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"Good God," I miserably thought to myself, as I glanced at my wrist,
detecting the baring on the watch I was wearing, while hastily
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entering the house and prudently restricting myself from slamming forcefully the door behind my back. I reflected on the notion that it usually took me about ten minutes to get from the university to the house, noting that this time around I was home in less than five. I guess the horridness of the day had some partial influence in the haste with which I returned, mostly powered by irrevocably building fury coursing through my veins and burning my skull inside out. It was not so astonishing having reached my destination that quickly, I might say that I was even expecting it considering just how much I was in fact pissed o . The nerves all over my body seemed to be resolutely active, registering every annoying detail to the very maximum and that was in no way a pleasant feeling. At that point, I couldn't even remember the last time I had been so upset over a nonsensical particularity. Adela met me in the hallway, as she was heading out to the university for her own lessons, her gaze locking on my flushed face addressing me a swi , yet gentle smile. She had everything ready, already prepared and was most likely only expecting my return, in order to greet me before she would get going, her bag was clutched in her hand, as he cheerfully asked: "Are you done for the day?" My mood was basically a desolate ruin and I was feeling down, yet

Catherine: Frustration

another day in a row of guite a many, so much so that I could even say that I was desperate and annoyed, and consequentially without thinking for a more than a second, I angrily spat out: "I am done for the year." She caught on my horrible atmosphere right away, given that it was an easy thing to do a er my irrational words of complaint, my foolishness actually reaching the level of worrying over something I should even ponder about. As though it was something one could do as easily as it was said, ignore how one felt was never e ortless, and it was just as if I radiated negative vibe all around me, a certain type of a radioactive particle. At least, it was how I felt.

Adela's face immediately morphed into a worried expression, and unfortunately, her cheerfulness disappeared in an instant. And, so did her smile. Since I had reached the very point at which I ended up hating everything and everyone, myself included, I couldn't help but feel bad for being the actual cause for such drastic change in my new friend's features. However, before I could apologize, she inquired, concern rather detectable in the few syllables she uttered: "What happened? Is everything okay? Are you okay?" she wondered, greatly emphasizing the 'you'. I rubbed my eyes, a er which I allowed my hands to sluggishly rest on my hips, before reassuring her. "I am fine.

Or, at least I will be. I will tell you everything when you get back." She was still looking at me, quite obviously puzzled, and when I gave her a lenitive nod, she bent down to put on her sneakers. While she had her focus settled on that, I remembered that I still didn't know her schedule by heart, and therefore I asked, as calmly as I could manage: "When do you start?" She gave it a hesitative thought, before mumbling the reply."Ahm, at two o'clock." again, her face automatically turned in my direction, just as our

As soon as she was done tying her laces, she energetically got upright unwavering gazes locked, and she added: "But I will be back at five and we will talk about whatever has you in this mood, okay? Just calm down and take a nap or a bath or drink some tea - whichever helps. Mum and dad are out. They said they will be late and said not to wait up, so you have the place to yourself." A nonchalantly suggestive wink was addressed to me, before a shy smile appeared on her lips, rather consequentially inquiring if the comment was standing at the right place, hoping to not have crossed some line. Not quite sure as to what I could reply, I shook my head, a smirk not failing to accompany the comment, easing my tension partially, and I took my queue to mumble: "I imagine a combo of all that will help. You go now. Or you will be late. We will talk later. Bye."

"Bye," She mused and slipped out the door, leaving me to the silence of the empty house, which I gladly welcomed. A part of the key to my relaxation was silence, so I embraced it as I took my shoes o, sighing as a mode to throw the repressed wish to scream out of my system. The exhale echoed in the halls of the empty house, its spaciousness a provider of a reply, which ironically a er reaching my ears once again turned into a satisfying feeling. I climbed on the second floor, my knuckles unavoidably white from angrily clenching my bag with all the force I possessed. I became aware of the very fact only moments before I reached for the doorknob and got the door to slowly open before me, the squeaking sound both irritating and funny, as I used the opportunity to shake o my hands in the air with the sole intention to relax my fingers, while entering my room.

