16 - Games

"Game night at Vanessa's?" I repeat back what Dean had said. We were walking towards the frozen food section, Dean pushing the cart while my eyes roamed every item. A er coming home from work, we

"It could be fun," Dean shrugged. "And it'll take your mind o the

Dean gave me an amused glance, reaching over and grabbing a few cartons of eggs before handing them to me so I could place them in

"Not necessarily...however you can never know with Zayn playing. Last time he wanted us to have a seance, all in attempts at trying to get ahold of his grandma and ask her if she meant to not leave him

Letting out a defeated sound, I shrugged my shoulders, pretending to be upset. "And here I was thinking I could finally get a chance to say goodbye to my goldfish. I was told it was busy swimming in the big blue sea, but you don't flush a fish down a toilet and expect me to

examination results. That is, if you would like to go."

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decided to pay the grocery store a visit.

"What kind of games? Like truth or dare?"

I paused, looking over at him. "Did it work?"

the shopping cart.

anything in the will."

"What do you think?"

believe that."

"I'm sure it's living it's dream life down there, Sophia. Hey, grab a few of those please." I saw where he was pointing at and compiled, also adding them inside. With a skip in my step I took over pushing the shopping cart, letting Dean take my place as his hand held onto the side of it so I wouldn't knock anyone over like I had accidently done the other week. He had the shopping list I had made in his hands, his eyes squinting while reading this. "Okay," He sighed, showing it to me. "What does this even mean?" "Um, obviously it's saying we need oil. Dean, maybe you should consider wearing your glasses full time." He glared at me, shaking the list in his hand. "How the fuck was I supposed to get oil out of two stickers?" "You can clearly see that they're opposites. So is oil and water. That's how." He didn't say a word, smoothing a hand down his face and sighing heavily, not bothering to argue with the logic I had just provided. "Alright, but seriously...what games will we be potentially playing?" "Most likely some stupid silly ones like never have I ever that'll give us an excuse to get tipsy." "Oh. What if I don't wanna drink...? I don't wanna ruin the fun. Should I just not go? I ruined last time for you and I want you to hang out with your friends worry free." I said, looking at him. The aisle was clear so I wasn't worried about potentially blocking someone's way, and Dean walked over to me, taking a hold of my hand and doing that same soothing motion that he knew would calm down my nerves. "You didn't ruin anything, Sweetheart. I promise. And don't worry about the drinking, Ayesha isn't allowed to so we try and keep it to a minimum to be respectful." ä™ "Are you sure?" "I'm sure." He reassured me before changing the subject. "Now, let's go find those frozen dumplings you told me about. Where were they located again?" "Right next to the frozen spring rolls. They're really good, Dean! Though, I've only ever had them once back when I used to live with...him." I winced, not meaning to mention him at all. Sometimes I forget just how many years I spent with Devon, a good chunk of my adolescence was corrupted with the memories of living with him. "Only once? I thought you said you really liked them." I nodded, avoiding his gaze. "Devon wasn't really...respectful towards dishes he wasn't familiar with." Dean's eyes blazed with slight anger as understanding dawned upon him. "He's the asshole who spit out your food." a⁶ "I didn't think you'd remember that. Anyway, It's alright. I mean, not everyone can like everything." a "Don't make excuses for him. There are respectful ways to decline food, especially food that's cultural. He could have easily told you he wasn't a fan of it. Spitting it out is fucked." He was right, once again. People pleaser Sophia was coming back out to play, and I really needed to start understanding that I should be able to call out people for doing me dirty...even though I hated confrontation. "You go to the frozen aisle, okay? I just need to grab some tomato paste." I nodded at him and proceeded to walk the rest of the way towards the frozen section. I excitedly looked around for the dumplings I wanted when I bumped into someone, forgetting to look before I walked. Shutting my eyes, I held back my yelp as my hand came up to rub at the aching spot on my forehead. When I remembered that it was someone I had bumped into, I immediately went to apologize. "I'm so sorry, I wasn't looking where I was going." "It's okay." A somewhat familiar voice spoke and I looked up, frowning once I saw who it was. ď "Oh..." I said, trying to hide my disdain. "It's you." "It's me." He replied, looking amused as if I had purposely wanted to bump into him. I glanced around, taking in my surroundings and not seeing Dean anywhere before my eyes caught onto the well known packaging. "Well..." I awkwardly said. "If you could please move, I need to ge that." I pointed towards the dumplings that were covered almost fully by his body. He seemed to shi his stance to almost look bigger, wanting to either intimidate or impress I honestly couldn't give a fuck. "I'll move on one condition." "No." "You didn't even hear what it was?"

