

# **Fated To The Alpha Novel by Jessica Hall**

## **Chapter 177**

Katya POV

The drive felt like it was taking forever, each second was agonizing as I felt the cold dread of darkness creeping in and twisting and warping my rational thought. How had I never noticed before, how had I never felt this writhing within me.

I was always aware of the darkness, but for the most part I only saw the aftermath and didn't have the processing of what it actually did. I felt like a bystander in my own body, yet for the first time I

was fully aware of what it did to me, the coldness of it and the way it controlled not only me but my thought patterns.

No wonder I never remembered much and would have to go off the word of what my mates said about what happened like a blackout drunk, only this time I was startlingly sober to watch what became of me. My limbs no longer mine, like I became the alter ego of the darkness as it wrapped me in its embrace, calling me to the deepest parts of my mind, whispering if I just gave in to it, it would erase everything that

hurt me and now I realised the darkness which is all I saw last time was because I was not fighting but succumbing to the bliss it offered if I just shutoff, if I let it have me. I let it have control because I could never identify it before, I couldn't hear the whispers until it was too late.

Only this time I felt the rush of it smooth caressing coldness seeping in and tainting my mind, clouding it and weighing it down like extreme exhaustion.

Just give in and sleep and tomorrow will be a new day but if I did, what

would the aftermath of the storm look like. I listen to the madness of its calling and fully identify myself within it.

The only thing grounding me was the purring from Maddox, the rumble of his chest against my

back. His warm embrace holds me here, keeping me fighting to stay forward and not to give in. I always confused it for anger but it was so much more than that, so out of control.

I could feel my body twitching, my hands clawing at my skin like it was alive and crawling yet I had no control over my actions. I could only try to fight to remain at the front, not giving into it completely and giving it the control it craved.

The darkness was like its own organism that resided in me, I was a vessel and it was just looking for an opportunity to sneak through my defenses and run amok.

I was my own destruction, no wonder they didn't trust me, no wonder they lingered. If our roles were reversed I would be the same. I was a ticking time bomb and they knew it and now I did too.

The more I resisted the stronger its call and I was helpless in its clutches as I watched myself slip further into the depths of my own mind, a passenger within myself.

"Stop Kat" Maddox whispers, the purring in his chest getting louder and I try to focus on the sound instead of the feeling slipping over me.

My claws drew blood as they raked over my bare legs, Maddox hissing, everything I did to myself I was doing to him as he took it from me. I tried to focus on my surroundings, trying to find a way to anchor myself.

Andrei was driving his lips moving and I tried to focus on his words while Maddox tried to restrain my hands, holding them in one of his. My legs dug into the leather seat as my feet moved. Focus, focus. I tell myself, my mind growing heavier as I

fight to remain. My back arching as he fights me to remain still, my entire body thrashing like a fish out of water.

“Need me to pull over” I hear vaguely. Andrei’s voice muffled and I realised why, it was the noises I was making. Growling and screaming like a madwoman. Maddox’s arm goes over my forehead as I try to bite him, the other around my chest when he moves, wrapping his legs around mine, but my strength at the moment was hard for him to contain.

The car jerks off the road and I am thrown into the footwell. Maddox landed on top of me when the car stopped. My body was no longer mine, it didn’t belong to me and I could only watch as the door opened and I lurched out of it, tackling Andrei to the ground. His arms wrapping around my torso as the darkness forces the shift but still with my rabid wolf form taking over my brother didn’t let go, risking my deadly bite to contain me.

“Fight it, Kat. I know you’re still in there”  
He growls. My teeth narrowly miss him as he lets go while I turn in his grip. The moment his grip lets go I was lurching forward, trying to escape into the trees. I am screaming at myself, trying to tell myself to

stop. There are too many human

communities in this part and we were still an hour out from home, yet nothing I did was able to pull me forward.

I was aware but it was like I couldn't grasp the controls and pull on them. Nothing is holding me here. Paws sound on the ground behind me, gaining on me and I try to push through the veil of darkness, trying to take control so they can catch me when my paws hit the air, my body careening toward the rocky valley beneath. Teeth sinking into my tail and jerking me back quickly and tossing me back onto solid ground though Maddox paws skid on loose gravel and I scream in my head as I watch him go over. The darkness watching unfazed by my mate falling to his death.

