

## Song 21

### Song 21 ↴ I Just Wanna Leave

By the time the weekend approached I'd had enough of this crazy place. I filled in the weekend leave request form and submitted it to Sister Louisa, who finally didn't seem mad at me any longer.

Somehow the streaking incident hadn't made it to the teachers' ears and I was counting my blessings. Miracles existed, and I knew it.

Ma picked me up early Saturday morning and I promised to myself I wasn't even going to be mad if she made me clean houses all weekend long. But instead she drove me all the way home. She was wearing her maid uniform, which meant she had to go to a job, but I didn't dare to ask her if she wanted me to help and shoot myself in the foot that way.

But she read my mind.

"All my girls are reporting to work today," she said, unprompted. "So, don't worry. I'll just drop you off at home. You can do your homework and babysit Victor for me."

That caught my attention. "Babysit him? Why?"

"Your dad is going to be out until tomorrow."

I hated it when she referred to the gringo as my dad. He wasn't, by a long shot. He hadn't even given me his last name. And I didn't think dads were supposed to creep you out.

I refused to ask why, but she felt the need to fill me in on more details. "He's got a job outside of town this weekend."

We got off a main road and into a narrow street that led into our barrio. The houses turned more and more shabby as we drove deeper into the street. The gringo was a professional welder and he worked on and off for a contractor company that did a lot of different jobs.

Anywhere from buildings construction, to oil pipes, big and small equipment manufacture.

I could tell this weekend was going to be bomb because he wasn't going to be around for most of it.

My grin was wide and bright as I waved my ma goodbye. I wheeled my suitcase into the living room and wasn't even fazed by the chaos that my little shit of a brother had amassed in the living room. He gave out the loudest fart a little five year old body could create and I thought that was a fitting welcome coming from him.

"Dios Santo," I gagged. "Did you just crap your pants?"

He giggled and I picked him up. It did smell like he'd soiled himself so I hauled him into the bath. A few moments later he was splashing in the bathtub. I sat next to him to keep watch and called Leti to let her know the news, but I guessed she was still asleep because she didn't pick up.

I nearly gave myself a heart attack when the bathroom door opened and the gringo looked down at us. He rubbed his nose and sneezed before he pointed at me.

"Get out, I need to piss."

The man that charmed my ma, ladies and gentlemen.

I didn't protest at all, though. I got up and waited outside until he was done and came out. Without a word, I slipped back into the bathroom and sat next to my brother again. Because having a conversation with a hyper and incoherent five year old was a lot better than a second in the gringo's presence. I breathed a sigh of relief when I heard the front door close and his truck start. As he drove away I felt my mood lift higher.

Leti called me then. When I picked up she greeted me with a, "What's up, perra? I thought you'd forgot about me."

I laughed. "How could I possibly. Guess what?"

"What?"

"I'm right across the street."

She hung up and a couple of minutes later she was barging in. We squealed once we saw each other and met each other halfway, wrapping our arms around each other.

"I swear you look so many shades whiter," she told me. "Are they feeding you caviar at your fancy boarding school?"

I rolled my eyes. "Stop. They serve pizza and pasta just the same."

We sprawled on the couch in the living room as a now clean Victor sat on the floor to watch cartoons.

"Okay, but you need to tell me everything about that place." She leaned closer to me, eyes wide. "Better yet, got pictures?"

I knew this would happen eventually, so I'd managed to sneak a few pictures of the school here and there. Leti was impressed, but nowhere near as much as I'd have expected.

Here was the reason. "Cool and all, but got any pictures of the people? Especially that guy who kissed you."

That caught me in the middle of drinking some apple juice and I choked. The juice came out of my nose, and oh, it was painful.

Even though she was grossed out she found me some napkins in the kitchen. I glared at her as I cleaned myself up.

"Of course not. That'd probably get me in trouble."

"There's something called a selfie, you know. You walk up to someone and ask them to take one." As I continued to death stare her she changed tactic. "What about Facebook?"

"I guess we could," I said. I had to admit I was kinda curious to see what her reaction would be once she saw Ashton and company. They all were a sight for sore eyes.

I pulled out my phone and set out to stalk people on Facebook. I found Quinn first, and we spent a good twenty minutes or so going over his profile. Leti was salivating.

"What about DeAndre?" I asked her, laughing my ass off.

She snapped her fingers and shook her head. "Well, do you see him around?"

We both lost our shit once we found a shirtless picture of Quinn. Boy was ripped. You could wash your clothes off his abs.

An unexpected name appeared on my screen as the phone vibrated. I was so startled that I dropped it on the floor.

Leti picked it up and looked at it. Her dark eyes gleamed with something that made me nervous. "Isn't this the pretty boy? Let's see what he wants." Then she picked up the call and put it on loudspeaker. "Hey papacito lindo, how you doin'?"

I could've died. "Oh my God, Leti!"

There was silence for a second longer. Then his voice, "Vera?"

I snatched the phone away from her. She was nearly in tears of laughter.

