pillow
from the couch at him. "Stop
feeling sorry for
yourself, you're gay! What's
the big deal? Half the
population of the world is gay
nowadays!"
"Does that means you're gay
to?" Trent said

jokingly, "That would make it so much easier to tell mom and dad. I can be like, 'Mom, Dad...I'm gay.' Then they'll say, 'What?!' And I'll be like 'So is Stasee!!' and point my finger as you all dramatically."

I started laughing at my brother's lame joke before adding, "No Trent I'm not gay, remember I'm Damen's 'Craaazzzy Stalkkkerrrr!'" I said sarcastically.

"Okay, Stasee..." Suddenly his voice went completely serious. "If you aren't stalking Damen, then what is going on, why do you keep asking about him and trying to talk to him at school?"

I completely stopped laughing as I stared at my brother in shock, I wasn't expecting him to ask me that and I hadn't decided on whether or not I wanted to tell him the truth.

Before I didn't want
to tell him because I figured
he'd hunt Damen
down and kick his ass, but
now that I know
Trent's gay I'm pretty sure he
wouldn't risk
breaking a nail just to punch
some guy out. I'm
scared to tell Trent because
from his reaction
earlier I'm pretty sure my
brother likes the same
guy that I do. I don't know
how he would react if
he found out what truly

happened between
Damen and I.

"Come on Stasee...Just tell me,
I'm going to end
up finding out either way and
I'd rather hear it
from you."

He had a good point. I
breathed deeply
summoning up enough nerve
to tell him the truth.

"It all started last Friday...
when Damen was
staying the night here..." I
started before I began
to spill everything to my

brother. I told him everything about that friday night, how Damen was in bedroom waiting for me, how he was gone in the morning. I told him about the janitor's closet, how he left me when Candise showed up. I told him how Damen showed up at my house in the middle of the night and took me to his 'secret spot' where we stayed up all night talking. How he embarrassed

me in front of half the school
this

afternoon and then how I met
Brandon and Karis.

After I finally finished telling
him everything relief
washed over me, it was the
first time I had talked
to anyone about Damen and it
was quite liberating
finally being able to get
everything off my chest. I
looked over at my brother to
try and tell what he
was thinking although his face
was completely

emotionless.

"Weird..." Was his only response.

"Weird? That's all you have to say...What's weird?" I asked extremely confused with how Trent was acting.

"Everything, nothing you told me sounds like the Damen I know...Other than Friday night...But even that, you know he has never spent a whole night with a girl before...Usually he'll take off

the

second the girl falls asleep."

"You're not mad?" I asked him, ignoring his

rambling. "I mean...Don't you...Well...Like him?"

Trent laughed, "That doesn't matter, he likes girls and I don't really have a chance." He said.

"Although, I don't like the way that

he...Wait...Never mind."

What? What was he just about to say? I thought

while staring at my brother.

Honestly I hate it
when people start saying
something and then
change their mind! That is so
fricken annoying!

"What were you going to say?"

I prodded him.

He shook his head, "It's not
important."

Frick that's annoying! I
wanted to scream out.

"So then tell me."

"No." He said sternly, "Just
leave it."

DING DONG DANG, DING
DONG DANG!

"Saved by the Bell!" Trent said while jumping up off the couch and running for the door.

"Treeeenntttt!" I yelled running after him.

I reached him just as he opened the front door to reveal a short little blond with bouncy curls. A

large smile covered her cute little face, two small dimples on each end of her smile. "Hey Trent!"

She waved at him enthusiastically, "Mind if I

steal

Stasee for a bit, we're having a girls night, watching One Tree Hill."

"No, please take her away!"

Trent looked over at me and smiled.

"You can join us if you'd like Trent, though I doubt you'd like One Tree Hill."

Karis said while laughing at her own joke.

I didn't laugh though I was too busy wondering if my brother really would like that show. I mean

before it would never even cross my mind, but now, maybe he did...

"A show about a bunch of whiney girls...No...I think I'll pass." He actually sounded a bit disgusted by the thought, "You girls have fun though." He went back into the house. As I watched him disappear I decided I'd find out later what he was about to say.

"Ready?" Karis asked pointing toward her Yellow

2009 Volkswagen beetle.

"For sure!" I replied while following her over to her car, "Cute car, honestly it suits you!"

"Thanks, my parents got it for me for my birthday."

"If you have your own car, why were you walking today? You know when Brandon forgot to pick you up after lunch." I asked her while getting into the passenger's seat.

"Urg...Thanks for reminding

me, I can't believe he just left me there! 'Effin dink."

Karis said as she put her keys in the ignition and started up the car.

"He usually picks me up in the morning for school.

The Hurtz's live next door to me so it's pointless for us to both bring our vehicles."

"Oh great..." I spoke sarcastically as I pulled my seatbelt on and we pulled out of the drive way.

"You live like right next to

them? Like-"

"-Like jump out of my bedroom window and land in their house right next to them? Yup." Karis said finishing my sentence and answering my question at the same time.

I sighed loudly while thinking about how maybe going to Karis' house was a bad idea. I didn't want to see Damen and I had a good feeling that it was going to be nearly impossible with him only being

two feet away.

"Is that okay, Stasee?" Karis asked me, finally realizing my sudden change in mood.

"Yah, that's fine." I lied.

The rest of the ride to Karis' house was pretty uneventful; we talked about school and upcoming projects for our classes. It was about a fifteen minute drive from my house to Karis' and as we turned onto her street I recognized right away

which of the houses were
Brandon and Damen's.
It was a large white house
with black linings and
roof. The house had a
complete circular driveway
with a large fountain in the
middle of it. There
was a large three door garage
that seemed to be
completely useless seeing as
both Damen's GMC
truck and Brandon's SUV were
both parked on the
driveway.
Just my luck, I thought to

myself, they're both home.

Karis pulled into the driveway of the house right next to the white one. Her house wasn't nearly as big though it was just as nice. The whole house was a pale brown color made of stucco with large windows covering the front of the house. There was a large balcony on the second floor that went from one side of the house to the other.

"We're here!" Karis turned to look at me a large smile plastered across her face.

"We have ten minutes before One Tree Hill starts."

"Oh, well then we better hurry!" I said trying to mimic Karis' excitement when in reality I wasn't very much of a One Tree Hill fan. The only reason I agreed to go was because according to Karis 'I didn't have a choice in the matter'.

I felt a little bad, it was the first time Karis and I were actually hanging out and maybe my only chance in having a real friend and already I was basing our friendship on lies. Well, technically I didn't lie to her, she never asked me if I watched or liked the show. I'm guessing she just assumed seeing as almost all the girls at our school loved it. Within seconds we were inside Karis' house, sitting

on
the couch in the living room
with bowls of
popcorn in our hands. "Almost
on!!" Karis clapped
her hands together excitedly
before turning her
attention to me.

She was pretty much
jumping on the couch
with excitement and yet I was
just sitting there
bored. I was just starting to
yawn when I realized
Karis was still staring at me
with narrowed eyes.

"What?" I asked,
dumbfounded to the fact that
Karis was obviously confused
with my lack of
excitement. "Oh! Yah...umm,
yay? One Tree
Hill...yay!"

Okay...So I'll definitely never
make it as an actor.

"Okay? That was the worse
attempt at
excitement ever!" Karis stated
while laughing at
my academy award
performance "You've never
watched the show have you?"

"Not really...and by that I mean no." I finally admitted, "Never."

"Really!?" and the excited Karis was back, "Oh my God! You're going to love it, seriously!" She was back to jumping up and down on the couch, every so often knocking popcorn out of the bowl and onto the floor.

So, the show wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. I mean there were a bit of whiney

girls like my brother said but all in all it was pretty interesting. It was nice to watch a show with almost as much drama as my own life - it made me feel a little bit better.

"You know, Hailey and Nathan's relationship, like in the beginning kind of reminds me of you and Damen's." Karis said as the previews for next week came to an end.

"There is no relationship between me and

Damen." I informed her.

"Yah, keep telling yourself that." Karis said while placing her empty bowl on the coffee table. "But you like him right?"

"Why does that matter?" I questioned her.

"Because we're friends now and friends tell each other stuff like that." She continued to hassle me for the truth.

"Okay...Sure, I kind of like him but he's still a dick!" I blurted out the truth

came out.

A sweet little 'awww so cute' smile covered Karis' face, "He's only like that because he's not used to actually having feelings for someone."

"Yah...Sure that's what it is." I spoke to her like she was crazy and in need of medication or at the very least sedation!

He's a senior at high school, he's had tonnes of girls and yet Karis was sitting there trying to tell

me he was being 'shy'? I'm sure that was the reason, I mean usually when you like someone and you're shy you decide to embarrass them in front of half the school, that's always the best way to go about it.

"Okay, enough about me and my love life, who do you like?" I decided to change the subject.

"No one!" Karis almost yelled as her cheeks flushed deep red.

"You're lying!" I accused her.
"So what, I'm not telling you!"
She folded her
arms and turned her head
away from me.

"You have to... We're friends
now and friends tell
each other stuff like that." I
smiled, knowing she
had to tell me now seeing as
that was her own
rule.

"Fine!" She turned to face me,
her face still as red
as an apple. "I like...." Grabbed
the pillow from

the couch and pressed it
against her face shyly.
She spoke into the pillow
muffling her words,
"Brhufen."

I took the pillow from her,
"What was that?!" I
smiled.

"Brandon!" She finally said
clearly as my eyes
widened and I stared at her in
shock.

Chapter 13

"Brandon?" I finally asked, "I thought, well, I thought you two were just friends?"

"We are...that's the thing." She said as her eyes fell to the ground. I could see the sadness within them as I began to understand her situation a little better. "We are just friends. We've always been friends. He barely notices me, it's like he only sees me as...like...I don't

know...one of the
guys?"

"Oh." Was all I could manage
to say. I mean what
was I suppose to say? It's not
like I was used to
that kind of thing. I've never
had to try and
console someone before. But
at the same time I
knew how she felt, to like a
guy who didn't care,
didn't feel the same way. I saw
the sorrow in her
eyes and I felt that same
emotion within me.

Karis attempted to brush it off, "It's okay," I gave her a skeptical look. "Really it is, it's been like this for years and I've grown used to it." Although she sounded confident her eyes betrayed her anguish.

"Have you ever told him?" I questioned her.

She shook her head before speaking in barely a whisper, "No..."

I continued to interrogate her, "Why not?"

"You wouldn't understand,"

she mumbled.

"Try me."

She sighed heavily, "Have you ever liked a guy so much that when you were apart your heart just aches, like you were an addict and he was your drug? But when you were together you knew you could never truly be together, sure you could talk, laugh and hang out but you could never actually be in his arms. Do you understand how much pain

it causes me to love a guy and
never know
whether or not he loves me
back?"

I almost wanted to nod my
head at her but I
managed to prevent myself
from doing so. It was
like Karis had been actually
speaking on my
behalf, like she had been
relaying everything I
truly felt deep down. The
strong feelings I felt
towards Damen that I always
hid, I always tried to

avoid
and ignore them hoping they
would go
away. No matter what Damen
did to me, how
much he embarrassed or hurt
me the good
memories always seemed to
overpower the bad.

"Then why don't you just tell
him how you feel?" I
asked, knowing that it was
easier said than done.

"Because!" She cried out, her
eyes began to swell
up with tears. "I'm scared! It

hurts so much
thinking that he might not feel
the same way that

I

do, just imagining that tears
me up inside. Can
you imagine how much more
it would hurt if I
knew for sure that he didn't
feel the same way? It
would destroy me!"

"But what if he does feel the
same way?" I said
as my voice became higher, I
was completely
shocked that she had liked

Brandon for so long
and still managed to keep it a
secret.

"That's not a risk I'm willing
to take." She simply
replied.

The sound of the front door
opening forced both
Karis and I to turn around to
see who the intruder
was.

Speak of the devil, I thought
to myself as
Brandon's tall and slightly
lean body appeared in
the doorway. He walked over

to us before flopping
down
on the opposite couch as me
and Karis. A
concerned look flashed across
his face as he
noticed Karis' slightly watery
eyes.

"What's wrong?" He instantly
sat up and looked at
her, his face full of concern.

"Nothing." Karis lied, "One
Tree Hill got to me
again."

If I hadn't truly known what
was bugging Karis I

would have fallen for her lie
as well. For such a
cute, innocent looking girl she
was an
accomplished liar! Or maybe it
was her cute,
innocent looks that made her
such a good liar,
either way the concern that
once covered
Brandon's face had vanished
and was replaced
with a smug little smirk.

"Awww! You mean I missed
One Tree Hill." His
voice was full of sarcasm.

"Damn."

"Oh shut up!" Karis rolled her eyes obviously she caught on to the sarcasm.

"What?" He pretended to act offended jokingly, "I thought you said it was on at nine o'clock, not eight!" His voice had a hint of humour in it clearly teasing Karis.

"Honestly Brandon?" Karis tried to sound disappointed in him but her voice had that same light-heartedness to it. "Every

week it's on at
eight and every week I tell you
that and yet every
week you somehow manage to
show up an exact
hour after right? Coincidence,
I think not!"

I sat in silence watching Karis
and Brandon
continuously harass and tease
each other. I also
noticed some flirtatious eye
rolls and cute smug
smirks directed towards each
other. I couldn't
believe how I never noticed it

before, the way
they talked to each other and
looked at each
other.

Maybe this afternoon I hadn't
really noticed it
because Brandon had been
paying so much
attention to me. I thought
maybe it was because
he liked me because maybe he
had been
interested in me. It wasn't
until now that I realized
he was only being nice to try
and cheer me up.

Maybe he just felt bad for what his brother had done earlier and felt obligated to make it up to me.

Either way, as I sat there watching Karis and Brandon one thing was for sure; the feelings Karis had towards Brandon were definitely mutual. I also had a feeling that it wasn't going to be very much longer before they both admitted their feelings to each other.

Whether I had to force it out of them or not, it was going to happen. It was just plain stupid for them both to be hurting so much while thinking the other didn't feel the same way when it was obvious they both wanted more than a friendship. "Earth to Stasee!" Karis' voice came from behind me which was weird because I swear she was just sitting beside me only moments ago.

I turned around to see both Karis and Brandon standing behind the couch staring down at me expectantly. "What?" I asked as confusion covered my face.

Brandon laughed, "Man Stasee when you zone out, you really zone out, Huh?" I still stared up at them completely confused. I honestly didn't remember them moving or even talking to me for that matter. But then again I

was pretty lost in my own thoughts and Brandon was right, when I zone out I barely notice someone standing right in front of me yelling in my face.

Karis rolled her eyes at me while a smiling laugh appeared on her face. She walked around the couch, putting her arm through mine and pulling me up to my feet. "We said were going. I need to take off before my Mom gets

home, which..." I followed her eyes to a large clock the hung just above the T.V, "Should be any time now, so let's go!"

At first I was kind of confused as to why we were leaving before her Mom got home but I decided not to ask, instead I just followed the two out of the living room, down the hall and out the front door. We were just walking down her front door

steps when a Red Cadillac pulled into the driveway blocking Karis' beetle in. "Shit..." Both Karis and Brandon said under their breath.

"Well so much for our great escape plan. Now, presenting the wrath of Mrs. Kindle." Brandon said looking over at Karis and then smiling, "Have fun, I'm out of here!" He ran down the stairs and jumping over the white fence that separated Karis

and Brandon's houses.

A tall blonde lady got out of the car; she was wearing a long black skirt that went just past her knees with a matching black blouse. Her hair was pulled back into a perfect bun with only a few strands of hair that fell gracefully along her face. She had a gentle, kind face though there was something in her eyes that showed she wasn't very happy at the moment.

"Uh-oh." Karis said while grabbing me by the arm and pulling me with her as she tried to make a run for it.

"Karis Kindle!" Karis' Mom's voice echoed through the air as Karis came to an abrupt stop.

Karis turned around while forcing a smile on her face, "Yah mom?"

"Don't try to act stupid Karis Kindle, you know what this is about!" Her mom finally reached us as

she
stood in front of Karis - her
hands on her
hips, barely even
acknowledging my presence.

"Where were you today after
your morning
classes young lady!?" She
asked sternly with a
very parental tone.

"I was having lunch." Karis
said honestly,
although Karis' response only
seemed to anger her
mother more.

"Karis! You know what I mean

and because of
your lip you are grounded! No
T.V, no video
games, no computer or phone!
Now get inside the
house!" I could see her
Mother's anger boiling up
and her face was flushed red
in anger.

"But I have to drive Stasee
home!" Karis whined.

Then as if finally noticing my
presence, Karis'
mother looked over to me and
the anger
immediately disappeared from

her face.

"Oh dear, I'm sorry you had to witness that. I'm

Karen Kindle, Karis' mother."

She introduced

herself as the kind face I saw at first was back.

I smiled politely back at her before something at

the corner of my eye caught my attention. I

looked over toward Brandon and Damen's house

and saw him, there standing at the fence looking

over at us as beautiful as ever.

He had his amazing little smirk plastered to his face and his eyes were looking at me and only me. When I first noticed him my heart raced - his stunning appearance left me breathless like it always did though the feeling was quickly replaced by anger. "I can drive Stasee home Mrs. Kindle." Damen's husky voice brought tingles through my body. "Oh." Karen said, turning her

attention over to
Damen, "Are you sure?"
"For sure, that won't be a
problem." His charming
personality seemed to work
wonders on everyone.
"Oh thank you Damen." Karen
said smiling
sweetly at him before turning
her attention back
to Karis. "Karis, in the house
now!" Karis turned to
me with
a sympathetic look before
turning around
and stomping back into her

house.

Karen followed her but before she entered the house she looked back over at Damen, "You really are an angel, Hunny." Then their front door closed behind her.

Angel!? Yah right, more like Lucifer himself - here in the flesh, I thought to myself.

I turned back toward Damen, completely confused as what had just happened. Did he honestly think

I was going to get into a vehicle with him? Sure he was undeniably gorgeous and had complete possession of my heart but that didn't make me hate him any less. I know how contradicting that sounded but it was the god honest truth. I hated him for everything he had done to me and yet I still couldn't convince my heart to feel the same way. It's sort of like that song,

"I hate everything
about you" by Three Days
Grace.

I looked away from him as I began to walk down Karis' driveway, slowly thinking through my options. When I finally make it to the end of the driveway and the end of the fence, I had made up my mind. Instead of turning right; which would lead me to Damen's house, I turned left and began to walk down the sidewalk. I

knew it was a long walk from here to my house, but it was better than riding with Damen. I had to get over him, I had to forget about him, he was an asshole and I honestly couldn't handle anymore heartache. I stared down the long street hoping that I was going the right way. I hadn't paid much attention to how Karis had got here from my house so I was pretty much lost but

being lost was better than being stuck in a vehicle with Damen.

Suddenly I heard the sound of a vehicle slowing down behind me and I didn't need to turn around to see who it was. I had a feeling he wasn't going to give up so quickly and yet a girl can still wish.

His voice came to my ears and as it always did send more tingles through my body that I tried hard to ignore.

"Stasee, are you seriously going to try and walk home?" Damen called out from his truck. I didn't say anything back, nor did I even turn around to acknowledge him, I just continued to walk.

"Come on Stasee, do you even know how to get to your house?"

No, I thought to myself but just kept walking.

"Look, it's getting dark out and I don't want you walking home alone! It's more

than a two hour
walk!"

I shrieked in frustration
before finally turning
around to face him, he slowed
the truck down to a
stop

in front of me. "Why do you
care if I walk
home alone? Why do you care
about me at all!?"

He looked completely taken
back by my words.

"Wha-what?" He stuttered,
which was weird I
don't think I have ever heard

Damen Hurtz

stutter, honestly I didn't think that was possible.

Suddenly anger seemed to rush through Damen as he raised his voice. "Why do I care about you!?"

Stasee that is the stupidest question I've ever heard you say, you know I care about you! Why would I have brought you to my place on the cliff, my personal place if I didn't care about you?"

"Well, if you do care about me

so much then you
sure have a weird way of
showing it!" I yelled
back.

The anger vanished from his
face as I watched
him take a deep breath.

"Please Stasee, just get
into the truck and I'll drive
you home, please." He
pleaded.

There was so much sincerity
in his voice and the
way he looked at me it was
impossible to deny
him any longer. It broke my

heart to see him so desperate, to see the sadness in his eyes as he pleaded for me to get into the truck. Finally I gave in as I walked over to the truck I stared him down and said, "Just a ride home, that's it. Nothing more." He nodded.

I walked around the truck and got into the passenger's side, venting my anger by immaturely slamming the door shut after I got in.

"Hey, the truck didn't do anything wrong." Damen tried joking with a smile on his face.

"Don't talk to me, just drive!" I said crossly. He nodded.

We drove the whole way to my house in silence. I was seething with unreleased anger. I could feel him flickering glances over at me during the drive.

I crossed my arms and just continued to stare out the window holding back

tears. After fifteen of the longest agonizing minutes of my life we finally pulled up to my house.

I was just about to grab the door handle to open the door when Damen finally spoke. "Stasee." He whispered.

"What!?" I screeched back with anger still flowing through me.

"Y-you're not going to forgive me this time...are you?" He finally managed to choke out.

The anger in me evaporated as I looked up to the perfect master piece in the driver's seat. "I don't know, Damen." I spoke quietly, "You kissed Candise right after telling everyone I had some psycho crush on you." He stared at me in shock and it seemed to take him a while before he got his voice back, "What? I never kissed her! She kissed me and I pushed her

away and told her to keep her
S.T.D lips away
from me!"

Okay, that had almost made
me laugh. I honestly
had to cover my mouth to
prevent myself from
showing him that I actually
thought it was funny.

He reached over to me and
placed his hand on my
bare shoulder which shot an
electrical current
through my body. I looked
over at him and he
quickly removed his hand,

even though my body
still vibrated in tingles from
his touch.

He continued to speak, "And I
know! I'm

completely stupid for saying
that to them, I don't

know what happens to me at
school. I really do

care about you Stasee and I
swear I'll change. I

just...I don't know what would
people think if they

found out about us.

I'm eighteen and your sixteen.

People might think it's

perverted and wrong." He
sighed loudly, "But I don't care
anymore, I don't
care what they think! The only
thing I care about
is you. I want to be with you
and I don't care if
the whole world knows it!"
I reached for the door handle
as my eyes found
their way to the ground, I
could feel the tears
beginning to well up in my
eyes. I opened the door
as one single tear rolled down
my cheek, "To

answer your question Damen,
I don't know if I can
forgive you or not. I don't
know if I'll ever be able
to trust you again." I
whispered quietly as I got
out of the truck and let the
door click shut behind
me.

I could feel my heart
shattering into tiny pieces,
not because of Damen this
time but because of
myself. Because of what I had
just said, it broke
my heart to speak those words

and as I ran
towards my house I felt hot
rivulets of tears roll
down my face.

Chapter 14

I looked in the mirror and was
completely stunned.
I had never imagined in all my
life what little
effort it would take to make
me look like this. I
had gotten so used to wearing

old baggy clothes
and things that covered my
body and hid my
curves. I hadn't even noticed
how much my body
had developed in the last few
years.

I was wearing a pair of jeans
my auntie had
bought for me last Christmas
that I had never
touched before. They were hip
hugging skinny
jeans that were very low and
just covered my
butt. They were tight against

my hips and thighs
making my short legs look
long and thin. I wore a
black belt that matched
perfectly with my figure
hugging black halter top that
ended a few inches
above my navel. The halter top
had built in
support for my boobs which
made my cleavage
look amazing in the low-cut
shirt. I felt like a
supermodel!
I didn't over do the make-up
to make me look like

a street whore or anything but
the light make-up
I did wear really accentuated
my features. The
light pink blush I wore made
my high cheekbones
look erotic and the deep
charcoal eye shadow I
had put on made my light
brown eyes pop out. I
wore no eye liner but I did put
on mascara to add
length to my eye lashes. The
natural coloured
lipstick I wore somehow
managed to make my lips

look bigger and more
Angelina Jolie style but not
quite as intense.