When I closed the door behind my back, I leaned to rely on the door with my back. I didn't want to move from my position, enjoying the unhurried pleasure it brought. I was tired, the idea to study certainly far from any thought whatsoever, and the peacefulness of the room successfully manager to wash away the arrogantly built up tension in

my muscles. Another sigh slipped out undetected, and I only registered it a er rang in my ears, so since the stress I felt was winding down, I didn't want to bother myself with thinking of the things which occurred during day, very much enjoying the feeling of refreshment that my unfastening mind was sinking into. The

happenings of the day were in no way forgotten, but were decisively put aside since I considered that running back from the university entirely filled with annoyance was enough worrying for the day. That is, until Adela returned and forced me into conversing with her,

something I was positively sure she would do moments a er breaching the door. I pushed myself away from the door, grunting from the displeasure which leaving the comfortable position brought, and dropped my bag on the only available chair in the room, which proved to be the one standing resolutely in front of my desk, letting it land with a thud. "I will unpack the books later. I will take a shower now," I silently mused, impatiently starting to get rid of my clothes one piece a er another. When I slipped under the blazingly hot water, every uneasiness seemed to get li ed away. The water tickling my skin was secretly preforming a refreshing massage making the shower one of the most relaxing I had had in a long time, and as an a ere ect I felt unexplainably better, tolerably relaxed and it was that good in fact, that right a er I put on my clothes, I felt an enormous urge to take a nap captivating my each cell. Just as I lowered my head down on the pillow, feeling the so ness of the contact which the linen pillowcase inserted on my cheek, I felt myself dri ing away. ***

I woke up at the mu led sound of my ringtone, instantly growing puzzled as to circumstances that have provided that, before remembering that because of the dealings of the day, the phone was still located in my purse, as I had entirely forgotten to take it out. As I was getting up to see who was calling me, I felt a little grateful that I managed to fall asleep and get some proper, although insu icient rest. The screen illuminated my face and the first thing I saw once my gaze landed on the screen, stabilizing my vision, was my mum's caller ID. It took me a while to get the device out on the open, since the phone as always managed to hide in the full bag so well, deep in the corridor of mess my bad never failed to be, that whenever the necessity for urgency appeared it would pretend to be quite the stubborn device and wouldn't give away its location, this time around no exception to the rule, ringing and buzzing like insane, yet well hidden to stay undisturbed for a while, making it impossible for my numb fingers to get it out in time. Doomed, the call cut o just as I was about to pick it

up, my mum probably thinking that it is pointless to continue

call.

waiting, given that I might be in class or am simply not registering the

Through the dizziness of my thoughts I typed her number and I called her back right away, taking a seat back on the bed. A er only an instant she picked up, greeting me. I was glad to hear my mum's

voice, even though I did talk to her that very morning. I knew that those short stolen moments of phone calls were costing a fortune, but I couldn't help it all together and mum needed those immensely, as well. I tried to greet her as cheerfully as I could, trying to hide away the hoarseness of my voice. "Hey, mum. How are you?" "We are well, Katie. Fred just got back from school and we are about to sit down for a lunch. How are you? Is everything well?" Mum sounded well, much better than I had expected. Considering everything, she was rarely in a cheerful mood, which made me immensely glad that she sounded better. It was simply that far too much was clinging on her mind and she had more than enough troubles landed on her soul. Consequently I was glad to finally hear her jolly voice, even though it was only over the phone. "I am fine mum. Everything is great. Have a nice lunch," I whispered, knowing that by the end of the line I will entirely forget to mumble a few words for a nice meal, and felt as though it was completely unnecessary to worry mum with stupid troubles from university, not

when she couldn't do much to advise, except maybe the usual calming, reassuring lines. Besides, it was not as if there was a huge problem, it was simply small nonsense that got to me. It shouldn't have, but it did and I had no intention of bothering mum with it. Not

wnen sne was finally nappy.

here?"