"I don't wanna hear what it is. I just want to get dumplings." "Look, I'm sorry for what I said at the party. I was a little buzzed and you were sitting there so hot that I didn't know how to approach you." "I was sitting there so hot," I deadpanned, repeating what he said in a monotone voice. "So you decided to go the asshole route?" I mused, raising an eyebrow. "Fuck, yeah, I'm sorry. Look, if you give me another chance I promise I won't do the same shit again." "I just came here to get dumplings..." I scowled. "We can get dumplings for dinner, if that's what you're suggesting." He o ered. "I thought I was suggesting for you to back o ." stomach. beside him. "I'm not interested."

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"Give me a chance. Let me prove it, babe." Babe. The word made me sick. He walked closer to me, his hand coming up to play with my hair. My scowl deepened, an unsettling feeling forming in my "Please don't call me babe." I took a step back, his hand falling limp "Why not? I'll get to call you whatever I want a er our date." "I said I wasn't interested." I repeated, trying to stay calm. "Can you fuck o ? I just came to get dumplings." "Christ, no need to be a bitch about it." "A bitch?" I laughed, incredulity. "Just because someone rejects you, it doesn't make them a bitch." "You didn't even give me a chance." "I don't owe you a fucking chance." He stepped closer again, caging me against the cold glass fridge and I hurriedly looked around for someone, anyone. Where the fuck was "Let me prove it to you, babe." There was that word again, mixing it with his breath fanning over my face made me still, holding my breath. Flashes of the past entered my mind and I cursed myself for freezing up now, begging my head to just get myself out of there but it was fruitless. "Please get o of me." I whispered desperately, my palms pressing against the cold glass as I tried to put as much distance between us as possible. I guess I felt intimidated now, his body almost consuming mine as he smiled like what he was doing to me at this moment was a game. All fun and flirty. "All you have to do is say yes." His hand was about to play with Dean's necklace when he froze, a voice interrupting us. "What the fuck is going on?" The sound of Dean's voice was like heaven to my ears, my body instantly going lax as I shoved the guy o of me, running over to Dean. He collected me in his arms protectively, glaring at the guy. "Nothing man, we were just having a friendly talk." He raised his arms up in surrender. "I didn't know she was taken. I'll fuck o now." He shook his head in disbelief, walking away. Only when he was finally out of our eyesight did Dean turn towards me, his eyes shining with concern. "He didn't touch you, did he?" I shook my head, hand coming up to grab onto my necklace to calm the tremors. "He kept touching my hair...and I can still feel his breath

on my face. Dean, I need to take a shower. I need to get his touch o ." He was quiet for a moment, analyzing me. "Would it help if I replaced his touch with mine?" Without thinking, I stepped into his hold, wrapping my arms around his waist as I shoved my face in his chest. He didn't say anything, just stroked my back until I was ready to leave my safe space. When I tried to move back, however, Dean gently held my chin, moving my head up so I could look at him. "You feeling better now, Soph?" When I nodded, he pressed a kiss to my cheek, pulling away to speak to me. "Come on, let's get those dumplings and get out of here." "Do you want to recreate Ocean's Eight with me?" I changed the subject, yanking the freezer open and grabbed a packet, dumping it into the cart. "You wanna steal millions of dollars worth of jewelry with James Corden?" He raised his eyebrows, amused. I winced, shaking my head at the thought of teaming up with that karaoke wannabe. "Maybe Good Girl's is a better option. They actually robbed a grocery store." Dean laughed so ly, pushing the cart towards the self checkout area. "You know...everytime you run o to Alex's you seem to want to incorporate me in another heist." "You did call yourself a genius, didn't you, pretty boy?" I hu ed, starting to scan our items one by one. "Unless you'd rather me take the lead. I am pretty creative when it comes to escape plans, you know." "Shouting 'run' isn't an escape plan, Sophia." "Fine, ruin all the fun, why don't you?" "Anyway," Dean spoke, starting to fill up our reusable bags with the items we had just bought. "Would you still like to go to Vanessa's tonight? If you still feel overwhelmed, we don't have to." "If I still feel overwhelmed, you should go. They're your friends, Dean. I don't want you not going because of me." "I want you there," He glanced over, giving me a sincere look. "And I want you to know that you don't just have me, but you have them "Of course not," He shook his head. "You were drugged up and hurt.

