Chapter Twelve a Hey! So, I'm FINALLY about to wrap up my other story Take You Down-which is sad but exciting at the same time. Sad because I really connected with my characters. However, I'm excited that I can really focus on revising this story! For those who have read this before, I can tell you this is going to be a completely di erent roller coaster ride. I do have one thing to say though. I **will not** tolerate any rude comments; therefore, if you don't like the new version, just put this book down. It's as simple as that. If someone posts a degrading comment, it will be taken down and there will be no benefit for the commentor. This doesn't mean, however, that I won't accept contructive critisim. There is just a huge di erence between being helpful and being hurtful. NOW. For chapter twelve... Can I get 100 votes and 20 comments? a a VOMMENT. Recap There Travis stood, inches from his original position against the wall, with a sleek, black gun trained firmly in his grip. I don't even recognize my trembling voice when a bloodcurdling scream rips its way out of my mouth. Panic seeps through my body once the echo of my scream fades and I slam my back against the wall. I'd be one damn ignorant girl if I tried to tell myself that no one heard that. Truth be told, I only thought I could scream like that on roller coasters. Shit repeat in my head over and over again. There's no point trying to be silent, considering my loud mouth blew that option. I hear Travis shu le frantically and that's what does it. Without a further thought, I tear myself away from the wall and pump my legs as fast as I can in the direction I came from. Run **Chapter Twelve** Never in my life have I ran this fast. The adrenaline—I've felt it before—but neverthis speed, this aching and thumping that travels all the way to the tips of my fingers and back in a bone- crushing chill. One could describe this feeling as a 'rush' or a 'thrill'; however, those are the lastwords that come to my mind. Try petrified It's a creeping terror that rushes into one's system, gnawing mercilessly at the brain as a constant reminder of its presence. It consumes the body, controls its shivers, and locks the bones, all with one thought. It's a mind game—only fear never loses. As I cut through the poorly monitored grass in the park, the image of that gun slips into my mind. The man, laying on the floor—most probably dead—was murdered by Travis Emmons. An unpleasant churning in my stomach nearly has me lurching forward with great e ort. With my breath ragged and painful, the thought of stopping tempts my aching legs—but I know I can't. a I throw a glance over my shoulder to see if he's coming a er me, and thankfully, he's not. However, that doesn't stop me from continuing my stride. For all I know, he could have somehow taken a shortcut that I haven't been around long enough to uncover. When I start to see home round the corner, appearing bigger and more daunting than I had ever seen it, I turn sharply towards the direction of the beach. At this moment, being alone seems like the best option—the only option that will keep me sane while I clear my head and figure out what to do. ď Before my heart can react to Travis's deadly figure, my legs act for me. I immediately whirl around and start to walk as calmly as I can possibly appear towards the porch—somewhere away from him. I'm starting to lose all sense of reason with each step, as I can almost feel his stare boring into my back like a dozen knives. "Faye!" He calls, his thick voice cutting through my shielded space like a blade. a His voice is a shock to me, more of a reason to keep going and never look back. As sensibility takes its last reign, I push myself faster, and I end up half jogging, half walking. It's only when I hear him shout my name again—closer this time that I discard any thoughts of staying calm and resort to sheer panic. I hear myself let out a small noise before kicking my heels into a sprint. Faintly, the jingling of Travis's keys warns me that he's still behind me. "Hell" he exclaims suddenly as my blood spikes at his anger, "Can you stop and let me explain!" The answer is obvious. No However, I don't wait around to tell him those two letters. Instead, I push on, regretting my choice of walking so far away from the patio near my room. a I pass by a single palm tree planted a distance away from another one before a hand jerks my elbow. A yelp escapes my lips before a thought seed is planted in my head. I rip my arm out of Travis's grip and start to back away from him, keeping my eyes on him. a It seems as if now, it's fight or flight mode. a "Don't touch me." I growl, glaring at him and taking a tentative step back. Travis slowly raises his hands to meet his head, and he takes a slow small step forward. I watch his every move, taking a step back with every step he takes forward. I start to calculate my chances of being able to escape in order to distract myself from his piercing gaze. He takes a larger step as if to test me and I throw an arm out firmly. With my other free hand, I dig my phone out of my pocket. "Stay there, or I'm calling the cops." I threaten, my voice low, shaky, yet very serious. a His eyes flicker to the phone as if it's a pest in his way, before he gradually brings his gaze back to me. "You can't call the cops—" He starts to say word by word. I stare at him wide eyed, "Are you crazy?" He shakes his head and attempts to take another foot forward. "Just—" I grit abruptly, taking another step back, "Don't move" His shoulders slum when he observes my defiant retreat. He takes a hand and brushes it through his hair, his eyes not once leaving me. I stare at him wordlessly, letting the tension sink in like a vampire would sink his teeth into skin. For the first time, the waves of the beach have no calming a ect on me—it's so crashes are rather harsh than soothing. a "You killed that man." I accuse, my voice cracking towards the end, "He was lying on the floor—lifeless. You killed him." "No, it's not like that," He shakes his head, "I—" "I saw that gun in your hands!" I interrupt icily hysterically, shaking my head. đ He clicks his jaw and narrows his eyes, "You saw many things you weren't supposed to see." My breath hitches, "So what?" I demand. "That doesn't change what I saw." "It doesn't," Travis agrees cautiously, "But if you let me explain, you'll "—Change my mind and move on like nothing happened?" I press, sco ing, "Not likely." Travis exhales sharply and retreats a step back. His eyes, hard yet void of any clear cut emotions, travel my face intensely as if they are searching for something in particular. "Look," he starts a er a moment, "Two minutes—just give me two minutes to explain myself." Even before he is finished I'm shaking my head. "What, and if I don't," I mock humorlessly, "You'll shoot me?" Travis clenches his fist and presses it to his forehead. "No." He grinds out between his teeth. With my heart pounding, I let out a laugh as if to let him know I don't believe him for a moment. With that, I quickly spin around just as he drops his hand and relaxes his jaw. The spider crawling sensation to walk, fast, gets me as far as three steps before Travis jogs in front of me. I glare at him and try to dodge around, "Move" He shakes his head and raises his head, "Not until you hear me out." With almighty courage, I reach a hand out and shove him to the side. I'm surprised when he stumbles as I do so, but I don't complain or stop to ponder it. I start to walk past him again. This time, I don't even make it a step until he grabs my shoulders and spins me around. My heart rate picks up as he firmly pushes me to back track. "Travis get o me!" I demand hotly, my voice shaking to my dismay. I keep telling myself to stay firm, but I know this could be the end for me. As try to lean against him, struggle at least, I feel my back hit something hard. My stomach drops and I start to feel sick as the churning mixes with my unpleasant thoughts. All thoughts of fighting him o leave me, partially because my body feels paralyzed, but also because a sense of dejavu distracts me. a With my back pressed to something hard and barely any room to breathe, I start to feel my breath come out short and quipped. All too clearly, I imagine the regurgitating touch of mom's late night visitors. When Travis brings his hand up to lean forward, I can almost feel the way her scrawny men pressed against my chest in disgusting admiration. a A strangled noise escapes my lips, startling me, when I find it harder to breathe. My eyes wander everywhere but at Travis's as I try to calm myself. Only, he makes the mistake of placing a hand on my shoulder. As soon as I feel his warm and sweaty palm, my brain loses it. Blood rushes to my head as an overwhelming sense of terror floods through my system. Dread washes over me, slithering up like vines, torturing me with its achingly slow progress. a Suddenly, it feels as if a hammer struck my chest, hard. I gasp and