A vicious growl roars a second later as Donnie's teeth grip the side of his face at the last second pulling him back but my body in wolf form didn't wait to see if he got back to safety. Instead taking off and looking for escape. No matter how much I screamed for myself to stop I ran, running around the ravine and up higher to the road that winds along the mountain side.

I had no idea where the darkness was taking me, but I appeared to be heading home. What did the darkness want with me, it felt like it was

searching for something. Seeking something out. Hearing a howl behind me, I move faster. Zipping and jumping over rocks and around trees before darting across roads continuing the incline to the top. Once there I turn off onto the secluded road. When I hear the mindlink open, it shocks me as Maddox's voice forces its way in my head.

"Mateo, get the kids inside and lock it down" Maddox yells. I tried to figure out why he was talking about the kids, tried to figure out what he meant.

Seeing our minivan up ahead I seem to gain more speed, when the darkness takes over with newfound energy when I notice it. The glimmers of it. I try to jam on the breaks in my own body. Try yanking back on the darkness with horror.

"It was chasing them, it wanted their power.

How had I never noticed the aura that sat around my kids like a glowing beacon and it was calling to the darkness, the darkness wanted it, craved the power. My jaws snapping at the wheels like a bloody dog, trying to bite the tyres.

Mateo speeds up, flooring it when I hear a loud engine coming up behind me and I step to the side to see Andrei's car chasing after ours when I am

hit from the side. Maddox teeth sinking into me and flinging me across the now deserted road.

“I won’t let you have them, Kitty” He growls in my head. I tried telling him it wasn’t me, that this wasn’t me but the darkness, that no part of this I had control over. I dart right, Maddox jumping into my path trying to get an advantage and for once I curse the training they put me through. He needed to hurt me, he needed to kill me if he had to, I would never be able to live with myself if I hurt one of my babies.

Maddox lunges at me but I drop, his body sailing over the top of mine before I take off again. My paws digging into the earth as I tore up the road when I realised something, the darkness doesn’t know how to use my aura, it’s all primal instinct, seeking power, it could fight but it couldn’t command because if it could, why didn’t I use it on Maddox and Andrei?”

I see Marge clutching the kids and running for the front door as I skid across the ground turning into the driveway. Jonah is not far behind her with Sage. Mateo shifts and runs at me but I manage to dodge him, my brother jumping from his car and lurching forward into his wolf again.



Yet I don't stop running straight after Marge when suddenly Sage shifts and pivots before attacking me. Her teeth sinking into my flank and I scream watching myself snap my jaws at her only for Andrei to bite into my neck before rolling on his back and flinging me over the top of him and into the side of his car.

Metal groans and I was screaming at myself to stop.

Screaming at them to kill me knowing what the darkness wanted, now nothing scared me

more than myself and what the darkness was capable of. It wanted to feed on power, and my kids glowed like a million candles with the power running through their veins.

I was surrounded when my father's car pulled into the driveway screeching to a stop, his door flying open and I was looking for an escape. Maddox tackles me, his teeth sinking into my mark but only grazing it as he tries to take me down.

Yet the moment his teeth grazed my skin I felt it, like a lightning bolt ripple up my spine. The sparks from the bond. The bond, our mate bond, I could still feel that. My limbs no, but the bond I felt completely. Sage rushes toward the house and so does my father. I see him tell Andrei to get in the house but my attention is diverted. I could vaguely

hear the roller shutters locking into place. But my sight was trained on my mates, the ones responsible for keeping our kids safe from their own mother.

“Kat, come on. You need to fight it” Mateo says the link sounding hollow as I try to pull on the bond, feeling for their wolves to pull strength from.

Mateo tries to gain advantage when I suddenly spin, realising it was a distraction as Maddox goes for my neck again. The darkness recognises the move and attacks colliding with him. Maddox just slipped out of range of my teeth as I stalked him. The darkness becomes enraged when I feel myself tugging on the restraints of my mind, pulling on the bond and Maddox and Mateo’s essence, using it to ground me and push me forward, letting their feelings come through.

I snarl, the darkness not wanting to give up control and I lunge at Maddox’s throat. Ares lets out a strangled whimper and I scream as my canines wrap around the back of his neck. I squeeze my eyes shut, unable to watch myself kill him. My scream resonates out and I shove myself forward plunging into the bond and focusing on the energy of it humming with love, acceptance, loyalty and every good thing that comes with a mate bond.

Only nothing happens, I expected agony of the mate bond severing painfully. Only when I open my eyes, I realise I was actually opening my eyes.