Then there was my hair - for
once it wasn't poker
straight and covering my face.

Instead I had it in
big waves that flowed
perfectly down to my back.

Framing my face giving me a
more confident look
compared to my usual hiding
behind my hair shy
waif appearance.

It was hard to believe the girl
looking back at me

in the mirror was in fact...me?
She didn't resemble
me in any way and yet every
move I made she
mimicked. But it was me. It
was the new and
improved Stasee Anne Rainie,
the girl who would
not take any bullshit from any
guy. The girl who
would show what exactly he
missed out on. Pay-
Back is a bitch.

"Stasee! Are you coming or are
you planning on
walking to school?" I heard

my brother yell at me
from down the stairs.

"Ok, I'm coming!" I yelled
back at him as a little
smirk appeared on my face.

"Alright Stasee, what is up
with the new look?"

Trent asked me as we pulled
out of the driveway.

Ever since I had come down
the stairs he had
been staring at me with well, a
weird look on his
face.

"What do you mean?" I tried to
play dumb.

"You know what I mean." He said sternly, "You look like you've come straight out of a playboy magazine." He shot me an accusing glance.

"Hey!" I gave him an insulted look though I kind of took it as a compliment. Most of the girls in playboy magazines were hot chicks! Mission accomplished I thought evilly to myself. "I'm wearing clothes!"

"And they look like they are painted on you - you might as well be naked!" He fumed.

"You're just jealous." I tossed my hair in the air dramatically and grinned at him.

We pulled up to Kevin's house as Trent began to laugh and he said sarcastically, "Yah, that's it Stasee, I'm so jealous of my little sister!" And rolled his eyes and stuck his tongue out at me.

Boys are so immature!

"You will be when you see all the attention I get."

I said jokingly and he just smiled back.

Kevin walked up to the truck and opened the passenger side door but instead of just jumping into the truck like he usually did he stopped dead in his tracks as his eyes fell on me. He gasped and I watched as his eyes widened and his mouth dropped. Like a typical guy he

recovered with
macho man grace and
immediately his eyes were
scanning my body from head
to toe. He didn't
move at all, just took it all in.
The only sound that
escaped his lips was, "Woah."
I raised my eyebrow at him
and said, "You better
close your mouth before you
get your gross
pervert drool all over Trent's
truck, I doubt he'd
appreciate that very much.
And by the way if you

keep looking at me like that I'm going to have to charge you a viewing fee for the visual for your spank bank!" Then I winked and did perfectly executed hair toss.

Damn, I'm good! I thought to myself.

"Yah dude! What the hell's wrong with you?"

Trent asked as he stared at his friend utterly appalled at his display of lewdness.

As if finally realizing what he

was doing Kevin closed his mouth, gave his head a shake and jumped into the truck. The whole ride from Kevin's house to school was totally creepy! Kevin sat there and just stared at me pretty much the whole ride to school. We were just pulling up to the school when Trent finally noticed Kevin completely eye-fucking me. "Hey dude, what is your problem this morning?"

Trent almost yelled trying to get Kevin's attention. Kevin's head snapped up as he looked over at Trent realizing for the first time where he was and who he was with. He cleared his throat, "Oh...Sorry, it's just..." He looked back over to me as his eyes once again scanned my body. "Damn Stasee, You are looking hot!" I smiled back at Kevin trying to be seductive though my brother killed it

when he said, "What the hell dude? That's my little sister!" And slapped Kevin upside the head! "Sorry Man." Kevin put up his hands defensively, "but it's true." He said the last part under his breath before he scrambled out of the truck to avoid another shot to the head. I slid over to the passenger's seat and was just about to jump down as well when suddenly Kevin appeared in front of me.

"Here, let me help you."

He offered. He grabbed me by the waist and pulled me out of the truck and placed me down on the ground.

I stared at him a little shocked at first, but could you blame me? I honestly was not used to this kind of attention! And to be honest I got off on the power! I also knew that with my new look I had to revamp my personality. I needed to act

more like Candise but less like a slut and more like a tease. A fine line to be sure but one I was confident I would master. That had been my plan since I woke up this morning, I was going to change and take part in the world out there. No longer would I be that shy girl isolating herself in her own little bubble.

"My Hero," I said teasingly to Kevin.

"Gag!" My brother joked as he

met up with me
and Kevin at the front of the
truck.

I whispered back only loud
enough for Trent to
hear me, "You're just jealous."
He growled in
frustration but there was a
playful smile on his
face.

"I guess there's no point to
stalk him anymore,
huh Stasee?" Kevin said
pointing over toward the
school.

I looked over at what he was

pointing at and almost lost my ability to stay 'cool' and 'confident'.

Damen was walking toward us forcing my heart to sink and my body to heat up nervously. I could hear the rapid thumps inside my ear as my heart beat faster and faster.

"Hey Stasee." Damen called out, "Can we talk?"

His voice made the hair on my neck stand up, but in the good way.

I was just about to say

something like 'not right now Damen,' or really anything that would be deemed stuck-up enough when something moved with speed in front of my eyes. I heard a loud smacking sound that quickly turned into a crunching noise. It took my eyes a couple seconds to adjust to everything and my mind to process what had just happened. Trent was standing in front of me still shaking with

rage, while Damen
laid sprawled on the
ground...out cold!
"Trent!" I yelled while trying
to get past him to
Damen but he held me back. I
watched Damen's
eyes slowly open but only one
eye seemed to be
able to complete the task. His
right eye was
already beginning to swell
shut.

"Take this as a warning
Damen Hertz, if you ever
go near my sister again I swear

to God a black eye
will be the least of your
worries!" Trent yelled
down to him. His arms were
wrapped around me
holding me back but I had
finally stopped
struggling and just stood there
watching. Half the
school had now surrounded us
and began to riot.

What a mob scene! I thought
while watching half
the students staring in shock,
while the other half
were screaming:

'FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT!'

"I know...I'm sorry!" Damen yelled out. He was still laying prone on the ground but had now pushed himself up with his hands.

"Sorry for what Damen?"

Trent yelled back. I could see the white hot anger in my brother's eyes, "Starting rumours about her around school? You're apologies mean nothing, just stay the hell away from her, got it!?" Trent's

breathing was
raspy he was shaking in anger.
"Damen Hurtz, Trent Rainie!"
A loud voice broke
through all the commotion as
everyone turned
around to see our principal
pushing through the
crowd. Everyone began to
scatter, leaving only
me, Trent and Damen
standing in the clearing.
Damen half lying-half sitting
on the ground with a
puffy eye and Trent was
standing above him with

bruised knuckles.

"My office, now!" Mr. Verlock's voice echoed loudly all around us. His jaw was clenched in anger as he stared at first my brother and then Damen.

"I don't suspect you had anything to do with this Miss Rainie?" Mr. Verlock asked while looking over at me. At first he was a little taken aback by my altered appearance.

"No!" Damen and Trent yelled in unison.

"Fine, you two...go, now!"

With that the trio disappeared leaving me standing in the parking lot alone, still a bit shaken up.

"Sta-Stasee?" A voice I had recently gotten quite accustomed to reached my ears and soothed me

down. I turned to face Karis with Brandon following closely behind her.

"Oh my God! It is you, holy! Look at you. You look hot, you sexy thang! Love the hair and your-

"

"Is it true your bro just knocked mine out?! That's crazy! Your brother must be pretty strong I mean it was would take an elephant to knock Damen down." Brandon interrupted Karis.

"Oh yah! We just saw Kathy and Sheila from class and they told us Trent came out of nowhere and just smashed Damen in the face!" Karis cut in, her voice

fast and excited like it always was. Weirdly enough, Brandon had that same tone to his voice as well.

"Yah and Sheila said that Damen was lying on the ground bawling his eyes out! And-"

Karis cut Brandon off again, "And Mr. Verlock came and tossed kids out of his way!"

"Woah! Okay, calm down you two!" I had to cut them both off. They were

eagerly staring at me with anticipation. "First of all, yes Trent punched Damen in the face-I'm pretty sure he's going to have an ugly bad black eye, secondly-no, Damen was not crying and Mr. Verlock did come but he didn't toss any kids around." I took a breath and continued. "Two minutes later and already the truth has been completely distorted!"
Brandon suddenly looked

bored and Karis looked disappointed. "Aww...I think the fake truth was more fun." Karis whined. I laughed at her before we began to walk toward the school.

As we walked through the school yard and up to the front doors I couldn't help but noticed all the people that were staring at us. Every single person we walked by would look at us and then whisper

something to their friends and then they would all stare. It was starting to make me feel uncomfortable. I felt vulnerable and exposed as I tried pulling my belly shirt down by the hem to cover my bare skin. Every time I attempted to pull my shirt down it was making the top portion of my shirt expose more of my cleavage.

Yeah that won't make people stare much! I rolled

my eyes.

"Why is everyone staring at us?" I whispered to Karis as we walked into the school.

"Us?" Karis laughed, "Their not staring at us, their staring at you!"

"What-me?" With my new look I banked on that it would get Damen's attention but I honestly didn't expect this. I was so concerned with getting his attention and ignoring him, I

didn't plan for the attention from the others.

"Yah, look..." Karis pointed at a group of girls who were looking at us, "The girls are glaring at you with jealousy. While the boys..." Karis pointed to a group of boys who looked like they were pushing their chests out. "Are checking you out and trying to get your attention."

"They are just embarrassing themselves..." I said

as I watched a boy try to puff
up and wink at me;
I shuddered.

Yeah that was nice! Ick!

"That is just normal male vs.
female behaviour,
you may have gone to school
here your whole life
but you might as well be the
'Hot New Girl'." Karis
stated.

"Well then why aren't you
being a crazy jealous
bitch and why isn't Brandon
acting like a drooling
zombie?" I questioned her.

"Because I know your personality and I know you aren't some slutty home wrecker." Karis winked at me.

"Like Candise." We both looked at each other and laughed.

"And I'm not a drooling Zombie because I'm not a shallow asshole." Brandon said finally jumping into the conversation. "I will admit Stasee, you do look really pretty-but looks aren't everything so don't

let all this go to your head."

"She won't!" Karis defended me, "But we got to go and get ready for class, we'll see you at lunch?"

"Yah for sure!" I replied. Karis and Brandon both waved bye to me as they headed in the opposite direction.

I tried to ignore all the people staring at me as I made my way through the school and to my locker. I was glad to find that the hallway where

my locker was had been pretty much empty, which wasn't much of a surprise. My locker wasn't very far from the principal's office and most students tried to stay as far away from Mr. Verlock as possible.

12-32-08, I thought to myself as I began to unlock my locker. I opened the door and began to scrounge around for my books.

"So the rumours are true." An amused sounding voice startled me as I look behind my locker door and saw Derrek. He was another one of my brother's friends, one of the guys that hung out with Trent, Kevin and Damen. Derrek was a lot different than them though, he was the captain of the football team and the most stuck-up asshole of them all! He was such a prima donna! He

didn't talk to anyone at school unless you played football or if you were a cheerleader. He thought he was Brad Pitt and wouldn't even waste his energy with any of the girls at Kersha High. Every girl throws herself at him and he merely swooshes them away like an annoying little fly.

So when I closed my locker door and saw Derrek leaning up against the lockers, his arms folded

against his chest eyeing me up, I was a bit surprised. He was taller than most of the guys at school and his muscles bulged out of anything he wore. He honestly looked like he was on steroids but everyone knew he wasn't, he was just so obsessed with himself that he spend every spare second he had working out. He had perfect black hair and gorgeous grey eyes, if it weren't for the

fact that he was so unbelievably huge then he would probably be less scary and much sexier.

"Well, well, if it isn't Derrek Harley. I'm sorry but I'm lacking football skills, also I'm not and never will be a cheerleader so you'd better jet before anyone sees you talking to me." I said to him as I opened my locker again and blocked his view from me.

He laughed loudly as he push

my locker shut and moved in front of it so I couldn't get in. "I never expected Stasee Rainie to be so judgmental, aren't you

supposed to be one of those sweet-n-shy type of girls?"

I rolled my eyes and simply replied, "People change."

"So I see," I watched him as his eyes began to survey my body with a half smirk glued to his

face. "Never would have thought Trent's little sister could look so sexy."

I could feel my face take on the form of disgust.

"Is there a reason why you're here because if not could you please move so I can grab my books and get to class?"

"Feisty, I like it." He then winked at me.

"Eww." I began to turn around but as I did so I saw Damen coming out of the Principal's office.

Plan A in motion, I thought as I turned back towards Derrek. "I mean, Oww-la-la?"

Okay, that's sounded stupid but who cares it didn't really

look like Derrek was paying much attention to what I was saying seeing as he was too busy staring at my boobs.

"Anyways, I was actually going to invite you to my party tonight. You can be my 'Special' guest." He

continued to have his conversation with my boobs. Again he winked.

Eww, I thought to myself.

How do girls see him as attractive, he is far too muscular and has the biggest ego! "It's a school night and I know I'm going to have a lot of homework." I said that part without thinking; it was the real Stasee Rainie coming out.

I heard Damen's footsteps getting closer, "I mean,

yah whatever as long as there's alcohol." I then flirtatiously ran my hand across Derrek's chest, "and you."

EW-BARF! Did I say that? I may have to boil my hand later!

"I'll be there...So you better come Stasee, I'll be waiting for you." With that he moved away from my locker, grabbed my ass, patted it and swaggered away.

I felt disgusted and totally

violated as I opened my locker and made gagging noises.

"Hey Damen, wait up man!" I turned around to see Derrek trying to catch up to Damen.

"Screw off dude!" I heard Damen yell at Derrek before he disappeared down another hallway.

Well, apparently I made Damen jealous, I thought to myself, mission accomplished! I leaned against

my locker, gathered my books
slammed my locker
shut and almost skipped to
class.

Chapter 15

"What!? Oh my god, seriously?
Derrek Harley
invited you to his party... You
know it's like a
seniors only party and
sometimes maybe one or
two junior cheerleaders are

allowed in but I've never, ever heard of any sophomores being invited!" Karis rambled on. Once the lunch bell rang I met Karis and Brandon in the cafeteria, we found an empty table to sit at after getting our food. I told them about the little scene with Derrek and my Academy Award winning performance. Did they give out awards for not barfing when touching a slimy

guy I
wondered? Karis went crazy
and began rapidly
firing questions. I didn't
understand any of her
questions because she went
supersonic and only
dogs could hear her. Sheesh!
Brandon was
completely uninterested and
whipped out a
"Transformers" comic book
and ate his lunch. It
takes a brave man to eat
spaghetti without
wearing a napkin in his shirt.

"Well, it doesn't really matter. I'm not going." I replied dryly as I took a fork full of spaghetti and shoved it in my mouth. I tried keeping my eyes on either my food, Karis or Brandon because anytime I looked around the cafeteria all I saw were eyes staring back at me. It had already been half a day and everyone was still acting the same way, which was either glaring or drooling.

"What!?" Karis yelled. If some people weren't staring at us before they definitely were now. She lowered her voice, "You have to go...I mean if you do everyone in school will be so jealous of you. You would be like a Goddess!" "Yes Karis because I really need more attention." I said with sarcasm before looking over at Brandon for his opinion. Karis looked at him too, although he seemed so engrossed in his

comic book he
didn't even noticed until Karis
punched him in the
shoulder.

"Ouch-What was that for-" He
look up at Karis
and then to me. "Oh...Um, well
it is a school night
so-" I saw Karis sneakily pinch
his arm. "Ouch! I
mean...Yah Stasee, you should
go."

I laughed, "Smooth
Karis...Very smooth."

"Oh...You saw that...Tee-hee"
She smiled her

completely innocent but knowingly evil smile.

"Anyways, if I do go-I'm not going alone!" I finally gave in.

"Of course not! Me and Brandon will come with you!" Karis looked at Brandon and smiled.

"No!" Brandon said while looking at Karis and then looking back at me. "No I'm not." He looked over at Karis again. "You can't make me!"

~*~

"Yah but there is no reason why I have to go. I mean I'm sure you and Stasee will have so much fun there. You don't need me...you'll have all those senior football players to hang off of." I heard Brandon's faint voice arguing with Karis.

"Yes I do!" Karis stated. "Right Stasee?! We need Brandon with us! It just wouldn't be the same!" Her voice reached me loud and clear.

I opened the bathroom door and looked into my bedroom where Brandon was standing at the foot of my bed in front of Karis with his arms folded.

Karis was sitting on my bed looking up at him with a teasingly cute smile plastered to her face, which instantly sent a jolt a jealousy through me. Even though both Karis and Brandon were completely oblivious to each other's feelings, the more we all

hung out, the more I saw the hidden love between them. It was the kind of love I longed for, the kind where they needed no one in the world but themselves.

"No it wouldn't, you have to come Brandon...or I'm not going" I said jokingly, even though in my mind I was secretly hoping Brandon would back out and force Karis and I to stay home

as well.

"Shush, both of you!" Karis jumped to her feet and playfully pushed Brandon. "You two are both going. We are all going to this party tonight whether you guys like it or not!"

"Since when did you turn into a big party animal?"

Brandon questioned her.

"Since I realized all of our lives are completely boring, isolated and full of video games, comic

books, novels and homework.
It's time for us to
have fun for once in our
lives...thus we are going
to this party tonight." As Karis
spoke she had her
hands on her hips trying
desperately to sound
tough and demanding; it was
so cute!

"Speak for yourself." I said
while rummaging
through my closet praying to
the fashion Gods I
would find one dress that
wasn't puffy, pink, or

full of cartoon characters. "I don't live a boring life and even if I did, how would you know, you just met me."

"Actually Stasee, you just met me, I've known you my whole life." She stated matter of factly, "and secondly, you've lived sixteen years without any friends so I'm sorry but there is no way your life could have been at all eventful."

"Ugh...Thanks for reminding

me what a huge loner I am." Suddenly I saw something black at the far end of my closet. A dress I hadn't seen or touched since my Mom gave it to me. Apparently it was the dress she had worn out to cocktail parties. Once she grew out of it she handed it down to me though I never imagined I would ever wear it.

I felt someone's arms wrap around my shoulders

as I stood there staring at the dress. "But you're not a loner anymore! You have me and Brandon...and...apparently Derrek too!" Karis said in my ear, I could hear Brandon in the background begin to laugh. Karis unwrapped her arms from around me as she turned to face Brandon. "What's so wrong about Derrek!?" "What? You mean other than the fact that he looks like a giant on the nad

juice?"

Brandon tested her, "Well let's see, he is a complete ass, he treats girls like shit, and he-"

"He sounds just like your brother, but you still love him." Karis fought back.

"Enough you guys!" I cut the argument short as I turned around to face them, the black dress in my arms. "Nothing is going on with me and Derrek, okay?"

"Ha-Ha." Brandon taunted as

he pointed his finger at Karis and stuck out his tongue.

"Oh grow up Brandon!" Karis barked at him as she walked over to me, "what's that?" she asked as her eyes scanned the dress in my arms.

I looked down at the black dress, debating on whether or not I even wanted to show it to them.

I knew if Karis saw it she would force me to wear it against my will, yet I did

want to wear it...I

think? I looked up at Karis to find her sticking her tongue out at Brandon with her right hand's index finger and thumb in an L shape, obviously standing for 'Loser'.

"Karis!" I said while laughing, "You tell Brandon to grow up and yet you're standing here doing the same thing."

Brandon started laughing next as Karis turned to face me with a surprised look

on her face. "You weren't supposed to see me doing that." She admitted as a smile crept onto her face.

I looked down at my watch, 7:40pm. "Okay, are you guys ready? If we're going we should really get a move on."

"I'm not...I'll just stay here."

Brandon said as he sat down on my bed. A large smile crossed his face, his perfect pearl white teeth shimmering

underneath my bedroom light.
"You wish mister!" Karis said
while running over to
the
bed and jumping up on it
forcing Brandon to
bounce up and down. "We're
ready Stais, are
you?"

I held up the little black dress,
analyzing it one
more time. "Almost...I just
need to put this on."

~*~

We pulled up to Derrek's
house in Brandon's black

SUV and well, the house was packed. We could barely find a place to park in his overly large driveway, which actually resembled a parking lot. Derrek's house was huge, one of the biggest in all of McLennan, which is another reason for Derrek's overly conceited attitude. His father is the owner and CEO of a multi national corporation. His mother is a famous artist, winner of prestigious awards

and whose work ranges starting from 10k in price. The best way to describe Derrek's house would be that it's a mansion, which is saying a lot seeing as McLennan is more of a rich folk town. We all grew up with large houses, everything given to us and a lack of parental supervision. Though there are a few exceptions, like my family, my parents are away on business most of the time though they

have strict rules. They at least make an effort to parent us when or if they ever find out we broke a rule.

"No parking, I guess we better just go." Brandon said interrupting my thoughts. He tried to sound disappointed but I could hear the hope creeping in his voice.

"Yah there is! Right there, between the red Corvette and blue Mustang." Karis said excitedly

pointing her finger eagerly at the empty spot.

Both Brandon and I sighed in disappointment as he

pulled

into the parking spot and

turned off the

engine.

I could hear music blaring

from Derrek's house as I

looked

over saw a bunch of seniors

from school

standing on his porch passing

around a pretty

large bottle and chugging it

straight. Then on the steps were more teens passing around what looked like a bong. The most disturbing sight was one kid kneeling in the grass puking while his friend stood by laughing. My gut was telling me this was a bad idea and my nerves began to act up. "I don't know Karis, maybe we should just leave. I don't think I want to wear this dress either so let's just go-"

"No" She cut me off, "Let's just go in there, have a couple drinks-loosen up a bit and in an hour if you guys still want to go...then we'll leave. Okay?"

"Fine." Brandon agreed.

"Alright..." I replied afterwards.

We all opened our doors slowly manoeuvring out of the vehicle while trying not to hit the cars on each side of the SUV. I turned around to see my reflection in the blue

mustang's window. Instantly I was reminded of Trent's comment about me looking like I belonged in the play boy mags. I left my hair in its flowing waves though I added a little more to my make-up, changing it from casual to a more party going look. Then there was my dress, it was a short skirted dress with a 'V' shaped halter that pushed my breasts together. The back of

the dress had a low plunging backless style to it, which left my whole back bare. I wore black stiletto's that matched my dress perfectly and made my legs look longer. I will admit, the whole outfit was a little over the top revealing and maybe a touch skanky but at the same time it was sexy. "You have to let me borrow that dress sometime, I love it!" Karis came from around the vehicle with

Brandon following behind her.

Karis' outfit was a lot more...well, Karis-ie.

Though her dress was shorter than mine and was completely strapless, the light pink color of it made her look cute rather than skanky. That was one thing I idolized Karis for; she could wear the most revealing clothes but still managed to make them look cute. I mean who does that? If I'd worn

her get up I would have been
arrested for
indecent exposure!

"You can borrow it right now,
I'm going home!" I

turned around to try and get
back into the SUV

when Karis grabbed my hand
and pulled me away.

"In your dreams Missy, let's
go." She said while
walking toward the house and
pulling me behind
her.

Brandon came to my side as
we all walked across

the huge parking lot styled driveway. "That's one thing you're going to have to get use to...Karis' stubbornness." Brandon spoke with amusement.

"Or I can just change my mind about becoming friends with you two and make a run for it." I joked.

"You wish!" Karis joined in.

"Yah, sorry Stasee but you're stuck with us now."

Brandon added and I smiled. Sixteen years I had never had

one friend and in two days I made friends with probably two of the best people in McLennan. They weren't stuck up, they were fun, they didn't care so much what people thought and I could already tell they were the type of friends you could trust with your life.

Chapter 16

We began to ascend the stairs leading to Derrek's house when we were abruptly stopped by Candise.

She stood on the top steps with Tiffany on one side of her and Sammy on the other. Candise had her arms crossed looking down at us with her annoying scrunched up face. She kind of reminded me of a ferret.