"They don't hate me because of the party?" It'd be fucked up if they got mad." I went quiet, thinking about it as I tapped my card on the machine in order to pay. "And they don't mind me coming?" "Vanessa and Ayesha practically begged me to bring you along. And so did Zayn." His disdain was clear when he said Zayn's name, making me laugh. He picked up one of the filled bags, letting me pick up the other as we walked out of the store. I could tell he had given me the lighter one, putting the majority of the heavy items in his bag. "Someone's jealous," I teased. "Of course I'm jealous, Sweetheart. I don't want you leaving me for "I would never," I placed a hand over his. "I might leave you for Alex though." "Fucking Alex," He shook his head. "I don't need any more competition." "I'm kidding. It's only you, pretty boy. Don't forget that." "I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing." He gave me a warm look, placing our bags in the trunk of his car before shutting it. "Come on, Soph. We need to get home in time to change for Vanessa's." "Look who the fuck decided to show up!" Brandon called out, opening the door wider to let us both in. He had a wide smile on his face, sending me a 'hey' before looking at Dean and starting up a conversation. I nervously looked around, seeing the rest of Dean's friends in the living room talking and eating. "Sophia!" Vanessa jumped up, crashing into me. "Are you okay? Are you still hurting? Tell mommy what's going on." I laughed, gently pushing her o of me. "I'm okay, truly. It wasn't that big of a deal, I promise. Dean has been..." My eyes followed to where he was, looking up at him with a small smile as I watched his features relax while engaging with his friend. "Really helpful." "Honestly?" Vanessa said, lowering her voice. "I thought you would have said he was rude."

I shake my head, the word rude and Dean don't even correlate in my head. "I know that some people might look at Dean and think he's this mean guy but he really isn't. I don't know..." I shrugged, playing with my necklace. "I guess people aren't really used to others not being as erratic as them and automatically pair that with them not wanting them around. Well actually..." I frowned. "Dean did say he didn't want me around so I guess I can call him rude if I wished." Vanessa smiled, finding no heat behind my last few words and hugged me again, her eyes shining. "I'm really glad you're okay." She said with a so smile. "You really freaked us out at the party, Sophia." My face warmed with shame. "I'm so sorry about that. I know you guys were looking forward to hanging out with him and I kind of shit on your plans." "Are you kidding?" She exclaims, her head shaking. "No, you've got it all wrong. We wanted to hang out with the both of you, not just Dean. Honestly? I'm surprised he even came. Dean isn't really big on going to parties unless something really awful happened and he wanted to get drunk. He isn't one to share his feelings with other people and believes he should su er on his own." selfish. mood? you."

I frowned at that. I met Dean at a party...did that mean something bad had happened that day as well? And what about the following days where he went missing? What happened then? I gave a quick glance back at Dean, my chest constricting. With all of my shit going on, I never thought to ask Dean any important questions. It's been about me all of this time and fuck, did I feel so "Nothing really bad happened the day of the party...I don't think." My frown deepened, getting lost in my thoughts. Or did it? Did something bad happen to Dean but I was just too oblivious to see the shi in his "That was kind of dierent, actually." Vanessa said. "He was there for My heart went full at that, and I let my mouth upturn for a fraction of a second before getting lost into my thoughts again about Dean. He did seem a bit more harsh for a day or two when he came back, but overall I chalked that down to normal behavior. Fuck, I felt like the worst friend-and-maybe-something-more-person ever. My thoughts were interrupted by the sound of Zayn's voice as he called us over to where the rest of them were sitting. "Hey, sore losers! Get your asses over here!" I looked to Vanessa for an explanation as she took my hand and dragged us over to the couches. She had rolled her eyes, sighing. "He wins at UNO once and believes he is the smartest man alive." She sits me down beside Ayesha before taking her respective seat beside Alyan, him looking at her far longer than I expect one friend would to another. The couches in this living room consisted of two triple seaters and two single seaters, arranged to form a rectangle in the living room followed by a co ee table in the middle. Dean sat on the single seater closest to me, giving me a look of reassurance when my eyes caught onto his. Though because of what was revealed to me seconds earlier I looked away, ridden with guilt. It was littered with games, UNO amongst them as Zayn threw his hands up in the air in a cheer, most likely winning again. Ayesha threw her body back against the couch with a sigh, her eyes closing as Zayn basked in his glory. "God, is he infuriating sometimes." She groaned, though there was no heat behind her words. "Does he win a lot?" I asked her, tucking hair away from my face. She turns to me with a smirk, looking back over at him. "Never, actually...that does seem awfully weird to you too, doesn't it?" Before I could say anything, Ayesha threw a pillow at Zayn's face making him let out a yelp, looking at Ayesha with a betrayed expression. throw pillows at?" crazy ass to the cops."