Maddox was lying beneath me, my jaw wrapped around his neck only my teeth hovering off his skin. I sag with relief and drop on him while shifting back, his fur warm against my skin.

Maddox licks my face and I break down. I was so close to losing everything and myself and it would have been my fault. Now I understood why they didn't leave me alone with the kids, and didn't leave me alone at all. The frightened look in Marge's eyes that day, how she was willing to go against her Queen. I now know why. Ares comes over sniffing and nudging my face. Maddox shifts underneath me and Ezra pulls me into his lap.

"I didn't know, I didn't realise" I sob, and I didn't.

I didn't see this version of myself. I didn't see what they dealt with and I didn't see I was rift between us. I knew it was bad, I knew that but I didn't think it was this bad. I didn't think I was a danger to my kids, I didn't think I was capable of hurting them.

Guilt smashes me for what I have put my mates through, knowing they deal with it constantly, knowing they live with this fear yet they do it because they love me. I

thought everything wrong was because of them hiding things, but now I see it's me.

“ Shh, it's okay you're back now” Ezra says and Ares sniffs both of our faces, Ezra stroking his face and pulling his head closer to rest on ours.

“I will take the meds, I will do what you ask” I tell them, surrendering control of everything to them.

I wasn't safe and I was too stubborn not wanting to see fault in my own actions when they were trying to protect me from myself. Ezra rocks back and forth, his purr soothing his nose pressed in my hair while I pressed mine in his neck. Ares shifts back. Mateo's hands caress my hips and lower back before he presses his lips to my shoulder.

“We knew you could do it, you just needed to hang on. We will always be here, pull on the bond, take it from us, take everything if you need to, just don't stop fighting it, don't let it have you, don't let it take you from us” Mateo whispers,

nuzzling my neck. I turn my face to see him and run my fingers through his hair.

Ezra kisses my cheek before brushing his nose across it and I turn into him, seeking out his lips. My lips pressing to his desperately almost bruisingly as I delve my tongue between his lips, his taste taking over my senses and I bite his lip softly, his hand twisting in my hair and pulling me closer. He groans into my mouth, kissing me harder and taking control of the kiss.

Hands trail up my sides before cupping my breasts as Mateo presses his lips to my shoulder and up my neck. I moan as his hot tongue comes in contact with their mark. A ripple of arousal washes over me and I turn pulling away from Ezra to kiss Mateo. His tongue plunging into my mouth, playing with mine as he tastes every inch of my mouth hungrily.

Ezra grips my hips, turning me on his lap so I am straddling him. His hot mouth wrapping around my nipple as he flicks it with his tongue, Mateo kisses the side of my mouth, his lips moving down my jaw and neck. Feeling Ezra's erection beneath me, I roll my hips against him and he growls, my core pulsating with anticipation as his cock pressed against my slick folds, coating him in my arousal.

Mateo's hand snaked between our bodies and he cups my throbbing core, his thumb pressing against my clit, while his other hand squeezed my breast. Ezra seized my lips with urgency as Mateo pumped two fingers in and out of me, my hips rocking against Ezra riding his fingers when I felt Mateo press his chest against my back. His fingers coated in my arousal and I lift my hips sinking down on Ezra's hard length as he adjusts him. My walls clench him instantly and I shudder at the full feeling and the stretching sensation as I take him in one motion.

He groans, his hands moving to my hips before he slams me down on him. Mateo's fingers move between my cheeks as he coats me with my own juices, sliding his finger into the tight muscles of my ass. I tilt my head back, seeking his lips and he leans down, his other hand gripping my throat as he crashes his lips down on mine. His fingers slipped in and out of me. Ezra nipping and sucking at my breasts, my hips rocking against Ezra when Mateo pulls his fingers from me, running his fingers between Ezra and I, stealing more of my juices that spill onto my thighs.

"F\*ck!" Ezra groans, his hand slipping to my hips slamming me down harder on him when Mateo's arm wraps around my chest pulling me back

against his chest, his cock pressing to my ass before he thrusts in and I moan loudly rocking my hips between them, slowly getting used to the feel. Mateo kisses my temple, his arm releasing me.

“Good girl” He growls, his lips trailing across my shoulder as he pulls my hair over it, his hand gripping my breast and he rolls my nipple while Ezra’s teeth grazes the other. I writhe between them, my orgasm building when Mateo pulls out slamming back into me and forcing me to grip Ezra’s shoulders as he is shoved back in the dirt.