"And what do you loosers think you're doing here?" She asked us while

Tiffany and Sammy mimicked her stuck-up facial expression.

"We're coming to the party Candise, so move."

Karis jumped in before I could say anything.

"Ha! I don't think so. This is a senior's only kind of party."

"We were invited." Karis said mimicking their stuck-up tone.

"I don't care who invited you, you're not welcome here." Candise insisted.

"Derrek invited us and this is his house so get the hell out of the way Candise!" I finally jumped in as I took another step up. I was now standing face to face with Candise, staring at her with glaring eyes.

She looked at me with amusement, "Ohh look here girls, Shy-loner girl thinks she's tough." She laughed as Tiffany and Sammy joined in following anything Candise said like

two obedient lap dogs.

"Well, first of all little girl, Derrek would never be caught dead talking to a sophomore never mind inviting three of them to his party."

The front door opened as the noise from inside surrounded us, people's laughter, music, joyful yelling; all the sounds that indicated a teen party.

We all looked over to the door and saw Derrek coming out of the house. He

was wearing the same clothes he had worn at school today. Blue jeans with a Pittsburgh Steelers hooded sweat shirt on and even though I would have drowned in that sweater it was tight against his overly large muscles. At this point everyone sitting on the porch was now watching us closely.

"Your right, Candise." Derrek said in his deeply low voice. "I didn't invite

those three sophomores here." He paused for dramatic effect.

"I knew it-" Candise began before Derrek caught her off.

"I invited Stasee here. Why the short-stuff and nerd boy came is beyond me." Derrek said while eyeing both Karis and Brandon.

"Derrek!" Candise said with amusement. "You know 'nerd boy' is Damen's brother!"

Just hearing his name brought a sharp pain into my stomach. Anxiously I looked around hoping he would just appear out of nowhere. I knew it was a tad psychotic, I mean I was supposed to be trying to get over him and yet he was the only thing I could think about. He was the only reason I even came to this party, wishing and hoping that maybe he would be here. Maybe I'd be able to at

least see him if not anything else.

"I fucking don't care!" Derrek replied to Candise making her giggle.

"And you know we're standing right here!"

Brandon announced angrily as both Candise and

Derrek looked back down at Brandon with disgust.

Seriously, those two were perfect for each other, both the most stuck-up, 'think they're the best' kids in McLennan.

"Whatever, we're leaving!" I said through gritted teeth. "Let's go guys."

"Wait!" Derrek called out. "You don't have to leave Stasee, I invited you!" He said it like it was a good thing, like I wanted to be there and would ditch my friends just to go to his 'party'.

God, the nerve of some people! I thought angrily.

I turned around to face him, "I'm sorry Derrek, but it's either all of us, or none of

us."

He looked over at the seniors watching us and then at Candise who had the 'Yah-right-like-he'll-fall-for-that-one' look on her face. Derrek then looked back at me, "Fine, you guys can all come."

Candise's mouth dropped as she turned to look at

Derrek, "But Derrrrekkkk..."

She whined.

"Shut up Candise! Fuck you're annoying!"

I took one step toward the

house before stopping and looking back up at Derrek. "And say you're sorry to my friends."

"What?!" He snapped back.

"Say you're sorry for calling Karis 'short stuff' and Brandon 'nerd boy', or to hell with it...We're

leaving." I challenged him.

He rolled his eyes, "Fine." He looked at both of

them and then muttered

"I'm sorry okay."

Everyone around us gasped in surprise as they

stared at Derrek. Though his words were all connected together making it hard to understand them properly I knew it was still a huge achievement to get Derrek to even remotely say it.

Candise stared at Derrek completely stunned before she threw her hands in the air and said, "Unbelievable!" She ran into the house, Tiffany and Sammy tagging along

behind her.

"You know this is going to ruin my rep! " Derrek groaned.

"Well, I guess that's just a risk you're going to have to take." I smiled at him while waving Karis and Brandon to follow me.

"Party time..." I said unenthusiastically.

"I'll show you guys around, follow me." Derrek said as he began to walk into the house. We all followed him as the door

opened and once again
we were drowned in the noise.

"It's a pretty big
house so try not to get lost!"

Derrek yelled over
the noise.

I knew it was pointless to try
and respond to him,
he would never hear me so I
just nodded.

Derrek began to scream over
the music again.

"There are drinks in the
kitchen, the bar
downstairs, there's a keg in the
dining room, some

hard liquor in the cabinet in the first bedroom up the stairs. If you're planning on getting lucky tonight my bedroom and my parents are off limits. They are probably the only doors locked and if I find anyone in them, they'll get shit-kicked! Girl or boy." He finally stopped yelling as he turned around and looked at us. "Any questions?!" We all shook our heads. "I'll grab us some drinks, what

do you want?!"

"I'll just have a cooler,
maybe?!" I yelled back.

"Me too!" Karis added.

Derrek looked at Brandon
waiting for him to
answer, "I'm the D.D."

Brandon finally responded.

"Okay? So beer it is!" Derrek
disappeared before

Brandon could correct him.

I finally took the time to look
around and well,

everyone was wasted. As my
eyes peered around

us when I realized I wasn't

just checking out the party but actually looking for someone in particular. Every time I saw a tall brown haired boy excitement rose inside me, although I was quickly disappointed because it never turned out to be him. I wanted to forget about him so badly because the constant disappointment was becoming unbearable. I shook my head trying to

get him out of my mind.
I tried to distract myself by concentrating on something else. At the top of the stairs I saw a couple boys putting a mattress down and looked about ready to ride it down the stairs; both boys had a bottle of hard liquor in their hands. At the bottom of the stairs was a group of teens (boys and girls) cheering and encouraging them. In the corner of the foyer was a chair

that was occupied
by a half naked girl giving
some guy a horrible lap
dance, her rhythm was
completely off from the
music and to any sober person
she looked foolish
and a tad pathetic.

I could slightly see into the
dining room where a
game of "Strip Poker" was
being played. I turned
to Karis and Brandon waving
them closer to me so
I didn't have to yell, "Is it just
me or is this party

a little..."

"X-rated?" Brandon finished the sentence for me.

"No, this is how parties normally are...aren't they?" Karis questioned. "I mean I see it in the movies all the time!"

I shook my head trying to keep my eyes averted from all the half naked girls,

"Yah, that's just it

Karis, you see it in movies! I don't think normal teen parties are actually this bad."

"Yah, but Stasee, this is McLennan. 90% of the girls here are sluts!"

Brandon nodded, "Karis does have a point."

"Well...It's still disgusting."

They both nodded in agreement though it kind of looked like Brandon was enjoying the 'view'.

My head snapped up when I felt someone grab my ass as I quickly turned around to face a drunken guy. He was another senior, not the most popular

of the guys but he was still a football player. He was a little chubby with reddish burnt coloured hair, freckles and these piercing green eyes. His eyes were so red and bleary from the vast quantities of alcohol he consumed.

"Excuse me!" I said pushing his hand away from me.

"Awww, com' on sex...E "

The boy slurred.

"I think there's a game of strip

poker in the dining room. Umm, why don't you go join them."

"Nahhh!" He yelled before stumbling over and falling to the ground. The beer that was once in his hand smashed against the foyer floor. I could hear Karis and Brandon laughing behind me as I ignored them and tried to offer him my hand.

"Here, I'll help you up." I insisted.

"Orrr!" He yelled arrogantly

again, "I'll -hicup-
helps you'p downn!" He then
grabbed my hand
before I had a chance to
respond and pulled me to
the ground as I fell on top of
him. Karis and
Brandon's laughter roared out
of control as the
boy's arms wrapped around
my body and squeezed
me
tightly against him as I
struggled hard to get
out of his grasp.

"Liam!" Derrek's voice echoed

through the foyer
as he marched toward us with
his arms full of
drinks. "What do you think
you're doing with
Stasee, let her go dude, she's
mine!"

I'm his? I thought to myself,
I'm definitely not 'his'
nor am I anyone's, I'm a
person not an object. I
was going to start yelling at
Derrek for saying
that. When Liam quickly let go
of me and crawled
away mumbling apologies to

Derrek, I decided to let it slide.

"No thank you?" Derrek said as he grabbed me by my waist and pulled me up to my feet.

"I'll think about," I replied before turning to Karis and Brandon. "Thanks by the way! My two best friends stand by and laugh at me as I get molested by

Liam. I have to wait for the stuck-up asshole to come along and save me!"

Derrek chuckled, "Hey, I'm standing right here."

Brandon butted in, "Yah isn't it fun to be shit talked right in front of your face?"

"Whatever Dude, I'm wasted. I honestly don't give a shit." Derrek then handed me a red coloured cooler, then handed Karis the same kind and passed Brandon a beer.

"You're cocky like your brother, huh?" Brandon shrugged.

"Anyways..." Derrek started talking again. That's when I realized the music had calmed down a bit - we were actually able to talk without screaming at each other.

"I'm stealing Stasee for a bit, you two go enjoy yourself. Look around, get naked. I really don't fucking care."

I looked at Derrek like he was nutty, "Umm, don't I get a say on whether or not I want to come with

you?"

Derrek then looked down at me as if debating, then finally he replied with one word "No." He wrapped his arm around my shoulders and pretty much dragged me along with him. We went through the dining room in which I really wish we hadn't almost everyone sitting around the table had next to nothing on except one guy you looked rather proud of himself. He

must have been
winning most the games
because the only thing
he wasn't wearing was his
sweater whilst
everyone else had piles of
clothes beside them.

"Derrek, dude you got to get in
on this!" The fully
clothed boy called out. Derrek
merely waved his
hand dismissively to him as
he brought me
through a doorway that led to
the kitchen. The
kitchen was huge! It looked

like it belonged in a restaurant rather than a home. All the appliances were made of stainless steel that matched perfectly to the black marble counter tops.

"Did you want another drink?" Derrek asked me as he walked up to one of the two fridges and opened it. The fridge was full of alcoholic beverages from top to bottom and nothing else.

I was going to say no when I

looked down and realized my cooler had less than a sip left in it, so instead I said "Sure, same thing." He grabbed another red cooler from the fridge twisted off the cap before passing it to me. "So what, you guys don't eat around here?" Derrek sneered, "Obviously we do." He replied snobby, "the food is in there." He pointed to the other fridge as he rolled his eyes at me.

"Stasee?!" A voice I recognized all too well pierced my ears as I turned around to be face to face with...my brother!

"Oh...Uh, hey Trent." I said nervously as I began to take giant nervous swigs from my cooler.

"What the hell do you think you're doing here?!"

He yelled at me.

"Trent, calm down. She's with me."

Trent turned to look at Derrek with wide eyes, I

could see the anger boiling up inside him as his hands began to clench.

"Trent, stop it!" I yelled out, "I'm sixteen years old!"

"Exactly Stasee, you're only sixteen years old! No sixteen year olds come to this party never mind my little sister!" He growled as I chugged the last bit of the drink down. "And what's that in your hand?!"

"It's nothing!"

"You're drinking?!" He ignored me.

"So what you drink all the time!"

"I'm eighteen."

"Yah and you drank when you were sixteen, too!"

"This is not like you Stasee, what has gotten into you!?" He demanded.

"Nothing has gotten into me, just leave me alone!" I yelled at him as loud as I could, I knew

everyone was now staring at us. My cheeks began to redden with both anger and embarrassment as I ran out of the kitchen. I didn't know where I was going but I continued to run knocking already tipsy people to the floor as I passed. I finally made it to a set of sliding glass doors as I opened them up and ran onto Derrek's lawn. I was guessing it was his back yard because I didn't

recognize it from earlier. I continued to run down through the grass until I couldn't go any longer. I fell to my knees as tears began to burst out of my eyes - I felt so embarrassment and so angry at my brother. I was already depressed about everything going on between me and Damen. All my emotions exploded at that moment as I sat kneeling in the grass bawling my eyes out.

"Stasee...are you okay?"

Chapter 17

The sound of his voice instantly stopped the tears from forming in my eyes, any thoughts that were once circulating through my mind had vanished.

The moment I looked up and peered into his warm brown eyes the world around me disappeared.

Even with his right eye completely bruised black he was still gorgeous. I barely even acknowledged the sudden rapid thumping in my chest.

I roamed my eyes over every inch of his perfectly sculpted body. I had been waiting, wishing to see him all night but it wasn't until that exact moment did I realize how much I needed him, how much I craved to be securely wrapped in his masculine

embrace. It felt like my head was getting light as if maybe I was going to pass out, that's when I realized I had been holding my breath - I let it go. I watched Damen as he knelt down beside me. His arm reached out as he cupped my face in his hand. The second his skin touched mine, my whole body exploded with goose bumps as a shiver ran down my spine. Using his thumb he

gently wiped away the left
over tears from my
cheek as I reached up and
pressed my hand
against his.

His other arm snaked around
my neck and at first
he hesitated for a brief
moment before pulling me
closer. I could feel his warm
breath against my lips
and

it smelt of sweet strawberries
with a hint of
spearmint. The alcohol that
was now circulating

through my veins dismissed
any past anger I had
toward him because at that
moment all I wanted
was to press my lips against
his and taste that
sweet intoxicating smell that
was radiating inside
my brain and attacking my
senses.

I removed my hand from his
as I coiled it
underneath his arm and
grasped on to his back
before pulling him closer to
me. Our lips were now

so close I could feel his lightly
brush against mine
which instantly forced my lips
to begin to tingle.

My body began to heat up
with anticipation - it
felt like hours before our lips
finally met although
it was merely seconds. It
started with light
butterfly kisses, our mouths
moved in sync with
each other.

Time seemed to stop as the
world around me had
been forgotten. It was just me

and Damen at that moment and that was all I cared about. The house could have been on fire and I would barely have even acknowledged it. The sounds of cars driving and party-goers laughing, drunken yelling and boats honking and all other sounds that normally filled the night air of McLennan had all disappeared from existence. The only sound that seemed to reach my ears

were our individual heartbeats
pounding against
our chests and our heavy
breathing as the kiss
began to deepen. As Damen
pressed his lips
harder against mine, pleasure
exploded inside me.
The tingles that had begun in
my lips expanded
throughout my entire body.
The last couple days I
had built up so much
resentment toward Damen
and self-loathing for being so
weak. Not once

though could I deny myself
what I truly wanted,
which was this.

I hated Damen after
everything he had done to
me and deep down there was
an unreleased anger
toward him but no matter how
much I tried to
unleash it there was
something else fighting
against the anger, something
stronger. It was
something I vaguely
recognized from movies I'd
watched and books I've read

except it was a feeling I was completely new to. There was no other explanation as I just then realized I had truly fallen completely in love with Damen.

Damen's hand began drawing light circles on the back of my neck which automatically made me shudder with sheer pleasure.

My arm joined my other one around his waist as I pulled him harder against me leaving no space

between us. We fit together perfectly, like we were specifically made to fit into each other's arms. Even though, I could still hear a faint voice in the depths of my mind, yelling at me to pull away. That this was not safe and I was only setting myself up for more pain, more hurt and more misery. Nice self-talk going on inside my head, I had to ignore the senile bitch and go with the

pleasure principle instead!
Damen pulled away for only
an instant and yet
that instant felt to me like an
eternity. He lowered
his head as he began nibbling
on my ear sending
me into pure ecstasy. The
pleasurable tickling he
was doing on my ear over
powered the voice in
my head and silenced her.
Stupid cow she's
getting in the way of my
happiness! I could feel
my hands clenching onto his

back and could faintly
hear my moans of pleasure
though my mind had
become nothing more than a
cloudy haze as I sat
knelt in the grass enjoying
every electrifying
touch from Damen.

"Wait..." Damen pulled away
breathing heavily,

"We need to talk first..."

"Hmmm?" I sat there in a daze
barely even
realizing he was talking. I
didn't want to talk but
instead wanted to just feel his

body heat against
mine and I didn't want the
addictive feel good
sensations to stop.

"Stasee," He whispered as his
breathing was
beginning to even out. He
hesitated, debating on
whether or not to finish his
thought. I really didn't
care - I just wished he would
stop talking so we
could get back to what we
were doing. "I need to
know, what has gotten into
you today? I need to

know if this is a permanent thing."

"What do you mean?" I spoke softly. I was still too distracted by wanting him and his pleasurable heat.

"The new clothes? New attitude? Flirting with Derrek and coming to this party?" His eyes were full of disappointment, "This isn't you Stasee, you're not like these people, you're better than

this, than them."

The absence of his touch cleared my head as the dreamy haze disappeared and I was finally able to make sense of what he was saying. I can't exactly explain why but his accusation of actually 'knowing me' made me angry as my eyes changed from loving to furious in an instant. I know I might have been overreacting but the fact that both Damen and Trent continued to

act as if me coming
to this 'party' was like God
hanging out in Hell was
infuriating! I was a teenager
like everyone else
and even though most of my
sixteen years were
completely isolated, I no
longer wanted it to be
like that. I wanted to be like a
normal teenage girl!
I quickly stood to my feet
which released me from
Damen's embrace, leaving me
feeling alone and
incomplete. Every part of my

body ached and
craved for his touch but
somehow I managed to
hold myself together and keep
my composure.

"This..." I waved my hands up
and down my body,

"isn't me? How would you
know what is or isn't
me, Damen? You barely even
know me!"

"Barely even know you?!"

Damen asked in
disbelief. "We sat on the cliff
for eight hours

Stasee and did nothing but

talk. If anything I know
you better than anyone else."
I couldn't deny the fact that he
was completely
right, which only made me
that much angrier. A
guy I knew for barely even a
week knew more
about me than my own
parents did. We hung out
for one night and I had trusted
him with my whole
life
story. He betrayed me the next
morning and
as I stood there looking down

at him knelt in the
grass those feelings of betrayal
from that

afternoon came rushing back.

"I don't care!" I yelled
immaturely, "Just leave me
alone, Damen!"

Damen got up to his feet as he
tried to reach out
to me, instantly I backed away
from him knowing
the second he touched me all
would be forgotten.

"Stasee, what can I do to prove
to you I won't
ever hurt you again? I'm

begging for your
forgiveness."

His voice was full of sincerity
as he looked down
at me with his soft brown eyes
that were lightly
shimmering with unshed
tears. I could see the
wetness that glazed over his
eyes except the
tears never seemed to fall as
he tried to keep
himself together. My heart
began to shatter into
pieces as I watched Damen
beg me - I had never

seen him look so exposed and vulnerable.

I had to look away.

"I'm sorry Damen but I just can't trust you." The words that left my lips seemed to break my heart more than anything I could ever imagine.

I turned around and began running back toward the house leaving my heart and soul behind with Damen. Only minutes ago I was running away from the house, now all I

wanted was to be back
inside where I could drown
my misery away. I
could feel Damen's eyes on
my back as I opened
the glass door but I never
looked back.

I made my way to the kitchen
while having to
maneuver over many passed-
out bodies on my
way through the living room.
The party had
calmed down a bit but I could
still hear people in
the dining room and there was

a lot of noise
upstairs. The living room was
full of passed out
bodies of people while the
kitchen was completely
empty.

I walked into the kitchen and
without hesitation
headed straight for the fridge
full of alcohol.

Okay, so "Full" was a bit of an
exaggeration I
thought as I opened the door
up, there was barely
anything left. I scanned every
inch of the shelves

while thinking...Beer, eww no.
Wine, not
happening. More beer...more
wine, vodka? Eww
someone back washed in it.
I was about to just give up
when my eyes finally
fell on one last bottle in the
bottom of the fridge.
The bottle was clear with a
yellowy liquid inside;
the label had a picture of an
eagle, the words
across read "Tequila - Tres
Sombreros".
I'll honestly admit I had no

idea what it was but
the word Tequila sounded
kind of pretty so I
decided to give it a try. I
pulled the bottle out of
the fridge and kicked the door
shut with the side
of my foot. I walked over to
the marble counter
and hopped up on top of it. I
twisted the cap off
as a strong smell soared out of
the bottle forcing
me to cough.

I tried to ignore the smell as I
held my head up

and brought the bottle up to my lips before tilting it back. The liquid poured out of the bottle and into my mouth, the whole way down my throat it burned like someone had set the inside of me on fire. I continued to swallow it down anyways, it burned but the pain was nothing compare to the emotional agony and distress I wanted to numb.

"Whoa, holy shit!"

Suddenly the half empty

bottle was being ripped out of my hands as I began fiercely coughing, which soon turned into gagging. I could feel my stomach rumbling fighting hard against the alcohol inside my stomach. I kept trying to swallow my spit forcing everything to stay down. It took a couple seconds but soon enough my stomach began to settle as I looked up to see Derrek staring at me wide-

eyed.

"What?" I snapped.

"You were just chugging that fucking Tequila like it was water!"

"Whatever, what's the big deal."

"It's fucking Tequila, are you trying to get alcohol poisoning."

"Whaz' it to you!?" My voice began to change, oddly enough I was almost slurring.

"Well, if you die in my house from drinking my

booze I'd probably get into a lot of shit." He said smugly before looking at me with a devilish grin on his face.

"Well...Sorr-ray!" I blurted out unintentionally. The alcohol had begun circulating through my body and I began feeling more empowered and confident. I attempted to hop off the counter not realizing how uncoordinated I was as I stumbled

over, bumped into Derrek and then fell flat on my butt.

"Smooth move." Derrek took a small swig from the Tequila bottle.

I reached my arms up towards him, "Well, mister-mister, aren't ya' gonna' help me up!" Even as drunk as I was I knew how slurred and unattractive my words were and yet I couldn't stop myself.

Derrek rolled his eyes at me

before bending down,
wrapping his arms around my
waist and pulling me
up with little effort. "I had to
pick you up twice in
one night. I think I deserve a
reward." He joked.

Apparently "my drunken" self
couldn't tell the
difference between a joke and
a statement as I
said mockingly, "Oh, my Hero.
How oh, how will I
ever repay you!"

Regretfully I wrapped my
arms around his head

and pulled him toward me as our lips connected. It was awful, I'm not saying he was a horrible kisser or anything but there was no spark, no tingles, there was nothing but the taste of cigars and beer which instantly triggered the wrong button in my stomach. My stomach began to rumble fiercely as my throat began to open up readying itself. I pushed Derrek hard in the chest as he stumbled

back and fell to the floor. My hand instantly cupped onto my mouth as I made a quick run for it without looking back. I ran through the dining room, then the foyer and up the stairs. I finally found a bathroom inside one of the bedrooms. The second I made it to the toilet and removed my hand from my mouth all of today's supper along with the alcohol spewed from my mouth.

I stayed in the bathroom for what seemed like forever vomiting until there was nothing left.

When I was finally done I got up off the floor and wiped my mouth off immediately regretting not bringing my tooth brush. I shut the bathroom light off and walked back into the bedroom, which was now pitch black. I didn't remember the light being off before, but then again I

had more important things on my mind.

The door was open a sliver where I could see the light from the hallway, I tried to use it as a guideline to get out of the bedroom. I was halfway across the room when the door suddenly slammed shut, which triggered me to jump in fear. The sound of the door locking increased my heart rate and I could feel my blood rushing in my ears.

"Hello?!" I called out, "Who's there?!"

Chapter 18

I stood frozen on the spot as fear stirred up inside me. Even the curtains against the window were dark and heavy blocking out the night's sky. Again I spoke into the silence, "Is anyone there...?" I stuttered out of fear but there

was no response.

I was about to take a step forward when I heard the floor board creek which automatically made my eyes begin to water. My heart was pounding hard against my chest. I was so scared I wanted to burst into tears. I already had a fear of the dark and being in here in the darkness with some unknown person had me shaking and hyperventilating.

"Who's there?" I cried out
again - silence.

I didn't know what to do as
my body stood
paralyzed in one spot, so I
decided to try
screaming for help. The
second I was about to
open my mouth a cold hand
clamped over it
preventing any sound from
escaping my lips. I
panicked and tried to scream
but it was muffled
against the unknown hand.
The hand was too big

to be a girl's so I knew it had to be a guy's.