"Ayesha..." he said, so sadly. "Does my poor, precious life mean nothing to you at all? Is this what I'm reduced to? Someone you can "Stop being so dramatic Zayn and maybe if you stepped outside of your ego filled bubble, you'd see that Sophia is about to report your Zayn then turns to me, looking even more betrayed. "Is that true, Sophia? I really did think you two were my friends but I guess I should have known better. I'm going to get myself another drink and celebrate my win with my real friends. Hey, Brandon? Do you wanna congratulate me on another fantastic win?" "No." "Oh..." "Congrats, Zayn." I tell him, laughter in my tone. "Go get yourself that drink." He drops his dramatic act, grinning as he stands up and nods at me. "Hi there, Sophia. I'm glad you could come and cheer me on." With that, he walks over to the kitchen, opening the fridge and slipping out three water bottles. Before I can question why, Ayesha speaks. "Don't mind him, he's usually like this. You'll get used to it soon enough. And hi, Sophia. It really is nice to see you again. I'm glad you're feeling better." Ayesha said genuinely. "It's nice to see you too! I'm literally in love with your dress." I shook my head in disbelief on how someone could look that good. "I'm in need of some new sundresses for this summer. I only own jeans and t-shirts." I frowned. She was wearing a light pink hijab that matched her maxi dress, along with some baby doll white heels. "Sophia, I know this may be sudden but...do you wanna marry me? We should definitely go shopping together soon— actually let's make it a girls trip with me, you, and Vanessa. If that's alright with you, of course." I beamed, happy. "Yes, let's do that! I'm free on Saturday at five? I have work before then." "I'll text you the details—" "Okay!" Zayn stood up, rubbing his hands together. "It's time to play some games now that everyone has arrived. Oh, by the way, Sophia I got you and Dean some water. I know you guys don't want to drink tonight and Ayesha can also get you some soda if that's what you would like." I thanked him, taking both bottles from his hands and handing one of them to Dean, still avoiding his gaze. "Oh no," Ayesha groaned, leaning back on the sofa. "I do not think I can handle another one of Zayn's games." "Lighten up Ayesha, this won't be anything like last time." "Last time, my mother almost married me to you." She deadpanned, and everyone let out a small laugh. "And what's wrong with that? I'd be happy to marry you!" Zayn hu ed. "That makes one of us," Ayesha muttered, shooting Dean a pleading look. He only smiled at her, turning to Zayn. "She's right, Zayn. You got your shit rocked last time." "Okay, but this time is completely dierent. I've actually matured, believe it or not." He said with a firm nod, looking around the room. I noticed everyone's smile widening, one of my own blooming as well. No matter how much people pretended to be annoyed at Zayn, I knew they loved him with their entire soul. Their warmth towards each other was very prominent and once again, I was forever glad that Dean had friends as kind and loving as them. "How about we stick to something easy?" Brandon o ered, yanking Zayn's hand so he sat down. "Since Sophia's new she can go first." "You know, if I had social anxiety I would be shitting myself up there. But I don't, so be grateful." I pointed out, looking to Brandon to further hear what I would be doing first. "It's simple. You stand up, say a sentence you think will spark up a conversation and then let us take turns disagreeing or agreeing to it and why. Then we just let the conversation lead to wherever." Alyan explained. "Hm," I nodded, looking down to think about what I wanted to say. "It

can be about anything?"

move on."

wrong." I replied.

"Correct." Someone confirmed.

that what happened, happened. Go?"

time to process what is being said to them."

that's what you're supposed to do."