"What are you up to, Katie?" she said, interrupting my thoughts that so foolishly roamed away. I dismissively shook my head, plenty of time to ponder over unimportant things later. "Oh, I just got up. I was tired when I got back from university and I needed a rest. Adela was headed to her classes and the rest of the family is out for the day, so I dozed o for two hours, a er taking a bath," I explained, summarizing the entirety of the day in couple of words, the account of which indispensable for mum, while throwing a look at the clock hanging on the wall opposite me, doing my calculations, as I went on: "And Adela has one more class, so she should be back in an hour, give or take. So, I am free for that period of time. So, maybe a er you finish lunch, Fred could Skype me and we could talk more. I haven't spoken with Fred in more than three days now and I am really eager to talk to him." "We could do that, sure," Mum confirmed, her cheerfulness getting

the best of her as she asked me: "You know what just happened

"What? Is everything okay?" I asked, the alarm of worry slowly lighting itself, despite my mother's obviously good mood. I was still sleepy and that had some e ect on the logic and reaction sections of my brain, which even in my full concentration occasionally failed to

"No, yeah all is fine. But Stephanie got engaged yesterday. She is getting married in a month," my mom exclaimed, allowing the news to take me by surprise, for a surprise it was. A sigh of relief escaped my lips, but one of indecipherable astonishment joined in, as a wave of both utter amazement and overwhelming pleasure overtook, as I, to my entire disbelief, succeeded to phrase out: "Wow, really? I must

provide a decent enough observation.

call her and congratulate her on that. David must be thrilled." "Well, he finally managed to convince her so I imagine he is recklessly happy about it. You know, you will have to come over for the wedding," she didn't fail to remind me, as though a reminder was needed. "Yeah, I know. A cousin doesn't get married every day, now does she? Especially Steph. I wouldn't miss it for the world," I exclaimed, feeling my mood improving with each new second, both me and mum sharing a nonsensically girly moment over the newly scheduled wedding. "Do you have any idea of what we are going to get for them?" "I have no idea, but you don't have to worry about it. I will take care "Okay, mum you go and have lunch and I will get down and make

myself a cup of tea. When you are done, tell Fred to call and we will

I ended the call and took my phone with me down to the kitchen. It is not as if someone would call me, but I still wanted to have it beside me in cases. I prepared the tea, the warm substance feeling my senses with the smell of chamomile as I was sloppily holding the cup between my fingers on my way back up to the room. I fired up my laptop and the first thing I did was signing in on Skype. Fred was still o line, which was understandable. I was just glad that I was online before him, much better option would be me waiting rather than have him jokingly criticize my lack of keeping up with his speed.

As I was scrolling down the friend list. I noticed that Stephanie was online. She still hadn't gotten around to letting me know of the engagement, but since I was successfully informed of the shocking news, I took the opportunity to congratulate her on her engagement. I video called her and in a matter of few seconds she answered. I didn't wait for her to say anything, and so I was the one that began. "I hear congratulations are in order. We are to hear wedding bells soon.

"Thanks, Kate. It is madness around here. People keep on calling and stu, so I didn't have time to tell you. Sorry for that. But I see that you got the news," Stephanie's cheerful voice was screaming to me that she was more than enthusiastically ecstatic, and it was obvious rather that the house was in an absolute mess from the buzz that I

I am glad for you, Steph. I hope you will be very happy."

talk more. Agreed?"

"Yeah, sure. We will do that."

could hear over the line. A smile played on my lips, as I detected the hyperactive state she was in. It was nearly wildish. "Yeah, mum told me only minutes ago. I planned on calling you, but I saw you here first and thought this would be better, since I get to also see you and the ring as well. So, are you happy and crazily enthusiastic?" She was glowing, her entire face was lighted up, and it seemed nothing could dim the contentment she was inundated in, convincing me in a brief period of time that I just might be in need of a nice guy myself. "Yeah, in fact I am. It is strange. I was never the marrying type but I kind of like it," she thrillingly cried out, wildly waving her hands

in the air, doing some type of flight of the bumblebees, or rather chasing insects away, in a hilariously charming way, moments before placing the ring in front of the camera so that I could get a glimpse at