Swiftly I turned around and was about to start hitting him, but he completely overpowered me.

He pushed me hard in the shoulder as I went flying across the room and my head smashed against something hard as I felt warm liquid begin to cover my head. Dizzily, I reach up and touched the thick liquid oozing out of my head and

instantly I knew it was blood.
I began to scream at the top of
my lungs. I felt his
hands wrap around my ankles
as he pulled me
down towards him. "Shut up!"
He hissed.

I tried to put a face to the voice
but I was too
panicked to focus. Rivers of
tears were now
flowing down my cheeks as I
squirmed to get
away but his hold on me was
too strong. I could
feel my strength fading and

my body began to shake with pure terror as I realized I couldn't escape.

"What's wrong Stasee? You can go around kissing everyone tonight but me?!" He gritted through his teeth. "I saw you with Damen on the lawn and then Derrek in the kitchen. What about me, don't I get one!"

He locked my feet down with his legs as he began crawling on top of me. I tried

to punch him but he blocked it by grabbing both my arms and pinning them against the floor. I screamed out in pain as my wrists were smashed with force between the floor and his hands. My head was still pounding and I could feel the blood dripping down my neck and soaking my back. "Please..." I cried out, "J-just let me go...I'm so-sorry! I'll give you a-a kiss if that's what you

want..." I stuttered through my sobs. My breathing was erratic I kept gasping but felt like I couldn't get enough air into my lungs.

A malicious chuckle came from him as he began forcing his legs between mine. "No, I want more than a kiss."

I tried to keep my legs together, but he was too strong and heavy. I screamed out again, wondering where the hell

everyone was. This was supposed to be a party surely people had to of heard my screams, why wasn't anyone coming? I felt so alone and scared and vulnerable.

"You had better shut up!" He threatened me. I could tell he was growing impatient because his voice was growing angrier. He was sweating and his breathing had quickened but I could tell he was also becoming excited.

He pushed both my hands together and held them above my head with his right hand. Even both my hands were no match against his one as I tried pulling them away unsuccessfully. He spread my legs open when I tried to kick him away but he barely even flinched. He was big and I'm not talking about muscles, his round body barely fit between my legs making it

almost impossible to
move them.

With his free hand he ripped
the strap off my
dress exposing my naked chest
to him.

Immediately I wished I had
never worn this, I
wished I had never changed
my look to try and
make Damen jealous! My loud
sobs were now
mixed in with hiccups as I
began to give up and let
my body go limp.

Suddenly his hand was at my

throat blocking my airway, squeezing and pushing me down against the floor using his weight to exert more force.

"Stop fucking crying!" He growled as his grip got tighter and tighter. I tried gasping for air but nothing came as my body began to shake from lack of oxygen. I felt light headed and thought I was going to black out. Stay awake I told myself, don't black out! I found the

energy and the will to
struggle against his death grip.
I turned my head
from side to side and bucked
my whole body
bracing myself with my feet
on the floor. He
grinned and laughed as he
said "That's it Stasee,
struggle it'll make it feel better
for me!" He moved
in to kiss me
and I could into his eyes,
which were
glassy and cold. I could smell
his sour breath. I felt

nauseous as my stomach began churning. I turned my head and he kissed and licked the side of my neck.

He finally let go of my throat and moved his hand move downward as I breathed in sharply, gasping in deep gulps of air. His hand ran over my breasts squeezing roughly and pinching my nipples making me moan in pain. He put his mouth on my breast and encircled the nipple

before biting down. I could feel his breath on my skin making it crawl. He paused to look at me to see the terror in my eyes.

Then his hand began moving its way down between my breasts and inside the top half of my torn dress triggering an alarm inside me.

"Please!" I begged.

"I said shut the fuck up!"

Suddenly the black of his hand slapped hard against my face as my cries

grew louder.

The sound of something smashing against the other side of the door made us turn our heads toward the noise. He froze, his eyes wide for a brief moment, and that was all I needed to push him as hard as I could. He didn't move very far but it gave me the chance to wriggle free and try to get up.

"Open it dude!" I heard Damen yell on the other

side of the door.

"Fuck, I'm trying to find the key!" Derrek yelled back.

"Damen!" I screamed as I jumped to my feet and attempted to run for the door. The guy got to me first as he clamped his hand onto my arm and threw me hard against the floor. I screamed out in agony.

I heard another smash on the door.

"If you fucking break that

you're paying for it!"

Derrek yelled.

"Shut up!" Damen yelled back

as he smashed

against the door again.

Suddenly, I was grabbed by

my hair and dragged

across the floor toward the

closet. I didn't want to

scream anymore because I

knew it would drive

Damen mad but I couldn't

help it. My loud

excruciating screams echoed

throughout the

house. I felt like he was

ripping my scalp off my head.

I tried to see what he was doing when I heard him open

up the closet door but at the same time I

heard the deadbolt click unlocked as the door

swung open. Damen rushed into the bedroom with

Derrek slowly tagging behind.

I finally looked up at the boy and saw his red hair,

freckled face and his chunky body. It was Liam.

"You fucking bastard!" Damen shouted. It was the first time I had ever heard Damen swear. He ran toward Liam and punched him in the face before Liam even had a chance to react.

Liam smashed against the wall behind him as he slid to the floor with a big thud. He looked up at Damen as blood began to gush out of his nose.

"You know your little angel was fooling around

with Derrek not even ten minutes ago." Liam stated with pure malice. A look of hurt flashed across Damen's face as instant regret wash over me. I had never felt so dishonest and unworthy in my life. I wished I could just curl up into a little ball and disappear forever. Damen's face quickly changed to anger as he kicked Liam hard in the ribs making Liam scream

out in pain.

"Fuck you Liam, you don't know shit!" Derrek finally spoke up as he pushed Damen out of the way. He grabbed Liam by his shirt and pulled him up with little effort, "I told you to stay away from Stasee!" It was Derrek's turn to punch Liam but this time as Liam fell to the ground he was completely knocked out. I was sitting there looking down at Liam's

unconscious body while my own body was shaking uncontrollably. I felt Damen's arms wrap around me as I rested my head in his chest, tears streaming down my face.

"What are we going to do with him?" Damen questioned Derrek.

"What can we do?"

"Well, she can charge him...Can't she?"

"Ha! Not likely, Liam's dad is one of McLennan's most respected Judges and his

mom is that
fucking sexy and sweet nurse
at the hospital."

Derrek said as he analyzed
Liam's body. "Who do
you think they're going to
believe? Liam - the son
of two extremely respected
adults or Stasee - the
weird loner girl?"

"What did you just say?"

Damen snapped
defensively.

"Whoa, calm down dude. I like
Stasee, she's cool
shit but that is how people are

going to look at it."

Derrek was right, if people had to choose to believe Liam or I at least ninety percent would believe him. I was starting to not even care as I sat there in Damen's arms. All I wanted was to get out of here before Liam woke up. My head was still pounding and my face and neck were burning from the assault.

"What about Stasee's parents, they're hard

working adults." Damen continued.

"Stasee's parents are like ours, business workers.

They're never around here so no one knows them enough to respect them. Our parents might as well be phantoms."

Derrek had another valid point. I reached up and tugged on the top of Damen's shirt. He looked down at me with loving eyes as his arms lightly tightened around me. "Can't

we go...?" I

whispered to him.

"Of course we can." Damen picked me up as he pulled me to my feet, holding me in a bridal stance while tying my dress back together. He turned to Derrek before we left the room, "Oh, when Liam wakes up...tell him he had better watch his back!" and carried me out of the room.

Once Damen placed me in his truck my eyelids

began to shut as sleep and exhaustion had taken over. All the alcohol I drank along with almost being raped left me completely drained. The soothing sounds of "The Spill Canvas" playing out of Damen's truck's speakers soothed me to sleep.

~*~

My eyes fluttered open as I felt myself being placed down on a soft bed. I looked around and realized I was in my bedroom

as a small smile appeared on my face. "Thanks for everything." I whispered.

Damen smirked wolfishly as he bent down and pressed his lips against my forehead shooting my favourite tingles throughout my body. He turned around and began to head for my bedroom door.

"Damen?" He looked back at me, "Can you stay with me tonight?"

Sadness washed over his face,

"My parents are supposed to be coming in sometime tonight, I kind of have to be home." I felt my lips purse into a frown. "But I can stay until you fall asleep..."

"I'd love that." I whispered back.

He walked over to me and lifted up the blanket before crawling into my bed. I felt his arms coil around me as I lay securely wrapped up in his embrace. I turned to face him

as I rested my head
on his chest. My stomach was
fluttering happily as
I listened
to his heart beat fast in his
chest. Sleep
then took over.

Chapter 19

"I don't care whether you guys
kicked his ass or
not, she's my little sister so
this problem is mine

to deal with!"

I woke up to the sound of my brother yelling from his bedroom into what I'm guessing was a phone seeing as I couldn't hear anyone reply. I squinted my eyes against the bright morning light shining through my bedroom window. My head instantly began to pound hard as my stomach rumbled angrily inside me. My mouth was dry as I ached for some water to drink, I felt

drowsy and
nauseated.

This must be what a hangover
feels like, I
thought to myself as I pulled
the blanket off me
and tossed it to the ground.

"Where is he?!" Trent's loud
voice reached my
ears, "Is he at your house? He
is, isn't he! I'm
coming over."

I looked around my empty
bedroom trying hard to
ignore my brother's hollering
that was only adding

to the excruciating pain my head was causing me.

"No? No! What do you mean no?!" Trent continued to scream as his voice echoed through the whole house.

I didn't know exactly who my brother was talking to but I definitely knew what they were talking about. The memory of last night began to replay in my head like a terrifying horror movie. It was all just a drunken blur as if I

was watching a
movie on a video projector
with multiple clips
missing. I was just beginning
to crawl out of bed
when I saw a small note left
on my bedside table.

I picked it up and began to
read.

Stasee,

I'm sorry I had to leave. I
really wish I could have
stayed with you... but I did
wait until you were
safely sleeping. I will be with
my parents all

morning but I plan to head to school at around lunch time. I'm not sure if you are even planning on going to school or not, but I just thought I'd let you know. I dressed you up in some bedtime wear last night, your dress was...well...ripped. I took the dress with me, I'm going to get my Mom's tailor to fix it up for you. If I don't see you at lunch I'll check up on you after school.

I hope you're alright...

Damen

I looked down at myself and saw that I was wearing blue and red striped pyjama pants with a green t-shirt with black pot a dots on it. Out of all the clothes Damen could have put on me, out of all the matching clothes he had decided to go with the most clashiest outfit I had ever seen. Instantly a small smile of amusement

appeared on my face
as I rolled my eyes and shook
my head.

"Fine! Fuck you Derrek, don't
even bother trying
to talk to me, you
backstabbing prick!"

I turned my head in the
direction of Trent's room
my eyes widening in shock. I
knew he was just
trying to protect me and that
the horrible news of
last night's events had
obviously pushed him over
the edge but honestly I wished

the yelling would
just stop. I wanted to get the
memory of last
night out of my head though it
seemed nearly
impossible with him
constantly yelling about it.
"I am not being immature!"
I dragged myself out of bed
and began to head
towards my mirror, fearing
what I see in the
mirror would echo how I was
feeling. At first I
stood there with my eyes
closed, taking slow deep

breaths trying hard to gain enough courage to just open them up and look at my reflection.

"Derrek...I told you not to invite her to the party, and what did you do? You invited her anyways!"

I peeled my eyes open as I began to adjust to the sight in front of me. My hair was a scrambled mess on top my head as dried up blood matted my hair together in dark clumps. I reached up to feel

the slight gash on top the
goose egg, which had
emerged out of my head. An
instant replay of
being tossed to the ground
and smashing my head
made me to tremble. My left
cheek was swollen
and discoloured as the
memory of Liam smacking
me across the face flashed
through my mind. I
could see the skin on my neck
darkened into the
shape of his chubby little
hand as the feeling of

not being able to breathe came back to me.

"You're sorry?! That's it? Okay

where is he,

Derrek? Where is

Liam?!....Fine! I'll find him

myself, you good for nothing

piece of shit!"

The sound of something

smashing against the wall

in

my brothers room instantly

reminded me of

Damen smashing against the

door urgently trying

to get in as I was being

dragged across the room by my hair. In that exact second the tears began to gush out as I fell to the floor. All of last night's flashback memories were becoming too much to bear and my body marked with reminders of the events that occurred.

The past sixteen years of my life have been boring and completely safe and predictable. No real happiness or sadness, it was merely a life of

neutral nothingness. I barely remember ever actually crying although the past week it seemed that's all I had been doing. I never thought when the time finally came that I made friends that I would want everything to go back to the way it was. But I did - I missed the non-dramatic, overly boring life I lived only a mere week ago.

I laid on my bedroom floor my hands covering my

face crying from my very soul.
My cries grew
louder and louder as every
second passed. I felt
broken.

Suddenly my bedroom door
flung open as I turned
to look at my brother standing
in the door way. In
his hand he held the handset
of his telephone,
the cord hanging loosely from
where it had been
pulled out of the base. At first
I continued to cry
though as my eyes settled on

Trent longer, I
couldn't help but cough out a
laugh.

He looked down at me with
such a worried
expression, as if there were
something wrong
with me and yet he was the
one standing there
with a broken phone in his
hand and a red hot
face. In some twisted way it
amused me that he
and I were such a train wreck.
My brother was
usually so in control of his

emotions, calm and steady able to cope with practically anything. I just had no reasons to feel any emotions before.

Ever since I decided to break out of my shell of loneliness and join the real world I have turned Trent into an overly protective brother, while I seemed to be nothing more than bipolar and depressed.

"Are you okay?" Trent whispered as he walked

into my room. I nodded my head trying to swallow the large lump in my throat.

"I'm going to kill him, Stasee." His voice was full of animosity.

"No...Trent, just leave it be...please." I pleaded as I began to get to my feet.

"But look at you; he can't just get away with that!"

"But that's the thing Trent, he can." I walked over to my closet trying to ignore him.

"Just drop it
okay."

"But Stasee-"

"Trent, please!"

He finally gave up but not without storming out of my bedroom angrily and slamming the door shut behind him. I sighed heavily before going to my bathroom and jumping into the shower attempting to once again forget all of last night's events.

I decided to wear something a little more casual

today, not the little kid-baggy outfits I used to wear but neither was it anything like my yesterdays outfit. I choose a nice pair of blue jeans with a perfectly fitted yellow t-shirt. There was no extra skin showing but the outfit did outline all my curves giving me a more natural beauty rather than a forced one. My hair was pulled back into a messy pony tail with strands of

hair falling out and I decided to boycott makeup wanting to embrace a more natural look.

I looked in the mirror as a smile appeared on my face. Ignoring the fact that my cheek and neck were bruised I actually looked good. It was a more in-between look and evidently I liked it. I wasn't overly trying but I definitely was trying a little more than I used to - giving me a more matured

natural beauty.

The sound of a vehicle peeling out of my driveway forced me to run to the spare bedroom across the hall to look out the window. I saw my brother's Chevy zooming down the street as my heart began to accelerate. I knew where he was going and I knew it couldn't be good.

I ran back to my room and grabbed my phone quickly dialing Trent's cell

phone number. It rang and continued to ring unanswered finally going to voice mail.

Thinking quickly I looked through our caller display to find Derrek's number. I knew that's where Trent would be heading.

"I thought you never wanted to talk to me again."

Derrek's voice answered the phone sounding amused.

"I think Trent's going to kill Liam!" I almost yelled

into the phone.

"Stasee?"

It was

at that moment that I realized

that I didn't

blame Liam for what he did to

me, I blamed

myself. If I hadn't decided to

change my

appearance and try to look

like Candise and the

Crew then maybe Liam

wouldn't have forced

himself on me. I had got so

caught up with trying

to pay Damen back that I had

stooped so low as
to dress up like a slut.

The

girls in McLennan that dress
the way I did

yesterday are the type to give
themselves freely

to any guy. Liam was far past
drunk last night and

though what he did was

wrong, I still blamed

myself for it. He did deserve

to be beaten up for

hitting me but honestly I did

not wish death upon

him.

"Did
you hear me?!" I said
panicked, "Trent is
going to your house to kill
Liam!"

Derrek
laughed into the phone which
made me
realize why Trent threw his
phone against the
wall.

"This is serious!" I yelled
angrily.

"Calm
down ya' grouch. No one's at
my house

right now, I'm on my way to school and Liam has gone on a much needed vacation."

"What?!" I asked confused.

"Well,

when Liam woke up this morning and realized what he did, he decided to go visit with his aunt in California until things...settle down a bit. I think he knew your brother would be going after him."

"Oh."

"So I'm guessing you need a ride to school?"

"What? Oh...I didn't even think about-"

"I'll

be there in five minutes." He cut me off before hanging up.

Chapter 20

Derrek pulled up in his silver 2009 Lamborghini Gallardo; usually when people

would see that car
they would stare with envy
but I merely rolled my
eyes with disgust. He looked
over at me and
smirked before hooking the
horn even though I
was already at the car. I
opened up the passenger
side door, gave him an evil
glare before getting
inside.

"Nice bag." He said
sarcastically while looking
down at my batman backpack.
"Shut-up and go!" I snapped

back.

"Someone's P.M.Sing..."

Derrek mumbled as he pulled his car out of the driveway and sped down the street without even giving me the chance to put my seatbelt on. I glared at him once again before I pulled my seatbelt with much emphasize and wrapped it around me angrily.

"Honestly Derrek, why is it you can be such a complete dick."

"Ummm...Because I have money."

I couldn't tell if he was joking or not but either way it still pissed me off. I looked over at the overly muscular guy sitting in the driver's seat; he had a snobbish grin plastered to his face. Curiosity was beginning to get the best of me as I finally asked the question that had been on my mind for the past 15 minutes.

"Derrek, why are you all of a

sudden talking to me
and driving me to school? I'm
not part of your 'in'
crowd so why are you even
acknowledging me."

"You can blame Trent for that
one. He wanted me
to keep an eye on you, make
sure nothing
happens..." He laughed but
continued. "I sure
fucked up last night, huh?"
I rolled my eyes at him. He
was such an
inconsiderate bastard.

"I didn't know you and Trent

were such good friends." I finally said breaking the silence.

"There's a lot you don't know."

Suddenly a memory from last night I had tried to

completely erase from my mind appeared. It was

right after I had chugged half a bottle of Tequila

and I was drunk...too drunk.

The thought of my

lips pressed up against

Derrek's almost forced me

to puke right then and there.

"Look Derrek...about last night-

"

"What part?" He cut me off.

"The...umm...kiss." I said as my cheeks flushed red.

"Don't worry about it."

"It's just I don't...like you like that..." I mumbled,

"What I mean is...That-"

He cut me off again before I could continue "I said don't worry about it, I'm not attracted to you."

"Oh right, your only attracted you older women." I snapped back.

I had no reason to be jealous but maybe my insecurities were starting to take over and I was hoping for some reassurance from Derrek. Which, apparently I was not going to get.

Derrek laughed his loud hearty laugh, "and where did you hear that."

"Hey, just because I never used to talk to anyone doesn't mean I didn't hear all the rumors. Like for instants how you've never

slept with any of the high school girls and that you only go for older women."

"Like you said, those are all rumors." He said nonchalantly.

"So what are you telling me you're a virgin?"

"Fuck no; I lost my virginity to Tiffany in 10th grade."

"Oh, and she's the only girl you've ever slept with?" I said with disbelief.

"Yes actually, she is the only

girl I've ever slept
with." He replied truthfully.
He turned his head
towards me while biting his
lip as if he were
having a debate inside his
head but then finally
continued. "I didn't sleep with
her because I
wanted to either. I slept with
her because I
thought maybe if I had sex
with a girl, I'd start
being attracted to girls."
"What are you taking abou-" I
stopped mid

sentence as my mouth
dropped to the floor. "Wait
are you saying..."

"Unfortunately, yes...I'm in the
same boat as
Trent-Or should I say closet."

"You know about Trent?" I
said in surprise before
realization dawned on me.

"Wait, are you two..."

"It's an on and off kind of
relationship and I'm
guessing right now it's off. He
was pretty pissed
at me this morning."

"Oh my god..." I managed to

whisper in daze of shock. "But you seem so-" "Straight?" He finished my sentence. "It's called acting...I act like a big dick head who's too good for all the girls in high school, that way they don't constantly try hitting on me. Well, aside from the stupid ones like Candise." "Well, you're sure good at it." I said still completely taken back. "Are you saying I'd make it as an actor?" He

joked.

"Very good possibility." I said while smiling back at him. "Does anyone know...Like about you?"

"No." He said sternly while adding in the same tone, "other than Trent and I'd like to keep it that way."

"No problem; My lips are sealed." I wasn't lying either. Even though Derrek was a complete asshole (whether it was all an act or not I still

wasn't sure of) but I knew this secret was not mine to tell. "So...If no one's knows about you but my brother...Why did you tell me."

"I don't know...I guess I feel like I can trust you."

He admitted; I smiled up at him in response. "I can...Can't I?"

"Of course, your dating my brother so your practically family!"

This made him smile but just as quickly as the

smile appeared it faded. "Well, I don't think we're actually together right now..."

"He'll get over it."

"Hopefully..." He spoke softly as he stared out the windshield.

The silence was starting to become uncomfortable as I tried to change the subject.

"So why don't

you and Trent just tell everyone you're dating.

Why do you have to hide, I

mean it would be so

much easier for you two if you

didn't always have
to pretend to be something
your not."

"Shit." He shook his head,
"Not likely, we're in
high school doll. If me and
Trent let any of those
little immature teens know
our real sexuality, we'd
be teased more than the band
geeks."

I shook my head at him in
annoyance. "You guys
are all the same."

"What are you talking about
now?"

"You, Trent, Damen... You guys care too much what other people think; you are all so embarrassed to just be yourselves."

"Okay, Damen has NOTHING to be embarrassed about." Derrek said while pulling into a parking spot. I was so lost in the conversation I hadn't even realized we were all ready at school.

I turned to look at Derrek and said, "Neither do

you or Trent."

With that I got out of the car and began to walk towards the school, not once glancing back at Derrek though I knew he was still watching me.

~

I watched the rain pouring outside through my classroom window as my nerves began to spike up. Soon the lunch bell would ring and because of the weather the whole student body would be in

the cafeteria for lunch. I didn't know what to be expecting; whether Damen would act how he usually did around everyone else or if maybe by some chance he really was going to change. Either way

I was scared for lunch to come and as every second ticked by my nerves continued to grow.

I stared at the round clock that sat above the chalk board at the front of the

classroom as the
big hand joined the little one
at the number 12. At
that same instant the bell rang
loud vibrating in
my ears as my body froze with
nothing but my
heart rapidly beating.
The whole classroom erupted
with noise as
everyone piled out of the door
hurrying away for
their one hour of freedom.
Both English and
History class had dragged by
so slowly this

morning but now that it was actually lunch it felt like it approached too soon. I slowly picked myself up off my seat as I could feel my palms begin to grow warmer. I made my way out of the empty classroom as slow as a slug before heading to my locker. It felt like barely seconds had gone by but I had already dropped off my books and was standing in front of the

cafeteria doors.

I could hear loud laughter coming from within the room on the other side of the doors. Already I knew the café was going to be unbelievably packed and obviously Damen lied beyond these doors as well.

"Okay stop being such a baby and open the door,"

I muttered quietly to myself. I inhaled a deep breath before pulling the door open and entering inside the

cafeteria, which too no surprise was completely packed.

I peered around the large room; looking from one end to the other. Almost all the tables were already taken up with one or two people sitting at them while their friends stood in the long line up to get food. Just standing in the crowded space all alone was beginning to make me claustrophobic.

Deciding maybe this wasn't

such a good idea I quickly turned around and was only second away from running back through the doors when someone's voice immediately stopped me.