"Uhh okay..." I started, looking over at Dean who sent me an encouraging nod. "I feel like people tend to have a weird saviour complex, and always need to fix or say things instead of accepting

"Agreed." Brandon replied. If I need advice, I'll let you know. Otherwise, all I need is for someone to validate how I'm feeling and

"I'm guilty of that," Vanessa sighs. "I just don't know what to say when someone rants to me. I feel like the other person should consider how I'm feeling as well, because for some people it takes

"Yes, exactly. Which is why you should always ask before you rant. Springing something onto someone and then expecting them to validate your feelings when you couldn't care less about theirs is

"But I thought giving advice helped?" Zayn wondered. "I thought

"I agree. Especially in terms of when you're ranting to someone about something and they try to o er all this advice. It's frustrating because all I need is someone to listen, not a therapist." Ayesha started o.

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"For certain people, it definitely can be." Ayesha shrugged. "But to most, saying shit like 'maybe you should do this' or 'you can try to do that' is helping no one. You're just saying words at that point." "What the fuck does that mean?" Zayn questioned. "Which part? The 'you're just saying words'?" He nodded and Dean went ahead to elaborate. "'You're just saying words' means that you're spewing on worthless sentences that won't a ect or change how they feel. In all honesty, it probably ends up wearing them down in the end since they're constantly surrounded with people telling them what they could have done. Sometimes, all people need to hear is a validating sentence, such as 'you have every right to feel that way' and that's it." "Well, shit. I didn't know it was that easy." "I think this also happens a lot while being an ally. Ally's have a weird saviour complex where they think that speaking over, let's say, people of colours voices will do us good. When in reality, all we need for them to do is to listen to our struggles and to support us by giving us a voice. Not to take over it." I shi the conversation. "Yes! That's something that frustrates me so much. It's one thing to understand that you have privilege and another to use it in a way that will support us. Just acknowledging it isn't enough anymore." Alyan shook his head. "Guys like, I'm so fucking glad we live in Canada because of how racist America is, but at the same time Canada is just as bad." Brandon spoke up. "Thank you!" Vanessa threw her hands up. "Canada is literally worse because of how well they hide their racism. Canada day is still a thing even though they committed literal cultural genocide towards Indigenous Peoples." "Exactly. And you'd think it'd be obvious to people that racism is clearly wrong but of course, people still debate over it." Dean added. "The way people debated whether my life mattered is still crazy to me. They're all pro-life until it comes to black people." "People are fucked, dude." Zayn sent Brandon a knowing look. "I'm glad this whole conversation game is a thing," I said. "It really helps give perspective on other's lives." "I agree. And it makes me feel less alone." Ayesha added. "Ayesha, does this mean you'll marry me?" Zayn perked up. "I'd marry Brandon before I'd marry you." Ayesha rolled her eyes. "But...Brandon's gay?" Zayn's eyebrows furrowed. I held in my laugh as Ayesha rubbed a hand down her face. "Exactly." "Be nice, Ayesha." Brandon stifled a chuckle, shooting Zayn a fake sincere look. "You'll get her one day. I believe in you, buddy." "You know...I can get her right now if I call her mom," Zayn started to reach for his phone when Ayesha leaped over, grabbing it before he could. "Don't you dare call my mother wannabe Zayn Malik or I'll have your head on a fucking stick! Do you hear me?!" "Maybe you should relax, Ayesha. Wouldn't want to upset your future husband, now would you?" Ayesha let out an annoyed hu, stomping over to Alyan and handed him Zayn's phone. "If I see you giving this back to him, I'll call your mother and tell her that you're the one that broke her plate and not your baby brother." Alyan winced, slipping Zayn's phone into his jean pocket. "Sorry, man." He said, shooting Zayn an apologetic look. "Maybe we should have a reality show and call it Zayn and friends!" "No way. I should be on the title card, not you." "That's the stupidest name I've ever heard." Vanessa grumbled out. "And since we always meet at my house, I should be on the title card." "But I'm the one that brings humor, good looks, and charm. A house is not a home until you have me, V. Wow, that rhymed. I should start

writing poetry." "Please don't." Brandon begged. "I feel like my third grade sister writes better shit than you." "Can we play another game? I really want to beat Alyan at something." Vanessa asked and sent Alyan a look. He smirked at her, the arm that he placed behind her head moved slightly so that he could play with her hair. "Yeah, sure. Let's play truth or dare. And if you don't answer, you drink." "Zayn, if you dare me to marry you I will toss you out of the window." Ayesha told him, pointing a finger in his direction. He masked his look of mischief with a blink of his eyes, trying to pretend to be innocent. I was rooting for them in my mind, finally turning to look over at Deam feeling bad because I was avoiding him for a good chunk of the night. I stand up, walking over to him and he pulls me down to sit, arm around my waist. "You having fun so far, Soph?" "Yeah, I am." I smiled up at him, leaning into his side. My hand started playing with his, twisting around the rings he hand on his fingers. "Your friends are..." "Annoying? Weird? Funny?" "Nice," I laughed under my breath. "They didn't need to include me but they did." "They know that you're important to me which makes you important to them. If you haven't noticed by now, I don't engage much at school." "Really? And here I thought you were prancing around handing out