"I'm sorry," I said to the phone. "My best friend knows no bounds."

He chuckled. "Best kind of people, if you ask me."

"Hell yeah," Leti said. I swore the apocalypse would happen if they both came together against me.

"So, what are you up to?" he asked.

After the craziness of the week, I'd decided to give him the benefit of the doubt and got on friendly terms with him again. But this call was still unexpected.

"Um, nothing much. Just at home."

"Great, because I'm outside."

Leti stopped laughing and looked at me. I looked back at her. We both looked at the phone.

"What?"

Honking came from outside.

Leti scrambled to the window and parted the curtains. I saw the white Jeep parked outside by the curb.

So many thoughts raced through my head, but the first one I acted on was to turn off the call. I stalked outside of the house and walked over to his car. I was about to scream bloody murder when he rolled down the window and I saw that he was not alone. The strangest group greeted me. Lincoln sat in the passenger's seat. Addy and Ayrton were on the back.

"What the hell are you all doing here? How did you know where I live?"

Addy raised her hand. "I found it on your welcome packet. You kinda left it laying around our room."

I folded my arms. That was true.

"Yeah, but who told you to come unannounced?"

"I just announced it over the phone though," Ashton said, giving me sass.

I pursed my lips and told myself to turn the anger down a few notches. Ayrton opened his door and stepped out of the car, looking around. He smiled. "I like this place."

I gasped and looked around. Taking in the small houses with unkept yards, chainlink fences and beat up cars parked across the street. I'd been to his place and I knew there was no comparison to be had. Yet, his smile was genuine. Like he could possibly feel more at home here than in his fancy mansion of seven rooms.

"Hi, I'm Leti," my best friend said, shaking his hand. "Are you Ashton?"

"Ayrton," he said. "The younger, gay twin brother."

A weird sound snapped me to attention. "Oh shit," I said, and turned to run back into the house. I found Victor crying on the floor.

"I tried to hug Peppa," he said as he pointed at the overturned TV on the floor.

A few moments later the entire group followed me inside. I had a second of embarrassment at them seeing where I came from, but had to suck it up quickly so that I could make Victor stop crying.

"Are you on like, babysitting duty?" Link asked. He looked ganglier in regular black clothes than he did in his uniform. I nodded at him and he clicked his tongue. "I guess you won't be able to join us for the concert, then."

That was when I noticed the common theme. All of them were wearing mostly black. Black jeans, tees and accessories. As if they were headed to a casual Friday funeral.

I frowned and looked at Leti, but she was as confused.

"What concert?"

Ashton jammed his hands in the pockets of his impossibly tight jeans. I tried not to look at his thighs. His blue eyes were shining as I looked back up. "I thought you could join us for a rock concert in town. It could be educational."

I snorted. "Are you really going on with that crazy idea of yours of forming a rock band?"

"Yep. I'll convince you somehow."

"Wait," Leti said, drawing their attention to her. "You want Vera to be in your rock band?" She looked at all of them and started laughing. She pointed at me. "She's never even heard one rock song in her life."

I rolled my eyes. "I've heard one." The one Ashton taught me on a treadmill, but that was it.

"Exactly," Link added. "Which is why she needs a crash course. And this concert is pretty awesome. One tribute band as a reward."

I gave them the most condescending smile I could as I glanced down at my brother, who was hooked back up on Peppa Pig.

"Sorry, I can't."

"Oh no, chica. I'm not missing this for the world." We all looked at Leti. She motioned at me. "Pack some of Victor's stuff. We're taking him to Nana and my mama. And then we're going to this concert."

"We?" I asked her, eyes wide as saucers.

"And you know what? I'm calling DeAndre. This will be hilarious."

I opened and closed my mouth repeatedly. When it was clear I wasn't moving a finger, she did the packing herself and pushed my brother and I to her house. It was the strangest thing to introduce my kind of friends from the new school to Leti's family.

That was when I slammed on the breaks.

"Sorry, guys. I can't. Ma will kill me if I don't stay put."

Nana winked at me. "Leave Victoria to me, go have fun and take care of my grand daughter."

I knew ma wouldn't dare to lose her shit at an elder, but that she'd for sure lose it at me after everything was said and done. Yet, I still found myself in the back of Ashton's Jeep with Addy and the boys. Ayrton had joined Leti in DeAndre's car, and all seven of us drove to this concert.

And I had to admit, I was excited.

SONG OF THE DAY: Good Charlotte - I Just Wanna Live

## Author's Note

in case you were wondering: is this story REALLY about a band? yes it is, and yes it seems like so far the story's been slow (sorry?), but this is it! change is coming for vera ☺

if you've made it this far without losing interest, YAY! THANK YOU!!

**drop me a vote and a comment with a taquito, an enchilada or a chimichanga\*** if you're so inclined!

\*if you're wondering what the hell am i talking about (it's not like you can send mexican food via wattpad comments), check out my master rant on giving feedback here: <https://my.w.tt/ljqvMRWgIQ>

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