"Stasee!"

His voice rang through my ears like a perfect melody making my stomach flutter around. I didn't have to look to see who it was because only one person in the world could make my body feel so

vulnerable; Damen.

"Where are you running off too?" I could hear the humor in his voice as I turned around to see

Damen standing only feet away. An amazingly cute smile was plastered to his face with his oh

so-perfect teeth shimmering under the

fluorescent lighting. His chocolate brown hair was a bit messy but it definitely made him look that

much sexier. He had worn-out

blue jeans on and a perfectly fitted black hooded sweatshirt.

"Oh...I-uh-I...was going to-uh-go grab...some LUNCH!" I stuttered, obviously not being able to think of something quick enough.

"You're a horrible liar." He said teasingly as I felt my cheeks flush pink. "Here, I'll grab you some food from the café." He insisted while my response was barely a nod of

my head.

Damen turned around and began to head for the big line up of students as I looked around the cafeteria once more. It seemed Damen yelling my name sort of got everyone's attention because almost the whole student body was now staring at us in shock. The table only feet away from me sat 4 girls from my grade, I could here them whispering to each other in

jealousy.

'Did Damen Hertz honestly just offer to buy the Rainie girl lunch?' One girl whispered

'Seriously, she's not even that pretty.. I mean look how boring she looks-a t-shirt and jeans? How is that even possible?' Another replied.

'She's actually kind of cute but not as hot as she was yesterday.' A boy from my class cut into their conversation while eyeing me

up and down.

Instantly the girl beside him
smacked up upside
the head which made me
smile in response.

"Stasee, you coming or are you
going to stand
there all day?" Damen called
for me from the line,
his perfect smile widening.
I could feel my stomach
fluttering happily inside
me while I seemed to be
wearing an erasable
smile on my face. I quickly
jogged over to Damen

and stood beside him in the line. Even standing in the line staring at someone's back I could still feel half the cafeteria's eyes on Damen and me.

"Ignore them." Damen whispered as he reached his hand down and coiled his fingers in-between mine. My body exploded with fireworks; his skin against mine was all he needed to do to force me to melt inside and forget the entire world around

us.

I looked up at him with a shy smile while he looked down at me with that perfect smile of his that never seemed to leave his lips. The loud noises that surrounded us seemed to vanish away as I became lost in his perfect brown eyes. I swear

I could stand there forever, his hand enclosed around mine while our eyes seemed to want

nothing more than to stare
into the others
forever. I could feel my heart
beating against my
chest as my eyes began to seek
out his lush lips.

I felt my body rising up barely
acknowledging that
fact I was now standing on my
tiptoes. My eyes
stayed connected to his lips as
I began to move
closer to him, already
imagining the taste of his
sweet mouth.

"Damen! Oh my god, where

were you this
morning!" Candise's annoying
shriek broke through
our
publicly intimate moment as
all the sounds
around me surfaced. I turned
around quickly to see
Candise
dashing towards Damen; each
time her
heels clicked against the floor
indicating her
nearness my stomach would
drop lower.
I quickly pulled my hand

away from Damen almost
the exact second Candise
wrapped her arms
around his neck. She shoved
me out of the way as
I lost my balance and began to
stumble.

I looked down at my feet just
in time to untangle
them and prevent myself from
falling. I looked up
at Damen and Candise at
exactly the wrong
moment; Candise pull
Damen's head towards her
as she pressed her lips hard

against his.

My whole body went num as everything around me became a loud messy circus of noises. I could feel my head spinning out of control as I became overly dizzy though somehow I had managed to turn away and begin to run.

Chapter 21

"Damen! Oh my god, where

were you this
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as she pressed her lips hard

against his.

My whole body went num as everything around me became a loud messy circus of noises. I could feel my head spinning out of control as I became overly dizzy though somehow I had managed to turn away and begin to run. Now, Presenting....

Part 21:

"Get away from me!"

I was half way to the Cafeteria exit when

Damen's voice reached my

ears, I wasn't exactly sure if it had only been my imagination adding to the chaos inside my head but either way I stopped dead in my tracks.

"Stasee!" His voice came again; this time loud and clear as any false thoughts began to evaporate. I slowly turned around to see Damen running towards me with Candise tagging behind him.

"Damen! What do you mean? What are you

doing?" Her whiney voice made me shutter in annoyance.

Within seconds Damen was standing in front of me, breathing heavily while he tried to catch his breath. I could feel every pair of eyes in the room directed towards us in anticipation; waiting and wondering what was going to happen next. Even the few teacher supervisors in the Café stood still with both shock and curiosity.

"Stasee, you need to stop running away from me. What are you afraid of?" He finally spoke once as his breathing became more even.

At first I said nothing as I was a little taken back by the accusation but then my eyes landed on Candise. "But what about you and her?" I said while nodding my head to the girl who was still trying to approach us though her nine inch heels

were slowing her down a bit.

"There is no Me and Candise...There never was and there never will be, honestly Stasee. I have never done, tried, or will do anything with her, never."

"But-" I started to say but was quickly interrupted as Damen's lips crashed down on mine in an explosion of pleasurable tingles.

I felt his arms wrap tightly around my waist as he

pulled me in against his hard chest. My arms were hanging loosely at my sides as I stood there in complete shock which lasted merely a millisecond before I threw my arms hastily around his neck and pulled myself up towards him. Our lips moved together in perfect harmony as our hands eagerly tried pulling each other closer which was almost impossible.

My knees felt weak beneath

me though my hold
around his neck and his hold
around my waist kept
me
from crumbling to the ground.
His mouth
tasted just as sweet as last time
though instead I
could taste a hint of maple
syrup. His tongue was
just beginning to find its way
into my mouth when
someone's hand grasped my
shoulder and pulled
me away.

That's when I realized we

were still in the cafeteria. I looked around at everyone as they stared with their mouths dropped and eyes wide. I could feel my cheeks begin to burn up with embarrassment from our very public and yet very passionate kiss. I looked up at Damen as he seemed to be coming out of the same cloudy daze as me.

"W.T.F was that?!" Candise nearly yelled from

behind me instantly forcing me to turn around to face her while covering my ears from her irritable voice.

"Candise, why can't you just leave us alone?"

Damen spoke sternly as he came to stand at my side.

"What are you talking about Damen, you actually like this 'little' girl?" She said while emphasizing the word little.

"Little? Candise she is 16 years

old and far more
mature than you and your
little groupies put
together." Damen snapped
back.

"But Damen...Look at her, she
isn't even HOT!"

Candise whined.

"What do you think you're
hot? You look like a
cheap prostitute and well shit,
you act like one
too! I'm sorry to break it to you
'darling' but guys
don't like sluts like you.

Stasee on the other hand,

well, she is unbelievably gorgeous. She presents herself in a way that you never could."

I looked up at Damen with complete awe, his words making me want to wrap my arms around him again but never let go.

"Uh! Whatever Damen!" She said while flicking her wrist and putting her bare balm in his face. If she was trying to act mature she was definitely failing horribly. "And you..."

Candise turn to face me with her face squished up into a very unattractive smug look. "Well, you can have him all you want...You-dirty-little-slut!"

It was at about that moment when I could no longer handle Candise's voice. Honestly, it had nothing to do with what she was saying anymore, I could care less what came out of her mouth. No, what came next was because I

couldn't handle
hearing her screeching, high
pitched, whiney
voice anymore.

My fist had already been
clenched since the
moment I heard her voice but I
had been trying to
control myself; I tried to
remind myself that I won.

Damen was
mine and he didn't want her
not now,
not ever, but a person can have
only so much
control.

I felt my arm reach back
before springing forward
in one fast motion as it
connected hard with her
face. I felt something crunch
under the pressure
as she flew to the floor and
began to scream
loudly, tears began flooding
her face. "Sheeee
brokeee my noseeee!" Her
voice yelled out
instantly making me regret
doing it because
obviously it didn't shut her
up, it only made it

worse.

I felt Damen's hand lightly tug my arm trying to get my attention. At first I just stared down at Candise completely shocked at what I had just done but I felt Damen growing impatient as I finally looked up at him.

"We have to get out of here..."

He said while I followed his gaze and saw the few supervisors now advancing on us. "Like now!"

He grabbed my hand and began to pull me which finally broke me out of my shocked trance. We both began to run; hand in hand out of the cafeteria and down the hallways. We were running so fast and kept looking behind us that we didn't even notice the old Janitor slowly making his way across the hallway. Our interlocked hands ended up knocking Mr.

Gergosh straight on his butt as we flew by him.

"You crazy, crazy kids, with all your hyper-ness jumping-jumpy inside you! If you want to run...Go in a Marathon!" He yelled back at us as he began to get up off the floor.

I felt bad not helping him up but it was either; go to the principal's office with a phone call home and perhaps suspension or be a rude teen and leave the old man on the

ground. I had already punched a girl in the face; why not add another something to my 'bad girl list'. Next thing I knew Damen and I were scrambling into his GMC truck. The second we were both securely inside with the doors locked we roared into laughter though it didn't last long when we saw a few teachers running out of the School's front entrance. I watched Damen fumbling for his

keys inside his hooded pocket.

"Hurry, hurry, hurry." I muttered as I watched the teachers getting closer and closer.

They just made it to the parking lot when I heard the engine roar to life. Quickly Damen shifted the truck into drive and pulled out of the parking spot and sped down the road. I suddenly roared into laughter while holding my stomach. I couldn't believe I had done that and yet

it seemed so
unrealistically funny. Damen
looked over at me
before he began to laugh to,
both our voices
echoing through the truck.
It was a good five minutes
later when our laughter
began to cease.

I looked over at him as I bit
down
on my lip. I still couldn't
believe what he had done;
he
had kissed me in front of the
whole student

body and then called Candise a slut. He had finally decided not to hide his feeling for me and had made, what ever our relationship was, very public. "What are you looking at?" Damen looked over at me sheepishly, a half smirk plastered to his face. I shook my head, "you surprise me, that's all." "What do you mean?" I looked up at him with a shy smile, "well...I just wasn't expecting that...In the

cafeteria."

"I told you, Stasee. I'm going to change...I don't care what they think, especially Candise. You are the only person I care about and I'm not going to be afraid of showing that." He looked out windshield before adding, "anymore."

I nodded my head as I peered out the window. I could feel my cheeks slightly turning red so I changed the subject. "So,

where are we going?"

"I was thinking of just heading to my house. I mean, if that's okay with you?"

"Yah, that's great."

~~

"Did you want something to drink?" Damen asked me once we finally made it to his house.

I was sitting on the couch in his living room as he stood at the dining room entrance looking over at me.

"Just water is fine." I replied.

He nodded before
disappearing.

My eyes began to wander
around the room; it was
big and yet completely cozy.

There were large
windows that looked out at
their front yard, the sun
shined through lighting the
place up. Their

couches were a beige color
with hardwood flooring
and

black glass top coffee table
and side tables.

There was no T.V but a big

fireplace sat where
the T.V would have been.
I turned my head behind me
as I heard footsteps
coming into the living room. I
was a little surprised
at what I seen. It wasn't
Damen; instead it was
Karis wearing nothing but a
guys superman t-shirt
and underwear. I inverted my
eye brows in
confusion as I watched her
face turn a different
shade of pink. She pulled
down on the bottom of

the shirt trying to cover her bare legs.

"Karis? What are you doing here?" I finally asked.

She stared me with the same wide eyes, "I should be asking you the same thing."

"Yah, well, I asked you first."

The look of surprise on her face quickly vanished as she ran over to me and plopped down on the couch; still wearing nothing but the t-shirt and underwear. "I slept here last night." She said with

a smile that reached her eyes.
"What?! Tell me more..." I said
excitingly.

Karis' smile grew as she went
into detail about
what had happened.

Apparently, Karis had gotten
a little too drunk last night
and Brandon ended up
having to take care of her. He
was bringing her
home when she had blurted
out her true feelings
for him. Brandon brought her
here and let her
sleep on his bed; when they

woke up this morning
they decided to skip school
and talk.

"We finally talked about
everything." She smiled,
"he's liked me for years Stasee,
but he was too
scared to say anything."

"Yah, I kind of got that vibe." I
pulled my knees
up to my chest and wrapped
my arms around
them.

"I think, but don't quote me on
this, but I think we
might be...like, officially

dating." She blushed, "he kissed me!"

"Awwww, Seriously?" I felt like I was being watched as I turned my head and saw Damen leaning on the doorway. He smiled up at me before waving his hand dismissively; a way of saying he didn't want to interrupt us.

"Yes!" She cried out happily, "it was my first real kiss and oh my god, Stasee, it was magical!" She

sighed happily before continuing, "so what happened to you last night? Last I remember you had disappeared with Derrek." Instantly my eyes shot over to Damen; though he still stood there with his sexy little smirk. Karis' eyes followed mine as she finally realized Damen was standing there. "Ooooooh." She said as if that explained everything. "I'll tell you about it later." I finally stated even

though I hadn't decided if I even wanted to tell her. Honestly, I didn't want to ever talk about it again.

"I'll hold you to that." Karis said while getting up off the couch. She looked over at Damen and then back at me before winking. "I should probably get back up stairs before Brandon gets worried." She bit her lip before skipping out of the living room;

not even caring about her half-nakedness.

Damen's eyes stayed locked on me; even as Karis walked by him in nothing but a t-shirt. He sat down beside me while handing me over a glass of water. "So, apparently my little bro had a girlfriend." He smirked.

"Apparently." I grinned back before taking a sip of my water.

I looked up at Damen as my eye scanned over his

body, taking in every detail.
He was completely
breathtaking, every feature too
perfect to be real.

I could sit there and stare at
him for days and be
utterly content in doing so. I
felt like reaching up
to touch him just to prove to
myself that this
wasn't a fragment of my
imagination; that today's
events were real.

Ring, ring, ring

The
sound of my cell phone

ringing forced me to
jump slightly out of surprise. I
giggled before
reaching into my pocket and
pulling it out. I looked
down at the caller ID; 'Derrek'.
"I wonder
what he wants..." I mumbled
to myself
as Damen peeked over my
shoulder trying to see
what I was talking about.
"Hello?" I answered the phone.
"Stasee!?"
Derrek's urgent voice echoed
in my

ears.

"Derrek, is that you?"

"Yes! Stasee,

you need you hurry!" He
exclaimed;

he sounded like he was on the
verge of crying.

"What...Derrek, what are you
talking-"

He

quickly cut me off, "Liam!" He
gasped out,

"Liam! He never made it to
California!"

Chapter 22

I felt my heart sink as the whole world around me became a little distant movie. I held my breath as I stared out at the fireplace in front of me. I felt unable to form words in my mouth as Derrek's words began to sink in. -He never made it to California- The word's echoed in my mind as thousands of possibilities

circulated through my head.

"W-what do you mean?" I stuttered as I looked over at Damen with wide eyes. He looked back at me with curiosity though I completely ignored him as all my attention was directed towards Derrek on the phone.

"I don't have any time for this, Stasee. Just come to Liam's house...FAST!?" His urgent voice forced me to think of the worst case

scenario.

"Get off the phone!" I could hear my brother's distant voice yelling in the background. The line instantly went dead as my mouth dropped and my cell phone fell to the ground. I could hear it hitting the hard wood flooring as the back piece broke off and scattered across the floor. "We need to go!" I panicked as I stood up from the couch and began to run towards the front

door. I could hear Damen's footsteps running behind me.

"Stasee, Stasee! What's going on?" He asked as he finally caught up to me, grabbing onto my arm; turning me to face him.

"T-Trent...We have to go!" I cried out; making absolutely no sense. I turned to face the door as I pulled it open and ran out into the chilly night air.

Damen followed me and I could tell he was utterly

confused by the way he kept
staring at me like I
was some run-away-mental-
patient. "Stasee!" He
yelled out, trying to get my
attention which,
surprisingly enough worked.
I turned around to face him
and even though I
stood completely still, my
whole body was moving
at an unheard of pace. My
heart hammered fast
inside my chest as my body
continued to shake
with anxiety. I felt my knee's

weakening beneath
me as my head span out of
control.

"What is going on?" Damen
demanded.

I knew our time was limited
and Damen's constant
questions were only slowing
us down. I rolled my
eyes angrily before replaying
mine and Derrek's
conversation to him. All my
words seemed to mix
in together as I spoke as fast as
an auctioneer. I
could barely understand what

I was saying but
Damen seemed to of got the
just of it because
before I could even finish, he
was already running
towards his truck.

Every second felt like a
minute and every minute
felt like an hour as I jumped
into the truck and we
sped down the street.

Different scenes began to
circulate through my mind as
both Damen and I
sat in the truck silently. I
watched as normal

things passed by my window
as we drove; kids
playing happily, cute old
couples holding hands as
they walked down the
sidewalk, dogs running
around in their yards.
Everything seemed so
normal and yet my life was the
complete opposite.
I was driving to my almost
rapist's house to most
likely find him strangled to
death by my brother.
Just the thought of it forced
my stomach to turn

as I tried to hold myself back from puking. It really had nothing to do with Liam; I mean I could almost care less about what might've happened to him.

No, all my worry and distress was for Trent and only Trent. Honestly, I never really thought he was capable of doing the things that were now flashing through my head but then again, I had

never seen him as angry as he was this morning. I closed my eyes as I imagined myself walking into Liam's house; a complete blood bath. Even though it was only my imagination making these scenes up in my own head it still hadn't stopped my stomach from dropping. Liam's dead, motionless body lying on the ground as Trent stood up beside him. A bloody kitchen knife clenched in his hand as

police barged in through the doors. All of them; looking over at Liam's body before charging at my brother; taking him down to the ground hard. As Trent fell to the ground, his face would smash against the floor before erupting in blood. Instantly I opened my eyes, desperately trying to shake the thought away. Trent wouldn't do that, he couldn't, there was just no way.

"Stasee..." Damen's soft voice interrupted my thoughts as I looked over to him. "It's going to be okay."

He reached over to me and tucked my hair behind my ear. His fingers trailed down my neck; the light touch of his rough skin against the softness of mine forced the hair on my arms to stand up. His fingers continued to down towards my collar bone

before his hand landed on my shoulder. Gently, he began to massage my shoulder as he looked up at me with caring eyes; utter concern masked his face.

"It...It's a-all my f-fault..." I murmured as my eyes began to fill up with water. I closed my eyes lightly as two tears trickled down my cheeks.

Damen's arm snaked around my neck as he pulled me in towards him. I scooted

over to the middle
seat as I snuggled against his
warm body. He
tightened his hold on me for a
second before
loosening it; he began to twirl
strands of my hair
between his fingers.

"How is it your fault?" He
whispered quietly as he
let go of my hair and began to
caress my arm.

I slightly bit down on my
bottom lip as another
tear trailed down my face, "If I
h-hadn't tried to

c-change...Then m-maybe
Liam wouldn't of..." My
voice began to trail off as more
tears left my
eyes.

"What!?" Damen staggered; his
hand instantly
stopped rubbing me. He
shook his head as he
looked out of the windshield
with disgust. "Stasee,
do NOT
blame yourself for what
happened. It was
NOT your fault...Liam has
always been a disturbed

boy and what he did was wrong. Very Wrong!"

"But-"

"No, it doesn't matter if you wore clothes a little more out there; that still does not mean what

Liam did was right!" He growled furiously, "even if he would have done that to Candise; it still would NOT have been right nor would it have been her fault. It was Liam's fault...So don't you dare try to blame yourself." He exhaled

deeply, "okay?"

My face was gleamed with wetness as I shakily began to nod my head. I looked up at Damen as his crispy eyes began to grow soft once again. He looked down at me reluctantly before tightening his grip around my shoulders. He then held me close against his own body as I nuzzled into him.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell." He said quietly.

A small smile twitched as the

corner of my lips, "I know."

He looked back down at me and smiled sweetly, almost in a thankful kind of way. I watched him as his head bent down slightly and he pressed his lips gently against the top of my head.

The small-almost invisible smile on my face grew as my cheek flushed pink. I fiddled with around with the hem of my shirt before

looking away shyly. Even at times like this, Damen managed to make me smile; it wasn't a large smile and maybe it wasn't even considered a smile but either way I glad he was here. I laid my head back against his chest as I attempted to get as close to him as humanly possible.

I cleared my throat, "do you know where Liam lives?" I asked him as I looked out the window

watching as we passed by more houses. Honestly, I had no clue where we were anymore.

"Yes...its a little ways out. I'm trying to go as fast as I can without being pulled over."

I nodded my head against his chest. His one hand stayed glued to the stirring wheel as his other hand continued to rub my arm comfortingly. I looked over at the car clock; it had only been 10

minutes since we left Damen's house though it felt like an eternity.

Every second that went by seemed like a second too much. Anything could happen in a second and as my mind began to wander once again I wished we could just be there already. Thoughts of Trent being locked up in jail for life scared me more than words could express. He was my brother, my best

friend; I loved him more than both my parents combined.

Once again, I tried to shake the thought out of my mind

but it seemed to be clogged in there. I just

kept replaying the horrific possibilities of what could be happening at this precise moment.

Even with Damen's arms wrapped securely around me; it still didn't give me the comfort I needed.

There was no denying that him being here, helped me to keep somewhat control of my sanity, but even so it wasn't enough to keep the bad thoughts away.

"Stasee..." Damen's hesitant voice brought my attention back to reality.

"Yah?"

"...We're here."

Chapter 23

My heart stopped as I slowly looked up at the house that we were now parked in front of. Everything looked so normal; it was just your regular house in which wasn't too big nor too small. It was a perfect little cozy house with blue stucco sidings with black roofing. Three steps led up to the small porch which a cute little swing chair sat beside the white

front door.

I took a deep breath before looking up to Damen,

"so...I guess we'd better go find Trent and

Derrek?" I whispered quietly; still fearing what it is we would find.

Damen nodded his head as he turned off the

engine. I reached a shaky hand over to the door

handle and opened up the truck door; slowly

climbing out of the truck, being careful not to fall.

"Hang up the phone!"
Instantly my body froze as
Trent's yelling voice
reached my ears; he was inside
the house. My
stomach turned inside me;
there was something
about his voice that honestly
scared me. Suddenly
my heart began to race as I
quickly ran towards
the house not wasting another
second. I could
vaguely hear Damen running
after me though I
completely ignored him as I

ran up the stairs and reached the door. I didn't even bother knocking as I grabbed the door knob and pushed against the door; fumbling into the house. "Stasee?!"

Once I caught my balance I turned my head to look over at Trent. My eyes went wide with complete horror. The whole living room was a disaster; the glass coffee table was smashed into tiny peices, framed picture

scattered across the floor, the space rug was scrunched up and lying in a corner of the room and most of the cushions from the couch were thrown around randomly. The whole living room looked as if a small tornado had blown through and destroyed everything.

I looked back up at Trent. He was standing there with his arm securely wrapped around the neck of a chubby little red head; Liam.

Blood smeared
across Trent's face, starting at
his nose in which
honestly looked broken. His
hair was a complete
mess on top of his head and as
my eye's trailed
over to Liam he looked just as
bad. His lip looked
as if it had been cut right open
and there was a
small black bruise already
forming under his eye.
But that was definitely not the
worst of it. I
looked back up at Trent as

something finally
caught my eye...Something I
hadn't seen at first.

In his free hand he was
holding a hand gun; the
gun directly pointed at Liam's
head. Tears ran
down Liam's face as he barely
even acknowledged
my presence. He stood there
squirming against
Trent's hold as he continued to
beg for his life in
quiet almost silent sobs.

"T-Trent..." I barely
whispered.

Damen suddenly was standing right beside me as he began to take in the whole scene.

"Trent! What are you doing?"

Damen's stern voice echoed through the room.

I began to scan the room in search of Derrek.

Finally I saw him on the other side of the room

standing against the wall

holding his hands up in the air as if he were surrendering.

He looked over at

me with slight relief as he

mouthed the words

'Thank god.'

Trent shook his head

obviously trying to get over

the shock of Damen and I

barging into the house.