Mateo slamming into me and making me cry out, my walls pulsating and fluttering when they start working in perfect tandem, pounding themselves into me and I give in to the feeling, letting them own my body, letting them take what they want because I wanted it to, need it after so long, so starved of touch, starved of the bond. I didn’t realise we were all drowning in the loss of contact, the loss of each other, lost in the bubble of parenting, working and surviving. We lost us amongst everything else. Something I swore I wouldn’t let happen again, we needed each other, needed our bond because a mate bond was always worth saving.

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## Chapter 178

Sage POV

We locked ourselves in the house, the roller shutters going down and locking into place. Kat was a monster when the darkness took over her, Mateo tried his best to explain to me what the heck was going on, but one thing was clear, they all feared her when she was like this. I didn't realize the extent until I saw her in wolf form biting at the tyres, fear gripped me that she would be crushed under the rear tyres. But nothing scared me more

when I realized she was trying to attack her kids.

Mateo explained when she was like that it was all basic instinct, that nothing was left of Kat when she got that way. Jonah was frightened as the house locked down. Whimpering and I felt bad that I couldn't shift back to comfort him, his body pressed between my front legs, his tiny hands clutching my fur were shaking violently. I lick his face, the only offer of comfort I could give him or I would have to walk around naked, my clothes shredded to pieces when I shifted.



Dipping my head, I sniff Jonah's face tugging on his shirt to move into the living room and on the couch, he quickly obliges climbing up next to Marge who brushes his cheek softly as she places both babies on the floor to crawl around.

Donnie nips at our face, his voice loud and clear echoing in my head. He was mad.

"You could have got bitten" He growls, not happy that we tossed ourselves at Kat, directly in the path of her snapping jaws. Kat was my friend and I knew she would never forgive herself if she hurt her kids, hurt Marge or Jonah. Jonah the thought of something happening to him twisted my stomach painfully, oh how I loved that little boy, he had nestled his way into everyone's heart and I would protect him with my life even if Donnie hated me for it, yet I knew his instincts burned the same.

Sierra nips him back when Donnie suddenly walks up the steps and disappears. When he comes back it's Andrei, dressed in a pair of shorts.

"Sierra" Andrei calls, nodding for us to follow after him. I follow him to a large bathroom with multiple shower cubicles and toilets lining the walls. He hands me some clothes that I know belong to Kat.

Quickly shifting I put on the tights and one of her shirts.

“Come here ” Andrei growls tugging me to him, his arms wrapping around my shoulders as he buries his face in my neck.

“Are you ok?” He asks and I nod, I was only worried about Kat. She came off so strong willed,so independent and connected with herself and it hurt to see this side of her, a piece of her breaking.

Sometimes looking at her I forgot she was 19. She seemed far older than me, and appeared to know herself better than I knew myself. I couldn't imagine the weight and pressure on her shoulders,the expectations people had of her, all while trying to navigate through motherhood and a bond with not one man but two.

Andrei leads me out to the living room, Derrick makes coffee bringing it out when Marge suddenly shrieks. My heart thumps erratically looking for danger when I hear a baby giggle. Fear was evident on Marge's face before I realized why.

Jonah was holding both of Marabella's hands, the mittens fallen off and she cackled loudly as he waved her arms about.

Marge quickly grabs the mittens. Derrick pulled Jonah away from her, but she smiled a huge gummy grin at him, kicking her legs and arms before pouting and her bottom lip trembled as her hands were covered again.

“I know sweet girl, I know,” Marge tells her. Andrei was observing Jonah and Marabella carefully before scooping Marabella off the floor.

“ She didn’t hurt him, it’s ok Jonah you’ re not in trouble buddy” Andrei tells him while bouncing Marabella on his knee. Derrick leans over handing me a coffee and Jonah crawls into my lap. Marge brushes his hair from his eyes.

“We just need to look out for her hands, I know you wanted to play. But she has powers like her mumma” Marge explains. Jonah nods.

“Like spiderman?” Jonah asks and I chuckle. “Yes, like spiderman” Marge tells him.

“That’s cool, I want to be spiderman,” Jonah says excitedly before crawling off me to play with Eziah.

“Does he have superpowers too?” Jonah asks.

“Yes, but you can touch his hands,” Marge tells him. I could see the confusion on his face as his

brows furrowed looking between Marabella and Eziah, I could see he was wondering why Eziah's hands were safe to touch but not Marabella's.

