

## Chapter Forty-One

### Recap

The tenderness in his gaze is so light that I begin to feel my eyes burn again. I look away and bite my lip, frustrated with my lack of control. Wordlessly, Travis sighs and pulls me forward into his chest. His arms come around my waist, latching onto the polyester feel of my jacket. I remain frozen in that very moment—even my tears halt in their downpour—as he tucks me into his warmth and rests his face on the nape of my neck.

↵

I wait, figuring that he would let go eventually and go on a rampage that would disconnect the feeling that was forming between us. A few moments of silence pass by—mainly with me trying to understand his sudden shift in mood. When nothing changes, I start to relax, subconsciously melting into his firm hold on me like it is the only thing keeping me up.

A tear I didn't know had fallen slips past the curve on my cheek and slides down my chin. I clamp my eyes shut, willing the tears to stop forming, and fist a handful of his hair in my hands.

As if he can feel the tears dropping on his shirt, Travis begins to rub soothing circles along the small of my back while tucking me impossibly closer into his body. Likewise, I pull him closer to me, hoping that the human interaction will dim the dull pain my mom has forever imprinted in my heart.

His lips graze my collarbone before finally pressing a barely noticeable kiss.

"I'm sorry," He whispers against my skin.

And in that moment, despite my confusion, I forgive him for anything.

### Chapter Forty One

"So what now?"

Somewhere in between hugging in the empty hallway and sitting around in the oddly spacious first floor bathroom, we had managed to eliminate any verbal barriers. It has been two hours since my mellow break down, and in those two hours, Travis has managed to enlighten me on a completely different side to him—one that elaborates his optimism. Whether he faked it or whether he was absolutely truthful about every word he said, his positivity worked. Surprisingly, I had forgotten about the dull pain a while back.

↵

"I was hoping you would know the answer to that." I reply at last while readjusting myself in the empty bathtub.

"Are you stable now?" He asks a ever giving me a strange stare. Before I can reply, he interrupts, "Oh wait—I'm talking to a girl who enjoys sitting in bathtubs in her free time."

↵

I release an exasperated sigh, "Don't be a jerk."

"Sorry." He offers me a mischievous grin.

"Did you just apologize?" In light of the situation, I raise an eyebrow in shock.

"Maybe I did," He replies, "Does it make you feel better?"

↵

I nod my head, "It does actually."

"Then I meant it." He concludes, resting his elbows on his knees splayed out from under the closed toilet lid.

"You know," I start, tracing an imaginary line along the rim of the tub, "If you were this nice to me when we first met, you could have saved us from trouble."

I stop tracing to observe his expression.

"Hey." He narrows his eyes and jerks his head in my direction, "You were a bitch too."

"Does that mean you admit you were a bitch?" I question sarcastically.

"Of course not." He replies easily while I glare, "Men can't be bitches."

↵

I roll my eyes, "Fine, then the male equivalent of a bitch."

"So a dick?" He asks, challenging my inability to say the word aloud.

↵

"A hairy one." I add with a smile.

↵

"So much hate." Travis comments while looking down at his own hands.

I murmur in agreement and allow a comfortable silence to envelope the peaceful bathroom ambiance. Travis leans back against the support of the toilet while I stretch my legs out to the edge of the tub itself.

"If I ask a question," I begin a er a few minutes, "Will you answer truthfully?"

"No." Travis states bluntly, unflinchingly staring down at his clasped hands.

I ignore his comment, somewhat expecting that response anyways.

He looks up with a tiny smile, "Playing—it depends."

"On if you feel like answering?" I ask, raising an eyebrow.

Travis nods his head, "Bingo."

I exhale sharply, knowing that there's no way he'd want to answer my broiling question. Another silence overwhelms us as he sits and waits for me to phrase my words, and I slump and find a way to speak them without getting him riled up.

"Who is Cassie?"

Okay, so I've never been great at dropping bombs so ly.

↵

Travis whips his head up and stares directly at me with an emotion I can't even begin to register. His eyes darken, a shade of olive duller than ever, and his lips part in shock.

"Sorry," I immediately say in a quieter tone, "Just forget I asked that."

He shakes his head, "I just wish mom had the ability to know when to shut up."

↵

I repress the urge to remind him that she was drunk, but I figured that would only increase his agitation. So, I remain silent, hoping his fuming will die down as the imaginary steam reeking o his body decreases.

"She's my sister." He answers, much to my surprise. I glance up at him in wonder—he had never once mentioned that he had one. I've only known about Mason, for he is all Travis talks about. "Cassie was two years older than me."

↵

Was

↵

A sick sensation crawls through my veins as I realize he used the dreaded past tense.

"I'm sorry." I muster, suddenly feeling rude for bringing her name up.

Distinctively, I remember the way Travis's mom looked when she saw me. She was awestruck—filled with disbelief and relief at the same time. It didn't register then, but now that I know...she though I was her deceased daughter.

"Why?" He snaps, irritated, "You didn't do anything."

"I know." I whisper, staring o into the distance.

I may not have done anything, but I did make him hurt again—by making him think about her.

It wasn't long ago when I was introduced to Layla as her step-sister. But even now, I can't imagine losing her. Having that type of connection with someone—one that you've lived with all your life—and then one day, they are just gone?

Unbareable.

"She's dead," Travis bites harshly, glaring at the marble on the floor, "And her blood is on my hands."

↵

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Don't give me sass about the page length. Like don't even mention anything about the length--good or bad. **You've been warned.**

↵

I have to admit, on the extremely long plane flight home, I came up with a few new ideas for this story. So, welcome aboard the wild express (;

↵

Thanks for always reading!

Can I get 65 comments?

↵

VOMMENT.

xxSummerxx

Continue reading next part [↪](#)