"He can't get away with what

he did to you

Stasee!" He said staring at me

and only me as he

slightly loosened his grip on

Liam.

"Okay, that may be true but

still Trent, this will

not solve anything!" I finally

replied once I found

my voice. I slowly took a step forward so I was once again standing next to Damen.

"St-Stay back!" Trent stuttered as he nudged the gun against Liam's head which forced me to freeze. My whole body was not vibrating in fear and worry; I couldn't believe my own eyes, it was almost as if Trent had passed the point of sanity.

But I guess this was normal behavior for a brother

who would risk his own life for the safety of his little sister; he is my big brother and pretty much my both my parents in one. He feels the need to protect me and would obviously go to any extent to do so...even if it were morally wrong and completely out of character for him.

"Trent, Please. The police are on their way...You can't do this!" Derrek finally spoke up though he

didn't dare move an inch as he did so.

The Police? I thought to myself as I began to panic. The thought of my brother being sent to jail forced tears to emerge in my eyes. I couldn't live without Trent, he couldn't go to jail...He just couldn't.

Anger quickly masked Trent's face, "Derrek, I told you to shut up!" Trent barked back at him. "Why are you protecting Liam? Do

you have a 'thing' for him or something?" My brother hissed jealously.

"No! I just don't want to lose YOU!" Derrek cried back.

Trent stared at Derrek for a few my moments as frustration and sadness began to take over his face as he kept his eyes locked with Derrek's.

Instantly, I could just see the passion and love they felt for each other; just by looking between

the two of them anybody could tell how much they truly cared for one another.

Even Derrek; big tough, asshole Derrek was standing there tears rolling down his cheeks in fear of losing Trent. He stood there knowing that moving would only anger Trent further; staying still, he looked at Trent with pleading eyes. I could just tell by his face expression that he was feeling

the same emotions I was feeling. Not fear for Liam but fear of losing the one person he cared about most in the world; Trent.

"The Police?...W-who called the police?" I finally butted in.

The second the words left my lips I regretted saying it. Trent's teeth grind together furiously as complete hatred grew in his eyes. "Liam did..." He growled in a low voice as his

eyes looked down at
the floor.

I then followed his gaze down
to the ground as my
eyes

fell on a small cell phone that
was now

broken into two separate
pieces.

"Oh Trent..." I whispered
quietly.

I felt Damen's hand reach
towards mine and
intertwine between my
fingers; lightly he
squeezed my hand

encouragingly. It was such a small gesture but even so it was all I needed to keep myself from falling apart.

I looked up at Damen as I watched his eyes trail towards Trent; he held his head up high as he shook his head slowly. I had to admire him; he was probably the only one of all of us who was able to stay completely calm in such a hellish situation.

"Trent." He spoke softly but sternly, "you have to put the gun down and let go of Liam. I know how much you want to make him suffer but killing him is only going to hurt Stasee more."

"Yah!?" Trent fought back, "and how would YOU know how much I want to make him suffer?"

"Because I want to make him suffer for what he did to her!" He said as I watch his control began

to slip. "There is nothing I would like more than to force him to lay on the ground and beg for his life as I rip his head..." He trailed off as he realized his voice was growing louder and louder with anger.

Trent chuckled, a laugh that honestly forced the hair on my arms to stand up. He sounded completely different and psychotic; nothing like my big brother.

"Yes, because you CARE for my sister so much...Huh, Damen? If you actually did care for her you wouldn't have treated her like complete shit...Your almost as BAD as Liam!" Trent spat.

"Trent...Don't." Derrek said as he finally lowered his arms.

Trent's words forced Damen to lower his head in what I'm guessing was shame. I could see the sadness on his face as he

lightly bit down on his lip. He slightly lifted his head as he began to speak though his voice was not nearly as firm as before, "Derrek, it's okay...He's right." He whispered quietly as he looked towards me as if he were trying to explain himself to me rather than Trent. "I made a mistake...A few mistakes. I honestly had, still have, strong feelings for you Stasee, but I don't know. I was

being thick
headed; a jerk, an ass, a
prick...There are so
many words to describe what
a complete idiot I
was and I'm so sorry."

"Damen, it's okay. I know..." I
then squeezed his
hand this time.

"No, Stasee just let me finish."
I nodded my head as silence
filled the room. Well,
almost everyone was silent
aside Liam who was
still sobbing and now
hiccupping as he muttered

something along the lines of
'Let me go, please,
please, please, don't, don't,
don't.' Honestly, I
don't even think he knew
what was happening
anymore.

Damen reached towards me as
his cupped my
face in his free hand. "I know I
was stupid and
immature, letting the stupid
judgmental kids at
school rule my life. It took me
a while but I finally
realized it doesn't matter what

they think...They don't matter to me. I could live without them but I can't live without you." He stared me straight in the eyes as he spoke so sincerely; honestly, for the few seconds he was speaking I had completely forgotten where we were and what was happening. "I was so worried about my reputation which was completely stupid. I don't even understand how I could have

even remotely been embarrassed of you. You are the most amazing girl I have ever met. That night I brought you up onto the cliff? I have never in my life sat up all night long and just talked; we talked about everything and even pointless things like who would win in a fight-"
"Batman or Superman..." I finished his sentence as I felt my lips begin to form a small smile.

"Yes." He slightly smiled back,
"from dusk until
dawn; we just talked and yet
that was probably
one of the best nights of my
life. Also Stasee,
your real and you don't try to
be someone you're
not."

"Aside from yesterday..." I said
quietly which
made him smile again.

"That doesn't even
matter... You're still the best
thing that has ever happened
to me Stasee Raine

and I'm sorry it took me so long to realize that."

It felt as if my heart had melted inside me as I looked into Damen's chocolate brown eyes.

Butterflies had taken over my stomach as the urge to jump into Damen's arms grew stronger. I wanted so badly to wrap my arms around him and never let him go but I knew that would have to wait for later. I then looked back over towards my

brother; his grip on Liam seemed to of loosen a little once again.

"Let me go!" Liam's voice cried out as he nudged into Trent. Everything seemed to go into slow motion as Trent began to stumble backwards. I even watched as his fists clenched; his index finger slipped against the trigger as a loud bang echoed throughout the whole house. Everyone began screaming from the

loud noise as an invisible force shot me to the ground. I groaned as I fell to my knees and hands as my head instantly began to spin.

"S-Stasee...I'm sorry. Oh my god, Stasee!! I-I didn't mean to!" Trent cried out as tears began to gush out of his eyes. He dropped the gun and ran towards me but merely stood up staring down at me in shock.

I looked up at him a little

confused. What was he talking about, why was he apologizing. I felt something wet on my hand as I looked down a saw a small pool of blood underneath me. Who's blood was that? I thought to myself, but as soon as the thought came to my mind unbearable pain pierced through my entire body as I screamed out in utter agony. I fell to the floor on my side as my hand reached up to my

stomach where it felt like my whole body had been ripped in half. My entire shirt was covered in thick liquid as my screams continued to pierce the air. I opened my eyes as I saw Damen kneel down beside me; he was pulling his sweater off. "You'll be okay, Stasee. Stay with me, keep your eyes open." He managed to say though the tears that covered his entire face. He was breathing heavily

obviously not getting enough air in his lungs as he began to full outcry.

I could vaguely here the sound of sirens in the background but wasn't sure if it was just in my head. "I-I-I..." I tried to talk but was cut off as I began to cough.

"Shhhh." Even Damen's shaky voice seemed distant. I struggled to keep my eyes open as I watched Damen scrunch up his sweater. He

moved my hand off my stomach and pressed his sweater against what I guess was the bullet wound. I screamed loudly as he put pressure onto the wound; it hurt so badly but I knew he was just trying to slow down the bleeding.

"Stasee, I'm sorry! I'm Sorry. What have I done!"

Trent cried out before instantly turning around to glare at Liam. "This is all YOUR fault!"

"T-Trent, don't." Derrek pleaded as I watched Trent begin to advance on the chubby red head.

Liam ran towards the gun Trent had dropped to the floor and quickly picked it up and pointed it towards Trent. "St-stay away!"

Liam stuttered as his shaky hand held onto the gun tightly.

"LIAM! Put that down!"

Derrek screamed with frustration.

Suddenly the doors burst open

as 5 policemen barged into the house. I don't think they were expecting anyone to have a weapon because as their eyes landed on Liam with the gun they all seemed to of taken a step back. Two cops spotted me and Damen on the floor as one of them pressed the button on their radio.

"Civilian shot...We need back up!" The officer urged into the radio.

"Liam...Put the gun down."

One of the Police officers who obviously knew the boy said calmly.

"But.." Liam began to protest. I could hear more sirens in the background; though they were different from the first ones which led me to believe it was an ambulance.

"Put the weapon down and put your hands in the air!" The cop said more sternly.

I didn't look over to Liam

because I was beginning
to feel weaker but I figured he
had listened
because instantly the cops ran
towards him.

Damen wrapped his arms
around me tightly
though his kept pressure on
my stomach wound.

Tears flooded his face; rolling
down his cheeks
and splashing against my face.

My eyes were
growing heavier and heavier
from the mass
amount of blood I had lost. I

didn't know how
much longer I could keep my
eyes open; I was just
so tired.

"Stasee...P-please...D-don't
Leave m-me." Damen
cried

as he held me close against
him. I could
vaguely hear a cop trying to
get Damen away
from me but everything
seemed to just become so
distant. The only
sound that reached my ears
was

Damen's voice and I liked it better that way. Suddenly I felt Damen being torn away from me, "Don't touch me!" Damen yelled, "Stasee! Stasee!" Damen continued to yell through his loud sobs. "Get away from me...STASEE!" I felt myself being rolled onto something a little more comfy than the floor but I couldn't see; everything had become just a blur. "Let me go! Please, I need to be

with her."

Damen's voice continued to ring in my ear.

Finally I heard the sound of someone else's voice; a cop maybe?

"We'll bring you to the hospital Damen...But right now you have to let her go into the ambulance."

"But...I need to go with her!"

"You'll just get in the Way Damen! Get a hold of yourself; she is in a critical state. I'll bring you to the hospital."

Damen went silent for a moment, before I vaguely heard footsteps. I felt something lightly touch my arm and I knew it was Damen...Only one person could force tingles to shoot through my body while being in such unbearable pain.

"Stasee.." Damen voice came out so weak, I could tell he was trying to sound strong for me but he failed horribly. I could hear his sobs; his tears and

running nose. I wanted to say
what but I couldn't
even open my mouth. I felt my
eye lids dropping
more and more as I heard his
faint voice whisper,
"I Lov-"
And everything went black.

Chapter 24

Damen went silent for a
moment, before I vaguely
heard footsteps. I felt

something lightly touch my arm and I knew it was Damen...Only one person could force tingles to shoot through my body while being in such unbearable pain.

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eye lids dropping
more and more as I heard his
faint voice whisper,
"I Lov-"

And everything went black.

~

Note: This chapter IS in
Damen's perspective..

Remember Damen's P.O.V (I
just don't want you
guys to get confused.)

And now Presenting....

Part 24

~Damen's P.O.V~

I sat on the hard plastic seats
in the waiting room

of the Hospital. I watched as a small family that consisted of two younger kids and a mother sat in the corner carefully trying to hide the tears in their eyes. Apparently the mother's father was on his death bed and the doctors had come to the conclusion he may not make it through the night.

On the other side of me there was a bouncy mid-twenties lady; her excitement and eagerness

made everyone else feel a bit awkward. She was soon to be an aunty; her sister was only a few doors down from Stasee and was in the middle of giving birth to a baby boy. Its crazy all the things you can find out about people just by sitting near them.

But what's even crazier is Hospitals in general. A hospital can both hold the saddest moments in your life and the happiest. It

sees both death and birth; at the same time an old man is dying a new man is being born. I myself was having problems trying to hold myself together; since the moment Stasee was admitted into the hospital the doctors had her in the surgery room under intensive care. They wouldn't allow me to go see her and neither would they tell me how she is doing. Apparently they

needed to speak with a family member but her parents are unreachable at the moment and Trent is outside the hospital having a mental break down. Derrek's outside with him and trying to calm him down though I hadn't seen them in the past half hour.

Everything just seemed like a horrible nightmare.

I kept closing my eyes hoping when I reopened them I would be back at my

house sitting in the living room next Stasee. It never happened though; I'd open my eyes to see the saddened faces of the small family across from me.

I had got to the point where I couldn't even cry anymore. Before this week my whole life had been boring and pointless. I never had any reason to live. I had friends who cared more about what they looked like than they did

about me. I had
parents who only came around
to talk about my
future plan and never once
actually asking me how

I
was doing. But then in one
night my whole life
had taken a complete change
for the better; or at
least that's how it felt at the
time.

I was laying on the couch in
the living room at
Trent's house. I couldn't sleep
so randomly I went

for a walk; I was just walking up the stairs when I saw Stasee leaving her bedroom and heading towards the bathroom. It was like it had been the first time I had 'actually' really seen her. She was wearing these cute little pink pajama pants and a tight black tank top. She looked completely breathtaking; even with her bed hair and off balanced sleepy walk. Curiosity had gotten the best

of me as I made my way towards her bedroom. I walked into her room and began to look around; out of all my years being friend with Trent I had never actually 'seen' Stasee's room. I was a bit surprised at what I found, I mean I never knew anything about Stasee but still when I saw all her superhero comic books scattered across her desk table I small smirk had appeared on my face.

I had always been a little bit of a comic book geek though it was a secret obsession I kept hidden from all my 'friends' at school. I continued to roam around her room until I reached her large stack of C.D's; being once again surprised as I realized she had all my favorite bands. Most of the kids at Kersha High, well at least the people I hung out with listened to hip-hop. Stasee had C.D's of Josh

Radin, The Tragically Hip,
Green Day, The Spill
Canvas and so much more.
I sat down on her bed and
reach over for a
tattered little book on her
nightstand table, "A
Book of Scoundrels" but
Charles Whibley. I
couldn't believe my eyes, how
could she honestly
have all my favorites from my
most cherished
book to my most listened to
bands. It was barely a
second later when she walked

into her room and
saw me sitting there on her
bed.

I remember waking up the
next morning; my arms
had been securely wrapped
around her petite
body. I had almost instantly
jumped out of bed at
I stared down at her; she was
so beautiful but she
was Trent's little sister. I
couldn't believe what I
had just done; I couldn't
believe I had slept with
one of my best friends little

sisters. I had rushed out of the house without any explanation and instantly regretted it. All weekend Stasee has been stuck in my head and no matter what I did I couldn't get her out. I went to a party at Derrek's house; where Jessica and Tiffany pretty much stripped naked for me but I still kept thinking of Stasee. I ended up leaving the party early and by myself.

I fell so hard for Stasee but was in denial for such a long time. I had never liked anyone the way I liked Stasee and it completely scared me. No one had ever had such a strong hold on me and because of that I continue to run until I finally realized I couldn't live without her. When she finally forgave me and came to my house earlier today I felt like my whole life had been complete.

Like this void inside me was filled and I finally had a reason to live. But now that reason to live was on the verge of leaving me forever.

Like I said before; I couldn't cry. I didn't know what was going on in the surgery room but the worse case scenario was beginning to haunt me.

The family across from me had been told the worse news; a loved was not going to make it.

While the lady beside me had been told the best news; her sister conceived a baby boy. A sat there in the same room with two of the most opposite emotions surrounding me while awaiting my news; whether it is the worst news or the best news was the unanswered question that froze my body emotionless.

"No...No, not my Liam." I heard a soft voice crying

from the hallways.

I looked up with curiosity as I got up off the hard chair; slowly I crept over to the doorway of the waiting room and peaked down the hall. Alicia Smitten, a curly haired red head nurse was standing a few feet away talking to one of the Police officers that had walked in on the earlier scene. The rather pretty lady who was also Liam's mother had tears rolling down

her cheeks as she continued to shake her head in denial.

The officer placed his hand gently onto the nurse's shoulder in attempt to comfort her. "I'm sorry Mrs. Smitten but he already admitted to it."

The policeman said softly.

"B-but L-Liam would never sh-sh-shoot

someone." Alicia cried. "Aren't you going to do more investigating?"

The Officer sighed lightly,

"There is no need too.
We caught him red handed
aiming your Husbands
hand gun at young Mr. Raine.
When he was
questioned; he admitted to
shooting Miss. Stasee
Raine without hesitation."
"No! Oh, please...No.
Liam...Not my Liam."
I turned around; not being
able to watch anymore.
I felt both shocked and guilty;
shocked because I
couldn't understand why Liam
had admitted to

shooting Stasee when it was in fact Trent who had accidentally shot her and guilty because I already knew I was going to go along with that story; Liam being the shooter. I didn't so much feel bad for Liam; he deserved to go to jail for what he did to Stasee but I did feel bad for Alicia. She had always been an amazing Mother and far better than most the mothers in McLennan. I

couldn't even imagine what this was going to do to the poor lady emotionally. I had just sat back down on the hard chair when a tall dark haired doctor walked into the waiting room. He had been one of the many doctors that had been going in and out of Stasee's room since she got here. "Trent Raine?" He called out while looking around the room. I jumped up to my

feet as I felt the quick hammering of my chest. "He's outside...It is Stasee? How is she? Please, tell me shes alright?" I began to ramble as I quietly raced over to him. He looked at me skeptically at first, "I should really be speaking to a family member."

"Trent's not exactly sane enough to talk right now. Please, just tell me! She's going be okay...please tell me she's

going to be okay." I could already feel pools of water filling my eyes. He cleared his throat before motioning towards the hallway with his head. I followed him out into the hallways as everything around me began to fade away and all I could hear or see was the Doctor. Once we were away from any nosy ears he stopped and looked towards me.

"She lost a lot of blood." He

began; instantly the tears in my eyes broke free as they fell down my face.

"But she's okay!?" I managed to yell out.

"For now. We have stabilized her and lucky the bullet missed all major organs and arteries. The bullet pierced right through the side of her stomach and came out at her side. It was only a flesh wound but as I said before; she did lose a lot

of blood."

I wasn't exactly sure what the Doctor was saying; did that mean she was going to be okay? She lost a lot of blood, what did that mean? I just stood there staring at the Doctor as the tears slowed down for the moment.

"At the moment she is unconscious and due to the amount of blood loss her body went into shock; we've done everything we could but we can't say

whether or not she will wake up."

"What?! What do you mean?" I cried out, "what do you mean?!"

"Her body reached a high level of shock called

Hemorrhagic shock; it prevented her cells from getting enough oxygen which forced her organs to begin to fail. Her body has gone into a coma. It is now a waiting game; there is nothing more we can do. I'm sorry Sir, it's in God's

hands now." Doctor
said quietly, "but you may go
visit her."

"A...C-coma? But when will
she wake up?!"

"It's hard to say..It could be
hours, days, weeks,
months...We can't promise you
anything."

"So what are you saying, she
might not ever...."

My voice trailed off.

"I'm sorry..." He nodded
slowly before turning
around and disappearing
down the hallway.

I stared at the empty spot where the Doctor once stood; it felt he had just clawed his hand into my chest and ripped my heart out. I didn't even notice the mass amount of tears flooding my face until I began choking on my own saliva. I fell hard to the white flooring of the hospital hallways; my head fell into my hands as my tears continued to flow. It was getting much harder to breath as began to

hyperventilate, choking on my tears as I gasped for oxygen.

A few nurses were instantly at my side trying to help me though all I wanted was to get to Stasee's room; to wrap her in my arms and never let her go.

"You're lieing! Shut up...No! Please, no!" I heard Trent's voice echo through the hallways as I slightly turned my head although I was still

gasping for air.

At the far end of the Hospital
hallways Trent

stood across from the dark
haired doctor. I

watched as he collapsed into
Derrek's arms while

screaming through his loud
sobs, "no!

Stasee...No!"

The nurses around me were
trying to get me up

off the floor but I continued to
pull away from

their grips as I began to feel
dizzy. I tried to slow

my breathing down while attempting to breathe properly as tears soaked my shirt. I could feel the wetness running down my neck before soaking into my clothes. Stasee had to wake up, she had too...

Chapter 25

Three weeks later...

Damen's P.O.V Continues

~

I looked over at the form of a person lying on the hospital bed. I stood up off the hard chair as I walked over to her but as I looked down my eyes went wide. It was Stasee, but she was old. Her hair was white and her face was wrinkled; she was still as beautiful as ever but she looked nearly ninety years old. I turned around to look in the mirror behind me; I reached

up to my face as the mirrors reflection mimicked my every move.

My hair was completely white as my face slightly drooped down from years of gravity and I looked nearly dead. I coughed as I turned to look back down at the sleeping women on the bed.

A doctor walked into the hospital room; a doctor I had never seen before.

"Damen, we need to talk." The doctor said softly

as he looked down at Stasee then back up at me.

"...About what?" I asked fearfully; knowing exactly what he wanted to talk about.

"It's been 75 years Damen; she has no family left anymore...We need your permission to pull the plug."

"No, no...She's going to wake up, she has too."

"Damen..." The doctor shook his head as he glanced down at the old lady

who looked so similar
to
Stasee and yet so different.
"She is nearly 92
years old...Even if she were to
wake up, her heart
is already beginning to fail
her; she won't be
strong enough to pull
through."

"No, no...She'll wake
up...She'll be fine. No, no,
no." My voice echoed in my
ears as everything
began to fade away.

~

"Damen...Damen, wake up."
I sprang forward as my eyes
flung open; my heart
was pounding inside my chest
and my body was
drenched in sweat. I looked
around the white
room as my eyes fell on
Stasee's motionless body.
She looked the exact same as
she looked last
night, the night before and
even three weeks ago.
Her eyes were closed shut as
her chest continued
to grow before sinking with

each shallow breath.

Her hair was its regular deep brown color as it outlined her perfect face. I sighed with relief as I realized it had only been a dream.

I shuffled around on the hard chair that I had been sleeping on. My legs felt stiff and sore from the awkward sleeping position I was beginning to grow use to it. For the past three weeks I had been sleeping on that exact

chair every second night.

"Karis is on her way over here...She was wondering if you wanted some coffee."

I finally looked up to where the voice was coming from. My eyes locked with my younger brother's as I quickly turned to look at the clock. It read eight thirty in the morning which meant I had only gotten at the most two hours of sleep last night. I

groaned loudly as I rested my head on Stasee's bed. I couldn't be mad at Brandon for waking me up because even if he hadn't, my bad dream surely would have.

"Why aren't you guys at school?" My voice came out a lot groggier than I had expected; I tried to clear my throat as I watched Brandon bite down on his lip.

"Umm, Damen...It's Saturday."
He said each word

slowly as if he were talking to a mental patient.

"Oh. Well, uh, sure...Coffee sounds good."

Brandon nodded as he began to head towards the hallway while pulling his cell phone out of his pocket. He hesitated at the doorway before slowly turning around to look back over at me.

"Damen..."

"...What?"

"You should, w-well, you should really go home

and try to get some rest." He spoke softly.

"No!" I glared at him, "I'll be fine...And I'm not leaving until Dr. Moore kicks me out again."

I watched Brandon sigh heavily before giving up and heading out of the room. I turned back towards Stasee as I reached my hand up and brushed her hair behind her ear. For the past three weeks Trent and I had been trying to spend

every second of the day here with Stasee but apparently the Doctors didn't agree so much with the idea. With the help of Derrek and his parents' money, we did manage to bribe them to let us visit her after and before visiting hours but of course there were conditions. Trent and I both had to take turns staying the night with her; with me staying every second night and Trent every

other.

Apparently the idea of us sleeping on a hard hospital chair every night was completely out of the question. They also had gone so far as to kick us out during school hours; though in my opinion it was a pointless effort. Even when I did attempt to go to school; I couldn't pay attention to what the teachers said. Almost everything people said to me lately would go in one ear

and out the other.

There was only one thought stuck in my mind, one unanswered question that haunted me both awake and sleeping; will she ever wake up?