Silence suddenly falls outside, no more snarling or fighting after 10 minutes Andrei says we should get ready to leave. I wait for them to come in, wondering if anyone got hurt. Getting up, I walk to the door, pulling on the peephole and look out and nearly spit my coffee across the door, choking as some sprays out my nose. I slam the peephole shut turning my back to the door, my cheeks blazing at what I saw. Andrei and Derrick walk out hearing me choking and spluttering.

"What's wrong?" Andrei says reaching for the peephole. I snatch his wrist away and he looks at me curiously. My cheeks burn hotter, I just saw parts of Kat and her mates I never wanted to see again.

"We should stay in here, it's not safe out there yet" I tell them. Derrick looks worried.

"They still haven't contained her," he asks, reaching for the peephole but I slap his hand away.

“She’s contained” I squeak, quickly shutting the main door so they don’t look out the shutters peephole.

“Are you alright, why are you embarrassed?” Andrei asks and I try telling him with my eyes not wanting to blurt out, that they are f\*cking in the driveway in front of her father. Just the thought of saying that makes my cheeks burn hotter. I don’t have to say anything when lewd noises reach our ears. Derrick freezes and Andrei scrunches up his face.

“Coffee, who wants more coffee, in the kitchen with the blender going?” Derrick says marching off, Andrei on his heels. Marge looks over the back of the couch at me and snorts with her laughter.

“About bloody time, the tension in this house between those three was driving me insane. Mates need each other, as disturbing as that is for Andrei and Derrick. I am glad” she says, scooping up Marabella and holding her hand out to Jonah.

“Come on let’s go make something to eat” She tells him and he takes her hand.

“Can you grab Eziah for me and the blanket?” She asks and I nod. I scoop the blanket up and Eziah, following them out to the kitchen far away from

the noises coming from outside. Andrei lays the blanket down and Marge places Marabella down with some toys. I sit Eziah next to her watching them play.

“Well that was a change of-”

“Don’t say it Marge, I don’t need that mental image in my head” Derrick says the blender on low drowning out any noise. Kat was going to be mortified, I knew I would be. Like doing the walk of shame, I don’t think I will be able to look her in the eye again without blushing.

Marge makes sandwiches and the kids play on the mat while we chat and drink coffee. Eziah crawls trying to get underneath my chair and I pull him out. His hand grabbing my dress as he pulls himself up to a standing position.

“He can stand now” I smile.

“Yes, Marabella tries but the mittens prevent her getting a grip on anything” Marge says and I could hear the sadness in her voice. Eziah smiles

cheekily proud of himself that he pulled himself up like a big boy. Derrick’s phone starts ringing, he pulls it from his pocket looking at the screen before answering it.

“Hello ?” he asks, switching the blender off.

“Ah yeah he is right here, I will chuck him on”Derrick says handing the phone to Andrei.

“The man looking into” He points to Jonah and Andrei quickly answers it, walking into the hall away from Jonah. I could feel his nervousness andI watched him keep glancing in the doorway toward him before his eyes fell on me. His shoulders sag before he walks off and I hear a door shut.

Looking at Derrick he also seemed concerned. “ I will be back” He says and walks out. Eziah’s handsstart slapping my legs and he blows spit bubbles excitedly and I smile at him. Jonah was leaning over Marabella pulling funny faces at her making her giggle and Marge handed me some tissues to wipe off Eziah’s drool covered chin. I clean his face just as Andrei walks back in. He said nothing and I could tell something upset him.

“ I want his background checked first, email everything over to me” he says before hanging up.Derrick leans on the bench, his eyes on Jonah andI know whatever it is I wasn’t going to like. We sat in tense silence and Andrei’s eyes were stuck on the wall behind Derrick, he wouldn’t look at meeven when I reached over and squeezed his hand.

Hearing the roller shutters start opening, we hear footsteps on the stairs. We waited and the kids played Jonah munching on his sandwich Marge made him. After about 20 minutes Kat walks in fully dressed and stops in the doorway. Andrei laughs at her blushing cheeks and I could tell she was going to pretend like nothing happened.

“There’s the little fornicator” Andrei blurts and Derrick chucks a tea towel at him, hitting him in the face. Mateo walks in not a care in the world flicking the kettle on. Ezra too didn’t seem to care, more focused on following Kat around everywhere she moved, his hand or body touching her in some way.

Eziah cackles loudly and I look over at Marabellawho had fallen asleep. Marge also notices walks over scooping her up before wrapping an arm around Eziah’s waist.