exhale with great di iculty, literally feeling all the breath run out of me. My eyes widen once I realize I'm le with no more and I instantly bring a hand to my throat. Confusion settles in my head and I feel a bead of sweat trickle from my scalp. "Faye?" In the background, Travis's concerned voice alerts me passively. I shake my head, desperate to regain my normal breath. "I—I…" I rasp, trying to get the words out. It's as the more I realize I can't breathe, the harder it gets to do so. "Can't b-breathe..." He curses under his breathe before pushing himself urgently away from me to bend down to my level. "Faye," He demands in a low voice. I close my eyes and try to focus on it, but a gasp has me panicking again. "Hey," Travis tries again. With a finger, he pulls my head slowly to face him. "Look at me." I nod my head, "I can't—" "I know." He says in an unusually calm voice, "Don't think about it." If I were in the right mind, I would give him a flat look, but I can't. Instead, he figures it out for himself that those aren't the right words. "Okay maybe I shouldn't say that," He mumbles before looking up, "Take deep breathes."

I shake my head, my breath hitching in my throat.

round, he gestures for me to follow along, and I do so.

breathe without crouching painfully.

then hesitantly distances himself from me.

attack, my face would've turned blue ages ago.

to say before—"

me, reaches out to him.

me."

right now?"

his empty eyes meet mine again.

breathes."

He shakes his own head and frowns, "Look at me and take deep

I bring my gaze to his and watch as he demonstrates by inhaling

slowly. When he exhales, his mint breath blows in my face. The next

Slowly and steadily, a er countless rounds of deep breathing, I feel

my heart rate start to calm down and my diaphragm start to expand

for a longer period of time. We continue to breathe together, looking

directly in each other's eyes, until I can finally stand up straight and

A few minutes later, I take one final breath and sigh shakily. Travis,

seeing that I've calmed down, straightens himself out as well and

I watch, stunned at what just happened, as a pained expression

crosses his face before it's gone. He looks down momentarily before

"Are you alright?" He asks gruly, angling his head carefully at me.

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I exhale, my breath ringing in my ears, before nodding in shock.

"Yeah."

His shoulders relax slightly when he hears my voice and I look away for a moment.

I'm so against him, yet at the same time I feel obliged to be on his side. I can't help but think that if he weren't talking me through the

"Thank you." I force out, my voice sounding awkward and short...

"Please," I raise a hand up and purse my lips, "Can we not do this

He nods and then looks uncertainly at me, "Look—what I was trying

He clamps his mouth shut and it forms a straight line.

I can tell he's not pleased, but he's not furious either.

A er a minute of staring, he sighs and moves his head up and down.

"Will you give me a chance to explain later?" He presses, his face determined.

My mind screams no, by my heart, the one that nearly collapsed on

"Yes." I breathe, and quickly add in, "But only because you helped

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