friendship bracelets like girl scout cookies." I said dryly, making him roll his eyes at me in a playful manner. "You and that attitude," He shook his head. "You feeling better?" "Yes, thank you." I sighed, interlacing our hands together. "This really did help take my mind o everything."

"Glad I could be of service," He murmured back, and we both watched everyone sit on the floor in a circle. Vanessa looked at us, her head tilted in question and Dean shook his head slightly, probably indicating that we would sit this one out. She "Truth or dare?" He simply picked up his drink, downing it to avoid the answer before reaching over and spinning the bottle, landing on Vanessa. I watched them play for a few more minutes, Dean tracing small circles on the exposed skin of my stomach and I finally gained the courage to focus "Dean?" I called out, looking up at him. "Can I ask you something?" He looked confused but nodded, waiting for my question. However

only nodded in understanding, turning back to the group before placing an empty glass bottle in the middle. With everyone ready, Alyan was the first to spin. It landed on Zayn. "Truth! No dare." "Nope, you've already said truth. What's the weirdest thing you've jerked o too." "Shit," Zayn cussed, thinking. "This one girls handwriting I was crushing hard over in high school." "Handwriting? Zayn, I'm actually appalled right now. Why?" back on him, wanting to talk.

before I could answer it, my phone started buzzing in my pocket, my stance going rigid. I didn't want to answer, but I needed to know who it was. Slipping my phone out, I noticed the contact was from the but it didn't. Rather, it probably made me even more nervous. "Uh, Sophia. Your phone's ringing." "Right, sorry," I sent a forceful smile to Brandon. "Do you want me to be there with you?" Dean so ly asked, also a hallway into a room so we could have a bit more privacy.

police station having it saved and I knew it was supposed to relax me seeing the caller ID. I nodded and we stood up, following Dean down With gentle hands, he took the phone from me once we were seated on the edge of a bed, noticing how shaky they had gotten. Finally with a look in my direction, he answered the call and placed it on speaker phone, setting it in the space between us. Dean had reached over, taking my hand in his as he repeated that same motion that he "Hi, Miss Adam. My name is Dr. Chen and I'll be discussing the medical examination that took place on..." She rattled o the exact

knew comforted me beyond repair. "Hello?" "Hi, is this Miss Sophia Adam?" "This is she." I cleared my throat, not wanting it to crack. date and I humed, letting her know I understood. "Because we only took pictures, I don't have an exact report which is why I wanted to discuss some things with you. From the looks of it, I

can tell your body has been through severe trauma though I'm not sure how bad. Due to that, if you were comfortable I believe you should come into the hospital and go through several other tests. I know how hard this has been on you, and I promise you if you do not

want to do it, you don't have to. However with more tests we can see if anything else is damaged and I can get a more thorough look on how we can help you. Furthermore, I believe with more concrete results it can help push your case forward."

At the last part, I held my breath, hope fluttering through my body. "Are you saying more tests might help me get that restraining order permanent?" Dean squeezed my hand as my eyes glistened, happy. "I believe that if we can establish just how much your body has been please. Just one question...will these be covered?" I confirmed, more tears streaming down my face.

through...it might happen. When your bones break, there are ways we can pinpoint the age of the fracture if it has not healed correctly.

Though, I would like to warn you that this is not a guarantee. Doing these tests won't ensure the approval of the restraining order." I wiped under my eyes, sni ing. "I would like to still do the tests, "Yes, through OHIP. I'll set up an appointment at the hospital for next week on Tuesday at eight AM. Would that be alright with you?" "Thank you...thank you so much." "Of course," She said, her voice full of warmth. "Good luck, Miss Adam." With that she hung up the phone and I pressed my hands against my face, full of thoughts and emotions. I felt like screaming with joy. I felt like crying in exhaustion. I felt like needing to break and hit and tear and rip and ruin. I felt like nothing. I felt like everything.

I was frozen and my mind stayed empty. I didn't have any thoughts yet somehow I also had a million. This might finally end.

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