A slender golden band with a single diamond in a round stone shape was decorating her finger. Both graceful and elegant, this ring complemented Stephanie's hand to the fullest. David was right in picking the ultimate classic engagement ring style and knowing my cousin's taste I knew it also contemplated with her wishes. It was giving the right amount of eleemosynary which an engagement ring had to possess, which made me believe that he might have had some help with the choice of a ring - his sister being the first and most likely possibility. Still, it was a beautiful ring and he did love Stephanie; therefore making me incapable of being rude and enquiring a er my

exclaimed in return, my compliments on the ring lacking to depict how I actually loved stunning design, though I am sure she could see it in the twinkling of my eyes. "Judging by the blush on your face, girl, you love it. How is David? Is he thrilled as you or is he becoming aware of the consequences of his actions?" I jokingly asked, adding drama to what I said by strongly emphasizing on my words. I was relaxed about it since knew she wouldn't take it for granted, a er all we were close and we always joked in that manner, besides in all honesty in their relationship he was, without a doubt, the one who never contemplated running away.

"Oh, it is early for that. I think he will grasp a hold of it a few weeks before the wedding. But then I will be the one what won't let go."

"Oh, I know that," I nodded nimbly at her alert remark, quick-wittedly

It was no more than seconds that my cousin was sent into a wild laughter, most likely by the happenings of the day rather than my attempt at a witty comment. When she eased on the laugher and I was convinced she could hear me, I continued: "Say 'hi' to David from me and congratulate him as well. I am just sorry that I won't be there to help out with the plans as we agreed when we were, what, 5 years

"Oh, it is okay. Never mind that, but I am sorry too. Preparations will start soon, so I might be contacting you if I had forgotten some of the things we had planned back in the day," she teasingly added, complying with my words, while cocking her eyebrow at me. I chuckled at her expression, shaking my head gladly as I became aware that all the tension I felt during the day was by then long gone. It was the simple workings of a conversation with a loved one that

"How is university? Did classes start?" she inquired, which confirmed

could produce such a quick and e icient outcome.

adding: "Stubborn you are, I am sure you will manage."

"Wow, the ring is beautiful. And what do you mean kind of like it?!" I

supposition.

old."

what I had long suspected - my capability to jinx things at the exact moment was more than real. "Yeah, they did. It is fine, but it is still the beginning. I will soon begin the complaints, don't worry," I uttered, thinking to myself that I had more than enough to complain about already. Still, I was in no way planning to break the merit that the splendorous news spread. Stephanie rolled her eyes, as she whispered: "Well, at least you get to be away from this boring city of ours. How is the family that you are staying with?" "Oh, they are great. We found our tempo and Adela proved to be great, just like I predicted. At least that is operating as I expected," The words slipped out before I even managed to register them. However, I did feel the regret washing over me in only few moment. I was only hoping that Stephanie was far too thrilled to register it. "Wait? What do you mean? What happened that you didn't expect to?" she wondered, catching up on my words despite my hopes. She

knew me well, maybe even all too well. We were constantly together

"Nothing really, it is just that few strange, surprising things happened since I got here. That is all," I prompted swi ly. I could hear someone calling out Steph a few times, while I was saying that. She could hear it also, because she waited for me to end and the next moment she said: "Something is going on. I have to go now. But we will talk soon

A er that she abruptly ended the call, without any verbal response from my side. I was glad that it happened, since I was in no mood to explain things, nor did I have the inclination to do it. Some things I wished to keep for myself. Meeting Bard, the way I did, on the first night of my arrival being one of those things. Other's I wished to

since little girls, so it was no surprise.

and you will tell me what happened."

forget - my horrible Norwegian teacher included.