“Did you want to help put them to bed?” Marge asks Kat, she looks at her kids in Marge’s arms before smiling sadly and shaking her head.

“You can do it, if you want” Kat says and I could see her eyes trained on them, worry etched into her face. Marge nods. Jonah jumps up and rushes off after her and stops next to Marge.”You can help if you want” Marge tells him and he follows



after her. The silence became awkward and Andrei I could feel was egging to taunt his sister, feeling it bubbling in him to poke fun at her.

“What a day” Andrei sighs heavily. Ezra smirks at him and Derrick groans, running his fingers through his hair and glaring at Andrei in warning.

“Yep, so Kat”

“Andrei!” Kat grits out through clenched teeth glaring at him. “Zip it, we don’t need to mention it” She snaps at him. Derrick rubs his temples and I see his cheeks puff out.

“What no need to be ashamed everyone does it” Andrei taunts.

“Geez they bicker like teenagers” Derrick mutters.

“Never knew you were into public displays, never took you for the type” Andrei chuckles and Kat glares at him, her face resembling a tomato.

“Yep, and I am out” Derrick says stalking off and Andrei laughs.

“Andrei! Dad was right there, why would you say that?” She snaps at him.

“Ha exactly how did you explain the kids to him, immaculate conception?” Andrei chuckles and herface turns red.

“Leave her alone” I tell him, slapping his arm andhe chuckles.

“I don’t get it, its fine talk about your nonexistent\*x life, but mine and you all make out its wrong”Kat spits at him.

“That’s because no father wants to hear about thepounding his daughter just took”

“Right that’s it, you disgusting” Kat shrieks, shoving past Ezra. Andrei takes off, Kat chasing after him and I hear their laughter as she tries toget a hold of him.

“Oi no running in the halls... Andrei put her down, she isn’t a teabag” Derrick scolds. I chuckle, listening to Kat screech at her brother before hegrunts.

“Low blow Kat!” Andrei croaks.

“Serve you right, you could have dropped her onher head”  
When I hear a soft thud.

“That hurt you bastard, ” Kat groans. Mateo and Ezra chuckle, also finding their sibling spat entertaining.

“I will get the egg flip, neither of you are too big for me to spank” Derrick warns and I laugh.

“Whatever old man” Andrei taunts before Kat walks in rubbing her arm.

“Where the heck were you, shouldn’t you be defending my honor” She spits at Ezra and Mateo.

“He gave me a dead arm” She whines before she glares at her mates.

Andrei comes back in smirking and leaning on the doorframe when Jonah comes bursting in the door. “Look what Marge gave me” He says, rushing in with a paper pirate hat on his head.

Andrei’s eyes flicker as he looks down at Jonah, his face hardening and he swallows, sadness creeping into him and me through the bond. Kat also notices the change in him.

“Everything ok?” She asks him. Andrei clears his throat.

“Yep, but we should get going. Dad, are you coming back with us or staying at Kat’s?” Andrei calls out. We all stared shocked, Kat stunned and I don’t think Andrei realized what he said. None of us say anything but I see Kat’s lips tug up at Andrei calling him dad.

“Dad?” Jonah says, confused looking up at him. Andrei looks down at him realizing what he called out, his brows furrow but he didn’t seem bothered by it.

“Derrick is my dad” He tells Jonah.

“Then why do you call him Derrick?” Jonah asks just as Derrick walks in scooping up Jonah.

“Because he has two dads, it’s easier to tell us apart,” Derrick tells him. Andrei nods at the acknowledgement but adds nothing else.

“Come on, you can come in my car, we can get milkshakes on the way home” Derrick tells him.

“Give you two a chance to talk” Derrick says, nodding to me. Andrei nods and we all say our goodbyes. Andrei’s mood plummets further as we get in the car.

“What’s wrong?” I ask him after silence for 20minutes of our drive.

“They found a relative that wants to take Jonahin” He says, his grip on the steering wheel tightening.

“Who?” I ask, looking away from him, unable to watch the hurt I see on his face.

“An uncle, his name is Clive ” Andrei sighs before brushing his fingers through his hair.

“When?” I ask, looking out the window, my chest constricting like I was being suffocated. I didn’t want him to leave, I wanted him with us where we knew he would be safe. I wished he was ours. Ours to keep and knowing he was leaving crushed me. “Clive wants to pick him up tomorrow,” Andrei says. I nod not knowing what else to say.

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