Stasee still hadn't shown any signs of awakening but I knew I would never give up on her. I would stay at her bed side for all of eternity if I had to.

The only people that were really there for her was Trent, Derrek, Karis,

Brandon and of course me. Sure, Stasee's parents had obviously come home when they finally found out the news but they didn't stay very long. They were here for the first week but had to leave again for work. It honestly didn't surprise very many of us; both Stasee's parents and mine were a lot alike. They were the type of people who cared more about working and making money

than they did about their children. They figured as long as they paid the medical bill; they were doing a good job.

I sighed heavily as I placed my folded arms on top Stasee's bed and rested head down against them.

I peered outside through the hospital window. The weather

seemed to mimic my mood; it was

pouring rain and had been like this for the past

week. Water smeared across the windows making it almost impossible to see past the flooded glass. Everyday seemed to slowly creep by; I would stare up at the clock as each second ticked to the next. I had probably missed more school in the past three weeks than I had within the whole year. But a lot of things at Kersha High had changed since the accident; one being Derrek and Trent

going public with their intimate relationship.

Apparently after everything that had happened they realized that life was too short and ended up kissing in the middle of the hallways during the morning rush. With Derrek and Trent going public with their sexual preferences, Liam admitting that he had shot Stasee, Candise being humiliated in front of the entire student body and me becoming

a complete loner who barely showed up for school; the whole 'A class' senior crowd had crumbled to the ground.

Kelvin being completely homophobic began hanging out with some of the less known football players; acting as if his ten year friendship with Trent never happened.

Tiffany and Sammy finally ditched Candise and decided to follow their own dreams rather than

being Candise's little sidekicks. Candise still roamed the school with her head held up high; thinking she was the hottest thing since Megan Fox. The good news was; people seemed to envy her a lot less now.

Even with all of Kersha High completely changing for the better; I still couldn't manage to fake a smile. I mean, sure, I was

happy that everyone
was beginning to be true to
themselves. Also, me
finally stepping up and not
letting the judgmental
teens of today's society control
my life had
started some kind of epidemic.
But I still couldn't
gain the strength to smile, not
when the women
the love was caught between
life and death, in
the dreamless state that
consumed her
unconscious body relying on

nothing more than
the Hospital's computers and
technology to keep
her alive.

"How is she doing today...?"

The sound of Trent's
voice brought me out of my
thoughts as I turned
to watch him walk into the
room and take the
seat on the other side of
Stasee.

I shrugged as I rested my head
back down on the
bed. My hand snaked its way
towards Stasee's

motionless body as I covered her cold hand with the warmth of mine. I glanced up at Trent; he looked horrible and yet very similar to me. He had big dark circles underlining his eyes, his hair looked as if it hadn't been touched in days, he wore the same wrinkled clothes from the day before and even his body language showed signs of complete exhaustion. "So...Uh," my barely used

voice came out
scratchy, "did you go to Liam's
trial?"

Trent nodded slowly as his
eyes stayed locked on
Stasee. He cleared his throat,
"yah...The lawyer
was a bit pissed you didn't
show up."

I rolled my eyes, "Liam
admitted to it...They didn't
need my statement anyways."

"Well, apparently they did."

Trent's voice grew
angrier as he finally looked up
at me. "I guess

Liam finally started thinking properly because now he's pleading innocent."

"What?!" I felt my heart skip a beat.

"Not that it really got him anywhere...He had already admitted to it, so he was charged as an adult with assault with a deadly weapon, attempted murder and unlawful discharge of a firearm. He's been sentenced to ten years in prison and depending on how

Stasee does; years
may be added on." Trent
finally finished and as I
looked up at him; I could still
see the shame and
guilt the masked his face.
As much as Liam deserved to
be punished for he
had previously done to Stasee,
the fact that it had
actually
been Trent who accidentally
pulled the
trigger had been haunting him
since the moment
it happened. Every time he

looked down at his little sister; tears of regret would fill his eyes.

Many nights I had watched Trent waking up screaming such things like 'I'm sorry' or 'I didn't mean to'.

Countless times, Derrek and I had tried to convince Trent it was not his fault, that it was an accident and Stasee would never want Trent to be putting himself through all this. We could tell him

a thousand times but it would never do anything; he needed Stasee to wake up and to forgive him herself, otherwise he'd never be able to let it go.

"Coffee anyone?" Karis' soft voice reached my ears as I left my head up off the bed. I turned towards the doorway as Brandon, Karis and Derrek walked into the room. I tried to force a polite smile onto my face but I could just tell by Karis'

sympathetic look that I had definitely failed. She passed me over one of the two coffees in her hands before grabbing a chair and pulling it up to the end of Stasee's bed.

Brandon followed her as he too grabbed one of the chairs from against the wall and placed it beside Karis.

Derrek walked around the bed and sat down on the arm rest of Trent's chair. I watched him as he

wrapped his arm around
Trent's neck and tilted his
head

against him. I then turned to
look at Karis

and Brandon as my eyes fell
down to their

interlocked hands. I couldn't
help be feeling

envious of the two couples,
they both managed to

find comfort in each other
during such tragic times

while I

sat at the bedside of the only
person who

could have given me that
comfort.

We all sat there in silence as
we continued to
watch Stasee's still body as her
chest grew and
sank with each deep breath.

Whenever I was
alone with Stasee, I would
usually read or sing to
her and even sometimes talk
to her but when all
of us were with her; we would
sort of just sit
there and watch her. Small
conversations

sometimes would fill the
silence but with both
Trent and I never really
joining in on them; they
would quickly die down.
I took a small sip of Coffee;
though it didn't seem
to be helping very much
because my eye lids still
felt overly heavy. I struggled
to stay awake but as
soon as I rested my head
against the side of the
hospital bed; sleep had
consumed me.

~

"Stasee, please, please wake up. I love you and I can't lose you...I'm so sorry, this is all my fault and I just...don't know what to do. If you don't wake up...I-I just don't know how I will manage to go on. Please, Stasee, Please. You are my baby sister; my everything...and I'm so sorry."

Trent's whispering cries forced me to open my eyes. I didn't lift my head up or really show any

sign of being awake as I glanced around the empty room.

My eyes finally fell on Trent; he was still sitting across from me but Derrek and everyone else was gone. It was only me, Stasee and Trent in the room now.

Trent was looking down at his sister as tears rolled down his cheeks, his bottom lip was slightly quivering as he reached up and brushed Stasee's

hair gently. "S-Stasee...Can you hear me? Please, you need to be strong...You need to pull through, I need you, we all need you." He coughed out through his silent sobs.

"Please, you have to wake up."

I heard soft foot steps behind me.

"Trent...?" Derrek's quiet voice forced Trent to quickly wipe the tears off his face. "I'm going down to the Hospital

cafeteria."

"O-okay." Trent mumbled back.

"Come with me, please."

"I'm not hungry..."

Silence filled the room for a second before the sound of Derrek's footsteps grew closer. I was starting to wish I was still sleeping because it felt like I was invading their privacy. Derrek reached for Trent's hand and I finally decided to close my eyes.

"Your never hungry,
Trent...But you still have to
eat." Derrek spoke softly.

"But, Stasee..."

"Damen's here."

"Yah, but..."

"Please, come eat with me."

Trent

hesitated for a long moment

before

replying. "Fine."

I

waited until they both left the

room before I

opened my eyes and sat up

straight. I looked back

down at the beautiful girl
sleeping on the hospital
bed. I bent forward as I lightly
brushed my lips
against her forehead.

"You have to wake
up..." I repeated Trent's words
as a single tear fell down my
face.

I got
up off the chair and moved
onto the side of
the bed. I reached towards
Stasee brushing my
fingers gently along the
outline of her face as I

began to quietly sing "Things

Left Unsaid" By,

Disciple. A song I had found myself singing to

Stasee over and over in the past three weeks.

"Oh how we talked, for hours upon end

What I would give just to do it again

Your lying there in this hospital bed

Wont you open your eyes

And lets talk once again.

If you fly away tonight,

I wanna tell you that I love

you.

I hope that you can hear me,

I hope that you can feel me.

If you fly away tonight,

I wanna tell you that Im sorry,

That I never told you

When we were face to face."

I

could feel the rivers of tears

flowing down my

face but I didn't stop singing

even as my voice

grew shakier. I reached for her

hand as I held

onto tightly; "you have to

wake up, Stasee..." I

whispered quietly once I finished the song.

Chapter 26

Another Week Later...

Damen's P.O.V Continues...

I stared out of the Hospital window; looking to the west as the sun began to disappear behind the large mountain on the other side of McLennan.

That same mountain was the

place I had brought
Stasee and somewhere along
that mountain was
the cliff that I seemed to find
so much comfort in.

Usually when I had a lot on
my mind, or when I
just needed to get away from
reality for a while I
would go there. But
apparently even that cliff
couldn't give me the comfort I
needed.

Every morning I would watch
the sun rise above
the ocean on the east side.

Each time the sun would rise; so would my hopes. A new day had begun and with this new day my faith in Stasee's awakening would resurface. But as every day came to an end and as I watched the sun set in the west behind those large mountains; it felt like a part of my soul would disappear with it. Each day it seemed to get worse and worse. I would spend almost every day

completely emotionless; I couldn't remember the last time I laughed...Well, actually I could. It was four weeks ago; right after Stasee had punched Candise in the face and we were speeding off in my Truck.

The only thing that kept reminding me that I was still human and that I wasn't a complete emotionless psycho path was when I cried. I would sit

at Stasee's bedside; staring at her motionless body, praying and begging for her to wake up. But aside from the few tears I shed regularly; my facial expression stayed neutral. My strength to even attempt to fake a smile had vanished; the only time I spoke was to Stasee and I felt like there was a large void inside me. But I knew I would never leave her and I would stay at her side

forever if I had too.

I turned back around to look over at the hospital bed in which Stasee laid peacefully asleep. I sighed before slowly walking over to the large bouquet of white lilies that sat on the bedside table next to a cute little brown teddy bear. My fingers trailed along the stem of the flower as I inhaled the fragrant scent I was beginning to grow so used to. Every week I would

go to the Hospital
gift shop and replace the lilies
with new ones.

I let my fingers fall away from
the flowers as I

moved towards the bed;

taking my place on the

seat next to Stasee. I reached

my hand towards

her before intertwining my

fingers through her

small ones. I rest my head on

her bed as I looked

up to her closed eyes.

"How's she doing today...?" I

looked up to the

sound of my brother's voice.
Brandon and Karis were
standing in the doorway,
hand in hand, looking down at
Stasee and I with
sympathetic facial expressions.
I slightly bit down
on my lip before shaking my
head slowly.

Karis let go of Brandon as she
walked over to the
side of the hospital bed.

"Hey Stase." Karis said; trying
to sound upbeat.

"Me and Brandon are
here...We can't stay long

because well, him and I are performing in Romeo and Juliet at the school today. Yah we both managed to get the two main roles in the play."

I saw the shimmering wetness that glazed over her eyes as she spoke. Talking to Stasee was always the hardest part; for all of us.

Brandon slowly made his way towards Karis. He gently placed his arm around her neck as he

looked down at Stasee,
struggling to smile.

"We'll, uh, maybe you
know...We'll video tape it
for you. That way, you don't
miss out." Brandon
said while stuttering over his
words. "We just
wanted to stop by and see how
you were doing
before we go."

"Yah, but we'd better go."

Karis said softly while
bending down and kissing
Stasee's forehead, "we
love you, Stasee."

I looked back over at Stasee as Karis and Brandon turned around and began to walk out of the room.

"Damen..." Brandon's soft voice reached my ears.

"Huh?"

"Are you sure you don't want to come?"

I nodded my head.

"I'm sure Trent would come in for a few hours and stay with her." Brandon continued but I merely just shook my head. "Damen, please...Just talk to

me. You've barely said two words to anyone in the past week!"

I looked up at my little brother before letting out a heavy breath. I turned away and looked back down at Stasee.

"Damen! Seriously, just come watch mine and Karis' performance."

Brandon's voice grew more urgent.

"No!" I finally spat out.

"No...Tonight is my night with Stasee, I'll come

tomorrow when Trent's here."

Brandon stared at me for another moment before turning around and leaving. I closed my eye for a second; trying to get myself under control.

Brandon didn't deserve that, he was just worried about me but I'm only aloud to stay with Stasee every second night and there was no way I was going to give up even an hour of that time.

I looked back down at Stasee.
My hand was still
holding her as my other hand
reached up and
tucked her hair behind her ear.
"Stasee..." I whispered quietly.
"I..Uh, I...Well."

I let out a heavy breath as my
fingers slightly
tightened around her hand
before loosening.

"I don't know what I'm trying
to say." I finally
admitted as my eyes trailed
from her face to our
hands. I reached towards her

and gently pressed
my lips against the back of her
hand. "It's
just...Can you hear me? Stasee,
please...Just
show me some kind of sign.
Please?"

I could already feel the small
tears growing in my
eyes, the tears that seemed to
appear each time I
attempted to speak to her. I
turned my head as
my eyes glanced back up at
her angelic face.

"Please, Stasee...I need to

know, just do
something...If you can hear
me; please try!
Stasee,try...Some kind of sign,
anything!" I begged
quietly
as a single tear fell down my
cheek. I
stared at her; waiting, wishing,
hoping for some
kind of sign. For something,
anything just to prove
to
me that she could actually
hear me. But
nothing happened; her body

stayed as motionless
as ever with the only
movement coming from her
chest.

My eyes then fell downwards
as I felt the stinging
pain of disappointment once
again. I just wanted
to burst into tears and never
stop crying; to hold
her body close to mine and
never let her go. But I
knew better; I knew I had to
hold myself
together, if not for me then at
least for Stasee.

I then rested my head back down on the bed as my eyes found their way back towards mine and Stasee's interlocked hands.

"Stasee..." I barely whispered her name as I continued to rest my head on the bed; my tears slightly beginning to blur my vision.

My eyes slowly began to close as my eye lids forced my remaining tears to roll down my face. I just wanted to hear her voice

again, to look into her light brown eyes, to see her adorable little smile...I just wanted her to wake up.

Suddenly I felt Stasee's hand slightly tighten around mine as my eyes flung open and I jerked into an upright position. "Dr. Moore, Someone, come here!?" I yelled as water filled my eyes once again. I quickly glanced towards her face; the feeling of her fingers still

slightly moving against mine shot tingles through my entire body.

Her closed eye lids slightly fluttered as I sat there in anticipation.

"Stasee, come on!" I said with a shaky voice, "You can do it, just open your eyes. Please, Stasee...I

know you can pull through!"

I watched her as her eye lids slowly began to rise upwards. Her sandy colored eyes soon found their way to me as tears streamed

down my face. I felt completely paralyzed, all I could do we sit there and stare at her as tears of joy continued to flow down my face.

"D-Damen...?" Stasee's voice came out so weak and yet it was as harmonic as ever.

Chapter 27

I was completely surprised I

had even managed to
muster out Damen's name. My
whole body felt
utterly weak; almost as if I
were paralyzed. I knew
I
wasn't though, I could still
feel the blanket that
was wrapped tightly around
me but even so, it
was almost impossible to
move. Not only that; but
it also felt like I couldn't talk.
My throat was
unbelievably dry and burnt
whenever I attempted

to speak.

My arms, neck and legs all felt cramped; almost as if I had been sleeping in the same position for days. But it honestly felt like I had only been sleeping for hours and the urge to go back to sleep was growing stronger by the second.

I looked up into Damen's deep brown eyes as a few tears rolled down his cheeks. The corners of his lips were stretched

upwards into a large smile as he attempted to wipe away his tears. I couldn't understand why he was crying or why he was holding onto my hand so tightly.

"Oh, Stasee..." He whispered out as he pressed his lips against my forehead.

"I-I never thought I was going to see those beautiful eyes again."

It was so weird seeing him cry; in all my years I'd never imagined I'd see Damen

Hurtz cry. But there he was, sitting right next to me as tears streamed down his face. He continued to mumble things that were completely incoherent to me. I think he might have been saying something along the lines of: oh thank god, your awake, I knew you'd pull through and just a bunch of other weird things like that.

My eye lids continued to grow heavier as I let

them slightly fall down. "I-I..."
I tried speaking to
Damen; it hurt so badly but I
felt I needed to tell
him. "T-think...I'm g-going...to
go...back...to
sleep."

Instantly the smile on
Damen's face vanished as it
was replaced by concern.
"No, no, Stasee. Don't go back
to bed, stay
awake." The tears in his eyes
stopped falling as
he held tightly onto my hand;
slightly he began to

shake it. "Stay awake, Stasee. Please!"

I glanced at him a little confused; why did it matter? Why did he care if I went to sleep?

"B-But...I'm tired..." I barely whispered.

"No, Stasee! You have to stay awake!" He was now beginning to yell.

"Doctor! Nurse! Someone, please!"

Doctor? I thought to myself, what on earth was he talking about? Finally I

began to glance around the room I was in; it was at that moment when I realized I was hooked up to some kind of Hospital machine. With a little more analyzing, I noticed I was in a Hospital room and lying on a Hospital bed.

"W-What's going on?" I looked up at Damen fearfully. My pulse began to quicken as fear and confusion mixed together inside me.

"Stasee! Thank god, you're

awake." I turned to see a lady with a light blue uniform on, "I'll go fetch Dr. Moore." The nurse said with excitement before rushing out of the room.

"Stasee...What's the last thing you can remember?" Damen asked softly.

I looked up at him before I began to think about it.

It was weird; my memory sort of seemed fuzzy.

The past week was a bit of a blur but at the same time it wasn't. I remembered Damen finally admitting his feeling towards me in front of our entire school. The memory of our very passionate kiss in front of everyone forced my cheeks to redden. I thought harder as the image of me punching Candise in the face slightly made my lips form into a smile. I knew that wasn't what Damen

was talking about; I needed to look further into my mind.

"D-Derrek...He called me." I finally mumbled though the memory was a bit unclear; I couldn't remember why he called me.

"Do...Do you remember anything else?" Damen questioned.

That's when the memory came back like a bomb exploding in my head. Trent had made it to Liam's before he left to California.

When Damen and I finally showed up at Liam's house, Trent had a gun pulled out on him and I...I was shot.

I tried to move my arm, I wanted to see my stomach but it was too hard to move. My body was so weak but I managed to move my hand to my abdominal. It felt tender and was still slightly in pain.

"I...I want to see it." I whispered out.

"See what?"

"My...My stomach."

Damen nodded as he pulled the blanket off my body, he slightly lifted up the hospital gown. I glanced downward only to see a deep red scar; a few little red dots surrounded the bullet wound. My brother once had stitches, so when I saw the red dots I knew right away they were from stitches.

"How..." My voice trailed off

as I stared down at the healing wound with confusion. "How is it already healed, didn't I just get shot yesterday?"

Damen slowly shook his head right before a tall dark haired man wearing a Doctor's uniform came into the room. "Oh, she was right...You are awake." He stared at me in shock, "Usually patients don't wake up so abruptly...Usually they show some kind of signs first;

I-I'm shocked."

"W-What on earth is going on?" I finally demanded.

The doctor walked over to the machinery I was hooked up to but didn't reply. When he finally turned towards me; instead of answering my question he began bombarding me with his own; How old are you? What is your name? What is today's date? What is your address? What are

your parents' names? What is the last thing you remember? The list went on and on, and as he was asking all these questions, Damen quickly sneaked out of the room. I could see him through the crack in the door as he paced back and forth while talking on his cell phone.

I looked back up at the Doctor and I tried to answer the questions as best as I could. I noticed

the more I talked the more my
voice grew
stronger. I had answered every
question right
aside from the 'What is today's
date?'

Apparently I had been in a
Coma for four entire
weeks. When he told me that I
sort of just laid
there staring up at him. It felt
like I had barely
been sleeping for a few hours,
although it did
explain why the stitches in my
stomach had

already been removed and also why my whole body was so weak and cramped up. But even so, it was still a little bit of a shocker.

I looked up as Damen walked back into the room, "I just called your brother; he's on his way over."

"Trent?" I gasped with excitement.

The doctor looked up at Damen, "Okay, well she seems to be fine; she is showing no signs of

memory loss which is a good thing and she also seems to have complete control of her limbs. But we will need to keep her here for one more week just to do a few more tests and to keep an eye on her recovery."

I rolled my eyes at the way the Doctor was talking to Damen like I was a little kid or something. Like, Really? He couldn't just turn around and tell me all

that instead of acting as if I was incapable of understanding. Damen looked over at me and smirked; he must have noticed the way it had bothered me because his smirk was more like a teasingly 'Ha-ha' smirk. I glared at him as he nodded at the Doctor. Slowly he made his way back towards me as Dr. Dink Face left the room. Damen sat down on the seat next to me as he reached

for my hand.

"Not a big fan of the Doc.?" He asked while still smirking.

"I'm pretty sure he likes men." I said stubbornly.

"Hey, what's wrong with liking men?" A voice I recognized too well, forced me to turn my attention towards the doorway.

"Trent!" I yelled out. I wanted to jump off the bed, run over and give him a huge hug. The only

problem was I was having
enough troubles moving
my arms never mind standing
on my legs.

My brother ran over to me and
grabbed my limp
body as he pulled me into a
tight hug. "Oh
Stasee!" He muffled into my
hair, "I'm so sorry,
you have no idea how sorry I
am. I never meant
to."

Mine and Trent's conversation
continued like that
for what seemed like an

eternity. He apologized more times than I could even count and every time I would tell him that it was okay. I knew it was a mistake; he didn't mean to. I remembered looking at him that day; he was getting ready to surrender, he was just about to let Liam go when Liam decided to shove Trent away from him. As Trent tumbled backwards, his finger had slipped against the trigger.

It was a mistake, some horrible accident. But there definitely was some good that came out of all of it. Liam was sent to jail; locked up in prison where he belongs. A lot of people may say that what happened to Liam was unfair but I'm sorry; after what he did to me, he deserves to be locked away.

It was about 10:30pm when Trent finally decided he was going to head home.

He still hadn't accepted my forgiveness and said that somehow he was going to make it up to me. I merely rolled my eyes.

"Whatever Trent. Honestly, look at me - I'm fine."

I said while smiling, "Now go home and get some proper sleep...You look like shit."

He laughed, "Oh gee, thanks sis." He gently kissed my forehead before turning around and

heading towards the door.

"Goodnight you two."

He then left both Damen and I sitting in the room alone.

I turned to look over at Damen, "You should probably go home and get some sleep as well."

"No way." He stated with a grin, "Tonight is my night here with you...So I'm staying."

"Your night with me?" I questioned him, "What does that mean?"

"Well, while you were being little miss 'sleeping beauty', the doctors allowed both Trent and I to take turns staying the night with you."

"Seriously? Then, where did you guys sleep?"

"On these chairs." He replied.

"Oh...No wonder you two look like hell!" I exclaimed.

Damen laughed as he began to trace his fingers along my hand. I slightly bit down on my lip as a

small shiver ran down my spine. Words couldn't express the way it felt every time he touched me; I honestly never wanted it to end.

Once I was finally able to pull my mind away from the tingly feeling I was getting, I finally said, "Well, if you aren't going to go home and sleep, then I'm not going to let you sleep on that chair."

"Oh yah? And where do you suppose I sleep

then?" He raised his eyebrow.
"In bed with me." I said as my
cheeks flushed
pink.

"You're so cute when you
blush."

"Oh, shut up and get your ass
into bed." I said
while trying to move over a
little bit; it was still
hard to move but I seemed to
be getting a little
better at it.

Damen slowly crawled into
bed next to me; it was
a little squishy because the

Hospital beds were only singles but it was nice having him so close against me.

"I don't want to go to sleep."

Damen yawned as he snaked his arm around my waist and pulled me closer against him. My whole body seemed to instantly warm up as I lifted myself up slightly and looked over at him.

"Damen, your eyes are so black you look like you've been punched in the

face. You need to go to sleep." I whispered quietly. He sighed, "But you just woke up."