I let my hair down and took my brush to comb it, all the while recalling the events of the night I met Bard and the first class. Somehow, that managed to overpower the importance of the nuisance of the month that my new teacher proved herself to be. I simply was not able to get Bard out of my head. It was strange that he would get drunk as he did. For one, success wasn't lacking in his life. 'He has a job, one that he seems to enjoy and like. Even though he is without a family, or he appears to be calculating the lack of ring, he is in no way lacking ability to one day have one. Being handsome as he is, I am sure that everyone notices him wherever he goes, especially the ladies. I noticed him and recognized him as a handsome face, so since those moments don't happen o en for me, it truly means that he couldn't skip the radar undetected,' I registered my mumbling only then, completely parting from all deemed as... well, not reckless to be Those features couldn't be easily overlooked and I was absolutely certain of that. 'So, why would he actually have that ring of

desperation in his voice? What was the thing that caused such

A blasting sound from my laptop interrupted me in the middle of my wandering thoughts. As I raised my head and looked at the screen, I became aware that it was a call from Fred. Not that I expected anyone else to call. I let go o my brush, placing it next to the computer, and I took the call immediately. My brother's jolly voice greeted me: "Hey,

He and mum were in front of his computer, sitting in his room both,

"Hey, Fred. I am great. You?" I replied with the same enthusiasm, given that I was happy to finally manage to find some free time to talk

"Awesome. I got back from school and had lunch and now I will take

"Oh, really?" I sarcastically asked, confused at his eagerness. As far as

I could remember, my brother had never in his life been so enthusiastic about studying, and that wish to study was puzzling

even for me even though I knew him best.

sadness in his life?'

how are you?"

with my brother.

care of homework."

entire thing."

intensely staring at the screen.

"Yeah, I promised you that, remember?" he mused, the words leaving his mouth in one single breath. It got clear where the key of that unnatural desire to study laid once he said those words, exactly right a er he said it. It dawned on me, and I recalled our agreement, the one we silently signed the day I le for Norway. If he did it - study hard and help mum, I would always be at his disposal. That was the deal, and he was trying to keep to his side of it, and apparently doing it quite successfully in all honesty. But what he didn't know or didn't have time to realize was that I would always be at his disposal, whether he chose to study or not. A er all, he was my brother and there was no way I would leave him without my support when it was needed. I was just glad he didn't succeed to through my words, and grasp ahold of my actual reasons for proposing just that. Snapping out of my thoughts, I smiled at my younger brother, saying: "Yeah, I recall it. Oh, mum, I just spoke with Stephanie. She seems beyond herself. I didn't think that she would be so thrilled of the

"She is. Very and I was astonished too. I thought she hated the whole institution of marriage all together," she said, her last words sounding

"She did, for the past ten years or so. Or, at least that is what she kept saying. Seems like David changed that for her." Amusingly enough, there was always that one guy that just made it all worthwhile, and

"I suppose he did," mum nodded her agreement, and judging by her gestures she had the wish to add something else, as well. However, before she could get anything out, she was cut o by my forever impatient brother, who didn't seem to enjoy the conversation we were leading. Not that I was blaming him, a wedding wasn't the best

As though I needed a confirmation to what I thought, my brother didn't fail to comment: "I want to talk about something more

"Which subject? Help with what?" I hastily shi ed my attention to Fred, he seemed to need it somewhat more than the simple, ordinary conversation with mum. I figured that we could cover the gossiping bit about Stephanie some other, more conveniently chosen moment.

"Math is the problem. We are learning about similarity of figures and application of similarity along with some theorems and I have some di iculty with that, so I was thinking that you could explain things to

I smiled, recalling how much I had to cover myself, and upon realizing that university classes had been easy on me I agreed without second though. "Okay, we will take care of it. So, aside from school is there

"Well, a lot of things," he enthusiastically exclaimed, startling my mum, a er which the conversation turned into a marathon, during which we changed a few topics, whose exact number I couldn't keep a track of. I ended the 'Britain news' program my brother was

entertaining me with when I heard Adela arriving from university, and a er I swi ly shut down the laptop I headed downstairs to greet her.

Adela moved towards the living room, as I descended the stairs and I

Because I have a small test soon and I need your help."

interesting than that. Aren't you going to ask me how school is going?

more of a question rather than a statement.

conversation topic for a boy his age.

me over Skype during the weekend."

anything else that you want to talk to me about?"

apparently, it happened when one least expected it.

silently accompanied her. She placed her bag on the floor next to the door, carelessly dropping it, and allowing it to land with a thud, and took a sit. I followed her example, and took a seat as well. Without delay or a pointless exchange of any polite mumblings whatsoever, she brought up the topic we le clinging open that a ernoon. "What happened today that had you so upset when you got home?" she wondered. "Norwegian classes," I burped out right away. "The professor is absolutely insane. I mean..." Cutting me in middle of the word, Adela said: "What is her name? She is from our section I am sure." "I think she said it is Inga Gulbrandsen, or something" I hesitantly said, her name being a challenge enough for my lack of knowledge

with anything even remotely related with Norway.

did she do this time?"

lessons also.'"

are both free."

luck.

o er though. It was sweet."