"Like four hours ago."

He yawned again, "Let's pull an all nighter."

I smiled, "Let's go to bed."

"Can I ask you a question first?" He asked softly.

"Anything."

"When...When you were in the...uh, Coma...Did you hear anything?"

At first I was going to say no, but then the

memories of all my weird little dreams came back to me. I kind of giggled at the thought of some of them, but others were a little more...Depressing.

"I don't know...I had some weird dreams." I finally admitted.

"Like what?" He questioned as his hand reached up towards my face. He ran his fingers gently through my hair as I slightly shuttered from the touch.

"Well, there was this one dream I had a few times." I said while giggling again. "But don't laugh."

"So, what? You're allowed to laugh at it but I'm not?" He smirked.

"Oh, shush. Okay well anyways, it was about you." I grinned sheepishly, "You were a big rock star singing your very own version of 'Things Left Unsaid' By Disciple...And the weird thing was, you

were actually like, really good." I giggled as I looked back down at him. The second I had finished talking Damen's cheeks grew red as he shyly looked away from me. At first I was a little confused as to why he was acting all embarrassed, but then suddenly it hit me.

"Wait." I reached for his cheek and pulled his face back towards me, "Were you...Actually singing to

me?"

He bit down on his lip bashfully as he slightly began to nod his head. My eyes then widened as I stared at him in shock. I honestly hadn't known he was such a good singer; I mean if he actually was as good as he was in my dream then...Wow.

"You never told me you could sing?"

He replied with a smart-aleck remark, "You never asked." I gave him the 'your-a-

dick-face' kind of
look as he lightly coughed out
a laugh. "Honestly
Stasee...I've never really sang
in front of anyone
before."

"Oh, so it's another one of
your little secrets...Like
your comic book obsession?"

"Do I hear a hint of jealousy in
your tone?" He
teased.

"Jealous? Of you?" I scoffed,
"The only thing I
might be a little jealous of is
your remarkable

ability to have so much faith
in the inadequate."

Damen laughed, "And who is
this inadequate
person you speak of?"

"Superman." I stated without
hesitation.

"Superman?!" Damen laughed
louder.

"Yes, Superman..." I stated,
"I'm sorry Damen, but
Batman could take Superman
any day."

"No way!" Damen exclaimed,
"Superman has laser
eyes, he fly's, mega strength,

he-"

I cut him off knowing the list would take too long,

"Yah well, what about in 'The Dark Knight

Returns'...Batman is like fifty years old and he still beats Superman!"

"No!" Damen yelled out, "That was all just staged!"

"Yah, maybe Batman's 'heart attack' was but not Batman kicking Superman's ass!" I fought back.

Suddenly the door leading to

the hallways opened
as a small little nurse peaked
through. "Excuse
me, can you guys please keep
it down...Others are
trying to sleep."

"Sorry..." We both said in
unison as the nurse
nodded before shutting the
door behind her.

We both began to laugh
quietly. As soon as our
whispering laughs died down;
a loud yawn escape
my mouth. "Okay...It's time for
bed now."

"Fine." Damen jokingly pouted.

I was just about to lye back down on the bed when Damen's hand wrapped around my head. He pulled my body forward as our lips crashed together. My stomach instantly began to flutter as my heart thumped loudly inside my chest. He began to massage my lips with his own in one of the most passionate, heart throbbing kissing I'd

ever experienced. His arms moved down to my waist as he held me tightly against his body, almost as if he were afraid to let me go.

I finally pulled away as I began to gasp for air. I looked down at him as my entire body felt like I was floating on cloud nine.

"W-What was that for?" I gasped out.

His breathing was just as heavy as mine as he pushed his body up towards

me and pressed
another sweet kiss against my
lips.

"Just a goodnight kiss." He
whispered as he fell
back down on the bed.

I smiled down at him as
butterflies fluttered
around in my stomach.

"Well...Good night to you
too." I whispered before I
nested my head against
his shoulder, my arm wrapped
around his chest.

He snaked his arm around my
waist as he pulled

me closer against his warm
body. "Sweet dreams,
Stasee."

Chapter 28 : Epilogue

I was sitting in the passenger's
seat of Damen's
GMC truck as we pulled up to
the front doors of
my house. It had never felt so
good to finally be
home. After being at the
Hospital for six weeks

(two of which I was awake)
home felt more like
heaven where as the hospital
was my hell. Two
weeks of constant
physiotherapy and even
mental
therapy had completely worn
me out. Luckily, my
recovery had been a lot
quicker than most peoples
and being released after only
two weeks after
waking up from a month long
coma was miracle in
itself.

I looked up into the windows of my house as I noticed that all the lights were out which indicated my parents weren't home. I had talked to them about three times since I had woken up. They said they loved me and that they wished they were there for me, they said to get better and hopefully they would be able to make it home sometime soon. This would probably upset most

teenagers; finding out that you had been in a coma for a month and your parents were only there for one week. Or that once you finally did wake up, they were too busy 'working' to even come and see you. But it honestly didn't bug me, I didn't need them. At this point in my life, I actually people who cared about me and were there for me and they were all I needed.

"Home sweet home." Damen's husky voice reached my ears as I turned my head towards him. A small encouraging smile sat crookedly on his face.

"Thank god," I smiled back. "I swear, if I had to have one more bite of that disgusting Hospital Jell-O, I would have..." I scowled while shaking my head, unable to think of a proper word to describe what I'd do.

Damen laughed, "Hey, that food didn't look so bad."

I rolled my eyes and was just about to glare at him when I caught a glimpse of something in the rearview mirror. Instantly my eyes lit up as I watch Trent's 72 Chevy pickup pull into the driveway with both Trent and Derrek sitting inside it. Behind them was Brandon's black S.U.V and although the windows were

fiercely tinted I could still manage to see Karis' sitting in the passenger's seat with Brandon driving.

I heard Damen slightly chuckle at me. "What?" I questioned.

"Nothing." He said as he continued to smile,

"Here, let me get your door for you."

I watch Damen as he jumped out of his truck and came over to my side of the Vehicle. He opened the door for me before

offering me his hand to take.

"Hey, just because I got shot in the stomach and went into a Coma for a month doesn't mean I can't open my own door." I said with a playful smile.

"Now, now, Stasee...How do you know I'm not just being a gentlemen." He teased.

I slightly blushed but then reached for his hand and slowly climbed out of the truck. My stomach

was still tender and if I moved a certain way, pain would shot through my body. After two weeks of physiotherapy, I did manage to wake my body up and stretch all the cramps out but I knew it was still be awhile later before the bullet wound would fully heal.

"It's a miracle!" Karis yelled from Brandon's SUV.

She had the door opened and was leaning over the frame of it. "She can walk!"

I watched her as she fully jumped out of the vehicle and began to run towards me.

All the guys were slowly getting out of their vehicles and walking up towards the house while Karis bounced happily to me within seconds. Of course she had seen me almost every day since I'd woken up but I guess finally seeing me out of the hospital, made her all hyper

and excited. I couldn't blame her because honestly, I was pretty excited to be out of there as well.

As Karis' small arms wrapped around my body and pulled me into a tight embrace, I winced. Her stomach pressed against my own which put pressure against the bullet wound.

"Be careful short-stuff..." Darrek said in his low, cool voice. "She may be walking but she did just

get shot a little over a month ago."

I could just barely see Trent behind Derrek but at the mention of me being shot I did noticed how he lowered his head. Even after two weeks of me constantly forgiving Trent, saying that obviously he didn't mean to and that it had been an accident, he still hadn't fully forgiven himself. I knew that it was going to take some time before

Trent came to terms with it and nothing I could say would speed up the process anymore.

"Oh, my god." Karis exclaimed as she pulled away remorsefully. "Sorry Stase...I guess I wasn't really think about that."

I smiled almost immediately as I wrapped my left side arm around her neck and pulled her into a small hug, careful not to press my right side stomach against anything.

"Don't worry, it's just a little scratch." I said with a smirk.

"Alright, kids, let's take this party inside." Trent teased. He walked up to the front door and began to unlock it as everyone else followed him into the house.

Once we were all scattered around the living room, Trent disappeared into the kitchen to fetch everyone some drinks. I sat on one of love seat

sofas with Damen, although I had to carefully position myself onto my left side. Brandon sat across from us on a matching chair with Karis resting on the arm rest lazily. "Maybe I'll go help Trent out." Derrek finally broke the silence as he got up off the other love-seat and headed towards the kitchen.

I then seemed to let my mind wonder over to school and all the days I've

missed, luckily it was Friday and I wouldn't have to go back to school for another three days. Also the teachers seemed to let my six weeks off also count as the suspension I should have received for punching Candise in the face. Apparently most of the teachers at Kersha High weren't very fond of her either so they tried to give me the most minimal

punishment. But even though I would be going back to school as soon as the weekend ended the amount of catching up I'd have to do was already stressing me out to the max.

"Stasee?" Damen spoke softly as he reached for my face and lightly brushed his hand along my cheek. I felt my stomach begin to flutter. "Are you okay?"

Once Damen's hand pulled

away from my face the dreamy state he always caused my body to transform into slowly vanished away. "Huh?" I murmured before I realized what he had actually asked me. "Oh...Uh, yah I'm fine. Just a little stressed out about school, I guess."

I heard Brandon laugh from across the room as I jerked my head towards him. "Did I say something funny?" I asked

him skeptically.

"Kinda." He finally replied.

"Stasee, you are ahead of everyone in class...Hell, you're ahead of me and Karis. You don't have any catching up to do, but at last the entire class has caught up to you."

Karis giggled, "Stase, He's right." She said as she ran her fingers through Brandon's deep brown curly hair. "You'll be ahead of everyone in a week or so...Well, unless Mr. Hurtz

over there distracts
you too much."

I felt my cheeks flush red just
as Derrek and

Trent walked into the living
with their arms full of

glasses. They handed both
Damen and I our

Pepsi's and then gave Karis
and Brandon their

7ups before they got comfy on
the other love-

seat sofa.

"So, what'd we miss?" Trent
asked as he scooted

a little closer to Derrek.

"Oh, just Stasee admitting that she's 'stressing out' about school." Brandon said with a crooked smirk that was so similar to Damen's.

Derrek and Trent both chuckled the exact same way Brandon first had.

I scoffed, "Why does everyone keep laughing at me?" I demanded as I folded my arms against my chest.

"Well, Doll, even though you've missed over six

weeks of school, I'm sure you're still doing way better than all of us." Derrek said with a devilish grin plastered to his face. I jokingly glared at him before I took a sip from my Pepsi. Damen reached towards me and pulled me closer to him which instantly forced my heart to flutter. I turned towards Karis and Brandon, "So how's your guy's play going?" I knew they had been rehearsing 'Romeo and

Juliet' almost every second day. Apparently the first day I woke up from the coma they had actually performed in front of a small group of people at Kersha High but their actually real performance in front of all of McLennan would be happening in about a month from now. I had already bought my tickets.

"Great!" Karis exclaimed. She turned and looked down at Brandon with loving

eyes. "Brandon is amazing at acting as Romeo." Brandon smiled shyly as he reached for Karis' hand. "Well, it makes it so much easier with you being Juliet...I don't have to pretend to be in love with you."

"You're too sweet." Karis smiled before bending down slightly and pressing her lips gently against Brandon's.

"Now, now Children...Leave that stuff for in the

bedroom." Trent joked.

"Yah, none us wanna' to see that shit." Derrek

agreed. His trademark smirk tugged at the corners of his lips.

Karis grabbed a throw pillow from the chair and tossed it at Derrek. "Whatever, Mister hallway kisser." She fought back which instantly broke everyone into laughter. When I had first woken up from my Coma Trent had told me about his and

Derrek's very public make-out session in the middle of Kersha High's hallways during the morning rush. At first I had been extremely surprised that he and Derrek had actually come out of the closet, but once the shock subsided, I was overjoyed for them. Plus, they were so much happier now.

"Shut up Midget, that was only one time!" Derrek laughed out while tossing the

pillow back at Karis.

"Don't be calling my girlfriend names." Brandon

joined in as he grabbed Karis and pulled her off

the armrest, holding onto her protectively.

I turned my attention away

from the little jokingly

fight Trent, Derrek, Karis and

Brandon were

having and looked towards

Damen. It was at the

moment I noticed he hadn't

even been watching

them; he was actually sitting

there looking down at me. My cheeks began to burn as I looked away shyly.

"Is there something on my face?" I finally asked while trying to clean off my face with my shirts sleeve.

"No." I could hear the smile in his voice.

I turned back towards him and looked up into his deep brown eyes that were still softly looking down at me.

"Then what are you looking at?"

"What? I'm not allowed to stare at my girlfriend?"

He smirked.

The shy look on my face vanished as I stared up at him in shock. That had been the first time he had actually referred to me as his 'girlfriend'. In all honesty, in the past two weeks since I had woken up, I hadn't known what to label our relationship as. We had been acting like we

were together but never actually had that conversation.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean that. I mean I guess I just figured..." Damen finally said after a very long and awkward silence. "I should have asked...I mean, if you don't want to be..."

"No, no, no." I quickly replied once I found my voice. "You just surprised me, that's all." I spread my arms out wide before

bombarding him with a tight hug. "I'd love to, I want to be your girlfriend, I do!"

I could hear Damen's muffled chuckle against my hair right before he pulled me into a tighter hug. I could feel the pain in my stomach soar through my body but I tried hard to ignore it. I didn't want him to let go of me, even if it hurt.

~*~

It was about three hours later

when everyone finally left, leaving me and Damen alone in my big empty house. I just finished waving goodbye to Derrek and Trent who were now speeding down the street. I stood at the front door as I watched the truck disappear out of sight.

Derrek had decided that because today was their one month 'out of the closet' anniversary, he was going to bring Trent

somewhere special. Trent had been a little skeptical at first seeing as I had just returned home from the hospital today. But after about a half hour of convincing him it was alright and that I'd be fine here with Damen, him and Derrek bounced out the doors like a couple of seven year old kids heading to an amusement Brandon and Karis had left about twenty minutes before my brother. Brandon

nearly had to drag
Karis out of the door and I'm
sure they managed
to be at least ten minutes late
for their "Romeo
and Juliet" rehearsal. Luckily,
I highly doubted
either of them would get so
much as a slap on the
wrist because from what I
heard, Ms. Sherman,
the drama teacher, favors
Brandon and Karis like
they were her very own
children.

"Are you planning on standing

out there all night?"

Damen called to me from the living room.

"So, what if I am?" I answered back while walking back into the house and toward the living room.

Once I entered into the room I looked to my left where I found Damen leaning lazily against the piano. His smile brought up both sides of his mouth, and a dimple surfaced. I could feel my insides melting as I watched

the way his eyes
locked with mine just before
his facial expression
softened.

It wasn't very hard to
acknowledge the fact that
this was the first time Damen
and I had actually
been alone, like really alone
since our time on the
cliff. Even at the hospital, it
would almost seem
like we had privacy but the
second the thought
ever came to mind, someone
would open the door

and 'check in' on us. But now,
here we stood in my
empty
house, completely alone with
nothing but
the sound of our breathing to
fill the silence.

I could feel my knees as they
began to weaken
beneath me. I took a small
step away from him in
an attempt to keep myself
from tumbling to the
ground. Soon, I found myself
standing up against
the back of the couch staring

at Damen as he pulled himself away from the Piano and took a step closer to me. I felt my pulse edge up a degree as

he dipped his head so his mouth was at my ear.

"Do you want me to leave?" He whispered as his warm breath tickled against my skin.

"No." I finally breathed out. I could feel his arm brush against mine as our

bodies were separated by
nothing but a mere inch.
Neither
of us moved, holding onto the
fragile link
that welded us together. I
grabbed the back of
the couch behind me, using it
for support as I
looked up at his face. A small
smile tugged at his
lips while his eyes seemed to
carefully seek out
mine. His face was both
patient and pleading as
his hands soon found my

waist. He lifted me onto the back of the couch, which leveled my face with his.

He fixed me with a seductive, inviting smile as my legs dangled, one on either side of him. He reached toward me as his fingers slightly grazed against the outline of my face. Gently he brushed my hair behind my ear. I could feel my body shudder in delight as I sat there barely

acknowledging the fact that I was holding my breath until I felt my lungs tighten. I let it out sharply just as he pulled his hand back.

I felt so empty when he wasn't touching me, like there was a part of me missing. I couldn't stand it.

I snaked my arms around his neck and pulled him against my body. I wrapped my legs around his torso. Our faces were so close I could feel his

breath against my lips. It smelt so sweet and inviting, all I wanted was to taste it, to feel his rough lips against the softness of mine.

"You're so beautiful." He said barely above a whisper. I stared into his eyes and realized they were as sincere as his tone. My breathing was growing heavier with anticipation but I still managed to mutter out, "shut up and kiss me."

Our lips crashed together urgently as my body trembled involuntarily. We kissed like we hadn't been together for years, like it was going to be the last kiss we'd ever share. I slid my hands down his back as I reached for the hem of his shirt. I slowly began to tug it off him, which forced us to break our kiss. For those five seconds we were apart I felt so alone but as soon as I looked

at his body, I
grinned. I seemed to become
quite content staring
at his perfectly sculptured
body. I bit down on my
lip, trying to contain myself
from pouncing on him
like a lion.

"Upstairs?" I suggested in a
small voice still
holding onto his t-shirt.
He nodded. Damen's arms
wrapped around my
waist as I then melted into his
embrace. He pulled
me off the back of the couch.

The whole way
upstairs and into my bedroom
Damen continued to
plant tender kisses against my
skin. He started at
my lips and made his way
toward my chin. He
slowly went down my neck,
ending at my
collarbone before making his
way back up. Each
time his lips brushed against
me, I felt a burning
sensation tickling against my
skin.

Soon I found myself being

gently laid down on my bed as Damen slowly crawled onto of me. I realized I still had his t-shirt in my hands as I dropped it to the floor. He lightly brushed his lips against mine, almost teasingly. I wrapped my arms around his neck and pulled him tight against my body as I rolled over until I was on top of him. Both my legs rested on each side of Damen's body

as I sat up and slowly began to peel off my long sleeve t-shirt before tossing it to the floor.

I watched the way Damen stared up at me hungrily, but there was also something else in his eyes. It was something I hadn't seen the first time we

had done this. It was more soft and sincere. I

could see the lust in his gaze but it seemed like it was more than just lust - it

was something deeper, something stronger. I liked it.

I fell back down against his muscular body as my lips found his. Eagerly, I deepen the kiss as his masculine arms wrapped around my small waist.

The tingling feeling that erupted through my entire body overpowered the tenderness of my stomach wound. His tongue soon found its way to my mouth as I tasted the sweet

warmth that it delivered.

I felt him attempt to unhook my bra. After a few seconds of him trying, I reached behind my back and with shaky hands unhooked it for him. I pushed myself up a little bit as my bra slid down my arms and I flung it to the side. I felt so exposed to him as my bare breasts fell out of the bra cups but as soon as my eyes met his, all my

insecurities were erased. He stared at me with nothing but sheer yearning and passion.

His hands reached up towards my face before slowly making his way down my body. Barely touching me, and yet grazing the skin enough to force me to arch my back as a small moan escaped my lips. He roamed his way down to my thighs and then back up towards the buttons on

my jeans. Slowly he began to undo them as my hands fell down to his chest. I held myself up as he gently pulled off my jeans and underwear, which left me sitting there completely naked. I slid my hands down his body until I reached the beginning of his jeans, fumbling to get them undone.

Once we were both naked Damen wrapped his

arms around my waist and rolled me back over so he was once again lying on top of me.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" He breathed heavily.

I smiled admiringly at him before whispering, "I've never been so sure of anything in my entire life."

The first time we had done this was absolutely nothing compared to this time. Everything was so much more delicate, more

passionate, and just plain better. This time it felt right.

~*~

I looked over at Damen who was now lying on my bed wearing nothing but a pair of boxer shorts. He was on his side, resting his head in his hand as he watched me get dressed. I pulled on a pair of black boy-shorts underwear before reaching for Damen's black 'John Deere' t-shirt and pulling it

over my head. I completely
drowned into his shirt
and yet it was probably one of
the comfiest things
I'd ever worn.

As I peered over at Damen
again, I noticed a smile
smirk had taken over his face
and I couldn't help
but notice a hint of
amusement in his eyes.

"What?" I finally asked as I
placed my hands on
my hips and waited for his
answer.

"You look so cute in my t-

shirt." He finally replied as a bashful smile grew on my face. I was just about to look away shyly when he suddenly pulled me onto the bed with him. I yelled out aloud which soon was followed by giggles.

He rolled me over him and placed me on the other side of the bed as he hovered over me. His eyes scaled my body before meeting my own gaze. Just lying there, staring into his

deep brown eyes made me feel warm inside. I never wanted this to go away, I wish this moment could last forever. I knew it was getting late and my eyes constantly tried to remind me of how tired I was. But I didn't want to go to sleep, lying in bed with Damen at my side was better than any dream ever could be. I wished I could just stay awake and never let the moment end.

"Damen..." I finally whispered out.

"Yah?"

"Can you promise my something?" I bit my bottom lip.

"Depends...?" He said skeptically, although he held a smile on his face that said, 'I'd do anything for you.'

"Can you promise me that when I wake up in the morning... You'll still be here?"

This actually made him chuckle. I was lying there

trying to have a serious conversation with him and he was laughing at me.

"Stasee..." He began as he dipped his head lower towards me, complete seriousness took over his tone. "I'm sorry to break it to you...But you're officially never getting rid of me." He then closed in the small gap that separated mine and his lips.

Tenderly, he pressed his lips against mine which caused my stomach to do

summersaults.

"Good." I spoke against his mouth as I felt his lips form into a smile.

Slowly he pulled away from the kiss, as his eye soon found mine. Our gaze stayed locked for awhile, neither of us spoke.

The only sound that reached my ears was the sound of our hearts beating inside our chests and our light breathings.

He reached his hand towards me, cupping my

cheek as he watched me with admiring eyes.

"Stasee..." He said barely above a whisper, "I love you."

I felt my heart melt inside me, as everything seemed to completely disappear around us. I stared at him for what felt like hours as his words continued to echo in my ears like the perfect lullaby. I could hear the hammering of my heart growing with speed as I tried

to comprehend what he was saying. Did he actually just say that? I thought to myself. I looked into his eyes, realizing he was waiting for me to reply. But honestly, I couldn't speak; I was still trying to convince myself this wasn't just a dream. I reached for my leg and pinched it.

"Ouch!" I called out. Okay, this must not be a dream, I finally concluded.

"Did you just pinch yourself?"

Damen asked trying to keep himself from laughing.

"I...Uh." I tried to come up with a good enough reason for pinching myself but couldn't think of something fast enough.

"Yah...I did...Just making sure this is real."

He laughed lightly before lying back on the bed.

He reached towards me and pulled me tightly against him as I melted into his warm embrace

and snuggled my head against his chest.

Everything was so perfect. I finally had my fairy tale come true. In the past two months my life had changed completely. I had friends, my relationship with my brother grew stronger, my life was no longer isolated, and lastly I had the perfect boyfriend. Sure, a lot of bad things had happened to, Liam for one, which no matter what

the memory of that night
would probably still
haunt me for years to come.
But at least now he
was locked up and wouldn't
have the chance to
finish what he had started.
But even though so much bad
things had
happened in the past two
months, the good things
over
powered the bad and if I could
ever go back
in time...I wouldn't change
one thing.

I glanced up at Damen, he was still staring down at me lovingly, like he too was too scared to go to sleep, too scared to let this night end.

Finally, I whispered out, "I love you too." And I meant every word of it.

I felt Damen press his lips against the top of my head. He tightened his grip around me as I felt his heart thumping through his chest and against my cheek. I could hear every beat

of his heart as I
soon fell asleep with only one
thought in my mind,
Damen loved me...And I loved
him.
The End.