"Oh, she is insane all right," Adela didn't fail to comment quite

sardonically within seconds, making my eyes go wide from the shock. I did expect that she could know her, but there was not a single chance that I could have even imagined, let alone predicted, that Adela would coldheartedly, yet decisively say those exact words. I was recovering from the shock, as she continued: "So, go on. What

"This time pretty much meant it is a constant follow up on," I shook my head, the thought in no need of a continuum, as I began to explain: "We had three classes all in all. At the end of the lesson, she closed the book saying, and I quote: 'You should probably start communicating with natives soon. The lessons we had today covered simple sentences and vocabulary is a matter of personal e ort. I imagine that in a week of two I will start speaking Norwegian on the

Adela simply chuckled, but I felt the annoyance igniting in me once again. Yet, I didn't stop at that. I had to elaborate the situation completely, so a bit more fiery I added: "I mean what is that all about? She barely even wrote on the board. She showed us the normal introduction things, the present tense and some other words and that is pretty much the entirety of the poor three classes we had. How in the name of Christ am I to communicate with people in a language I have never spoken before?" I increased the intensity of my words, as I, without a whit of doubt, felt the frustration once again waking up in me, my each nerve wildly dancing over my body, only to

Adela sighed. I presumed that since she agreed with what I said, and doing so in less than three seconds, she actually knew my new

Trying to calm me down, Adela so ly said: "Relax, breathe. I know exactly how you feel. I had the misfortune to be in her class and hear

Once my ragged breaths evened out slightly, Adela addressed me a smile and went on: "Inga is weak on her knowledge. She got the job through connections. So, instead of teaching properly, she chooses to joke around with students not teaching them a single thing and failing them all the time. But, you could go to some other classes, follow the lectures with another group. Or, if you have a book according to which you should work, I could help you out when we

"Extra lessons could be a good solution," I confirmed, realizing that such idea could be worth trying, under the condition they lasted less than four hours. It would have been great if I could actually go through those in just half the time, which I imagined could be done, only if I had someone to work with properly. Yet, that someone was not Adela. I couldn't bear to take away her time, because of my bad

Not wanting to insult her though, I gently through a smile tried to reassure her that I would manage, even though I still had no idea how I would do it. According to my belief it would take a miracle for me to even pass the exam. "As to you helping me out, I don't think that could work. Have you seen our schedules? We are buried with lessons and so far through the week we have had lessons at a completely di erent time. And during weekends we both have to study, but I can always sit in on di erent lectures. I will find a way. Thank you for the

"Still if you ever need help, you can count on me and I can try to explain things for you," she honestly said, and then turned the topic towards the professor once again, telling me: "Just don't let her get to

compliment the sense of trimming perfectly.

professor quite well and the way she operated as well.

those exact words. Just don't let her get to you."

you. She has always been like that, and the more indi erent you are the better for your nerves. And a few advices. I have to tell you those." I felt as if I was in an eminent threat of going crazy, and would eventually end up in being in a need of a council, I placed my entire attention to the words Adela was about to say. The certainty that the necessity to use them sooner or later would definitely immerge made me pay close attention to every single one of her words. "First of all, never show o . Even if she asks an easy question you know the answer to, just skip the answering. Don't say a word, because she will remember you and that is never good, unlike with any other professor. She considers it to be showing o and she despises show o s. I am sure that sooner or later she will give you that speech. If she directs the question back to you, the best thing to do is lower your gaze and just say that you don't know the answer." It was only a minute of depicting, and Adela said so many things that I truly felt that I would be in need of a notebook where I could take wished that I was wrong, and how I repented on my thoughts as Adela continued: "Second, even though she definitely told you that

you can interrupt her whenever you have questions don't do it. Never. Doesn't like that either. When it comes to her writing on the board, don't ask what it's written even though you don't understand a single letter. That is considered to be an insult to her handwriting. Then never skip her classes - always be there in front of her and wait for her to leave before exiting. There is a lot more of those, but long story short never ask about anything at all. Just go there, sign your name, pretend that you don't understand a single question, be still and quiet and if there is anything you need help with - ask me."

"Oh, man that lady has quite a list. I can feel it that Wednesdays are going to be a torturous madness," I stated, nearly singing the last few words, musing silently that it was a bliss the following day was in fact a good one, well as far as the architecture lessons were discussed. I shook my entire body in discomfort, cringing at the thought of the actual irony in teaching your own mother tongue thanks to

connections, trying to discard the creeps that were sending jolts over my skin. I knew I would regret it once I hear the answer, but I had to

"No, she makes them easy; most likely because she is bad at the language herself. Even though it is her mother tongue, I have noticed her making a few basic mistakes. I don't even want to consider those from di icult grammatical tenses," Adela speeded up through the words, and I felt my body relaxing. At least, there was that - one positive reply, one that suited me. All hope was brought down to the easiness of the exams. I smiled, nodding my head at the only trace of luck Adela's latest words delivered, as I heard Adela repeat once again, more purposefully this time around: "You just really can't let

"I will try that. At least I didn't seem to break any of her rules today. Oh, man," I sighed, breathing out the last syllables, the thought of changing the subject crossing my mind almost immediately. "Can we

"Yes, please!" Adela exclaimed. "I think dinner conversation would be

"I have no idea. Pick something and I will simply join in."

Dinner went nicely and our conversation stirred towards much pleasanter topics, in our mutual relief. A er the dishes were washed, we caught a good movie on TV, and fully dedicated our attention there. I was certain it would end up one of the few I will manage to watch during the semester, so I was determined to enjoy it and make

ask: "What about the exams? Are they di icult?"

her get to you."

talk about something else, please?"

nicer. What are we going to eat?"

it count. The credits were running, when the doorbell announced that Adela's mum and dad got back home. Some small talk with them developed, as well and as soon as I could, I excused myself and withdrew to my room. Despite of the a ernoon nap, I felt unexplainably tired and went to bed as early as I could convince myself to stop studying, trying to forget the horridness of the day. The one thing that cheered me up, was that the next day I had a lesson in architecture and it was something I couldn't wait for with much patience. I was looking forward to seeing him, and his calm pacing up and down the amphitheater, while he did his best to depict what he had on his mind. I smiled at the notion, as I scooped up under the blankets and let myself dri away to sleep. Packing my bag took longer than I had expected, which was undeniably understandable given that in the last second I made a decision to head into the library and dedicate the remaining time of the day concentrating on Norwegian, instead of returning back home right a er classes. However, before submitting myself to such an arduous ritual, I had a class I was gladly expecting over the last two

days, and I was not going to allow anything to ruin it in the slightest. I was hoping that it would cheer me up and give me at least some energy, and much of a needed hope before I dive into the misty

Unlocking the door with as little noise as possible, I rushed out of the house, running down the few stairs, and jumping the last three landing on the pavement and continuing my way towards the university hastily, cursing myself for timing out the organization so terribly wrong, and desperately hoping that I wouldn't be late. I wouldn't have minded it back home, but I didn't need the embarrassment of standing in front of a full room here as well, I

Once I reached the grounds, I headed towards the amphitheater without any delay, and when I turned just around the corner, entering the corridor, I saw the professor standing only few steps away from the door. There was no way that I would make it before him, not even

"Damn it," I whispered under my breath, clinching on my bag with annoyance. Nevertheless, to my entire luck, his phone rang and he stopped right in front of the door, his hand sliding into his pocket, locating the device and taking it out. Without knowing that I was

I continued my walk towards the classroom, towards him. He guided his phone to his ear, picking up the call in the meantime and as he

waters of the Norwegian language.

already had enough of it, as it would seem.

if I ran and made a total fool out of myself. Again.

watching him, he mumbled: "I thought I turned it o ."

still didn't notice me, he exhaled. "Hei, Mary." It was kind of wrong to eavesdrop on him, but I was going that way and he did say it pretty loudly. In my defense. I had even no idea as to why I was looking one in the first place. But Mary, I didn't think he was married, so she must be a girlfriend, or maybe just a friend. Yeah, a friend calling at eight in the morning, sure. Keep telling yourself that. "Mary, everything is fine. Jesus, woman, how many times will I have to say that?" he asked teasingly with a smile painted on his lips, a er which he turned his head, snapping it in my direction so suddenly that I had no time to look away. As his gaze landed on mine, he furrowed his eyebrows, probably at the realization that he was not covering every rule of privacy, and I irrefutably felt a blush overweighing my features. "This can't be happening. Why did I have to stare?" I regretfully thought, persistently keeping my gaze locked with his. He, on the other hand, turned blank serious. I politely smiled at him, nodding in his direction as a greeting, hoping that that would soon be forgotten. I was nearing the door, and I hurried my stride wishing to reach my

destination, slip in the room and escape his consecutive gaze. As I got to the door and grab the doorknob, turning away, I heard him say: "Kids are at school, Mary. I have a class now. We will talk later." and

"Well, I managed to get in class before him and there is the benefit of that awkwardness." I was nearly glad at the lucky charm, and then I recalled the last thing he said. Kids? I simply assumed that the lack of ring would mean he is not married and the getting drunk that he is single. I never, in the slightest, thought that he might be married and even have kids. So, that information was an enormous surprise, and now I was even more confused as to what this guy was thinking when

a er a short break whispering: "Yeah, bye."

he got drunk. He followed in, placing his folder on the desk as I took my seat and the class began properly. I was focused on the lecture, since that time around it seemed to be much better than the first one, and yet at every break my mind immediately wandered o to those thoughts. Him, married, kids, drunk... I simply didn't understand it at all and therefore I entirely gave up on trying to. If only my mind would settle on the idea of having an unresolved issue at bay, and thus it would all prove to be completely perfect. Only, it is easier said than done, since my brain racked to come up with an explanation, the question not letting it all to rest. When he traditionally asked if there were any questions, I knew it was an indication that the class had come to its end. Once we were dismissed, I packed my things and le the amphitheater, making my way to the student's restaurant to have breakfast before beginning with my work. I imagine I could have done without the food, being

used to spending more than a day without food, as a consequence to

overpowering, and the desire to avoid it was strong enough to make me take a small, what I kept telling myself a irrelevant detour.

When I finished my breakfast, taking a considerable, and unnecessary amount of time to do so, I bought a bottle of water and a couple of

forgetting it, but the reluctance to begin with Norwegian was

candies knowing that I would be in need of refreshments. I quietly entered the library, taking a seat next to the window, and spreading my books on the table before me, basically placing the conundrum as to what to begin with, on the open before my eyes. Given that there were other times when I felt helpless to the same degree, I figured it just might work, decided to give it a go, and finally discovering the optimism that laid well hidden, began to write and rewrite and translate and scribble all I could perceive on the notebook. And, that was only the annoying beginning. At one point, when the enthusiasm of the begging began decreasing, I noted that I was simply tired, and that chocolate might do the trick. I tried that, drank some water and even opened the window to get some fresh air. Unfortunately, none of it seemed to help me get back on track, supposing that I was on it at the very start. The level of excitement evaporated a er another half hour of

desperate attempts, and another wave of edginess ran down my back, becoming more than what I could bear. It was more than di icult, as painful as I found it to admit it and as hard as it bruised my ego, and there seemed to be no way I could learn a new language

I could notice the spring of tears that started building up in my eyes as the tension I felt started enhancing. It had to be let out somehow, before it drove me mad. I wouldn't allow myself to cry over classes, never over that and being in a library meant screaming was in no way an option, so I threw my pen on the table, quietly jumping up on my feet and pointlessly running my hands through my hair trying to get

Continue reading next part $\ \square$

from the scratch all by myself.

rid of the creepy feeling.