[iii. THROUGH WINDOWS



chapter three, THROUGH WINDOWS A

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"Have you seen him yet?" her father asked on the phone, during their only phone call they had all year. The 'he' didn't have to be clarified, the two of them knowing that it was his son and her halfbrother, the reason for the divorce between her parents – not that she complained about it or thought of her brother in a bad way.

Have you seen him yet? It caused her to freeze, knowing that, no, she hadn't. It had been a month and a half since he had been taken to juvie and still, she had hidden away in her apartment. Not really hidden, she had tried to move on and forget about everything that had happened in September because it was just too hard for her. She tried to live her life even though every time she got home she had to stop herself from asking Brinley if he would be staying the night or if he was already there, waiting for her. đ

So no, she had not seen Finn even though she could go see him at any moment. She was scared and she knew that probably was too, she knew that she should go and see him because he deserved that but she was scared. She didn't want to see him because it hurt, it caused such a hard ache in her heart, but she knew that wasn't fair to him. It wasn't. She had to visit him because he was her brother and he was alone in there and he didn't even deserve it.

And she knew that when she paused, her father knew that too. "No," she continued on the conversation, just wanting him to hang up the phone or do it herself, not that she would because that wasn't who she was. "I haven't."

Her father sighed, like he had the right to be disappointed in her. He didn't. She was sure he hadn't been to see his son and if he had, it was only because of Lucy. And if he had gone on his own will, he still would never have the right to act like her dad. He stopped being that when she was eight, when he decided that his family wasn't enough – they didn't make him happy enough – so he sought happiness in a younger woman with a job under him meaning she had to submit. He might be her father but he was not her dad. a

"Davina, you know it's not right to just leave him there," he said in a low voice and she stilled.

"I've been busy," Davina said back in response, and although it was partially true she knew she shouldn't use it as an excuse, "School and work."

"You have time on the weekends, don't you?" he pestered on and she wanted to go o on him, tell him about the times she cried over him because he wasn't there and neither was her mother and she was just alone. She wanted to scream and yell at him because he had been so terrible to her and now he had the audacity to be disappointed in her even though he was never around. สื

But she didn't, because that wasn't her. She couldn't do that. "Brinley and I go to the park, dad," she cringed internally at the title she gave him, "And I still have to hang with Rosie."

"He's your brother, Davina."

"And he's your son. Have you even seen him? Or have you just sat at home on your weekends that you could spend with him?" she snapped, already feeling guilty for talking back to him. She shouldn't have done that, she should've just bit her tongue.

"Yes, Davina, I have seen him. Lucy and I went last week on	
Wednesday and she plans to go again soon," he calmly replied.	
"But you aren't?"	
"I have work, and paper work. I don't have the time to go see him but you do. You don't work at a large company," she felt a pang in her heart at the jab.	a
Her father was rich, he had always been, just like Lucy. Davina's mother, Anna, had not been. Anna worked at a frozen yogurt shop before meeting her dad, being swept away into the lifestyle of the rich with wine and champagne.	
And her father worked at a large company; she used to work at a diner. Davina Royce the waitress at Apple's Eye Diner since she was a starry eyed sixteen-year-old with Rosie Harlan who gave her a sexual awakening which had been incredibly awkward when they were younger and now an old joke. Davina Royce was went to college and got a History degree like an idiot, realizing a er that she couldn't get a job with that, and going back new to get one in education and working at a flower shop now instead of a diner.	đ
"I'm going to college," Davina said back, "And I'm working at a shop. Maybe I don't have paperwork but that doesn't mean I don't have schoolwork."	
"Schoolwork hardly compares," and she could practically hear the eye roll accompanied by the statement.	đ
"Well good thing it's not a competition," Davina fired back before	

looking around at the empty flower shop she worked at, Stevie actually not having the same shi as her, "I have to go. Work, you know."

And then she hung up the phone without a goodbye. She never got one before and she didn't need one now.

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That weekend, she did end up going to see Finmt definitely wasn't because of her father, if anything she wanted to do something to spite him (although that was rude and she couldn't no matter how badly she wanted to), but because she needed to see him. Finn was her brother and it had been a month and half and she usually couldn't go half a week without seeing him so this was torture. It really was.

She took the bus to the building, signing in and saying just who exactly she was visiting before they sent her to a room full of other visitors. The room had been divided, tables with glass dividing them and phones beside to pick up and use just like it was out of a TV show. She took a seat at one of them, waiting and waiting until she saw Finn in an orange jumpsuit being led into the room. His eyes wandered the side which she sat on until they landed on her, sitting down opposite of her and picking up the phone. She did the same.

"Hey," she said so ly, hoping that he could hear her.

"Hey, V," she said back and she smiled at him, wishing that he wasn't mad at her because it had been so long and she really didn't want him to be angry, "How are you?"

"I think I should be asking you that," Davina replied before answering, "And I'm fine. Stevie's still hitting on me and Tessa came over a couple of weeks ago for an hour."

"That's cool. Have...have you seen dad?" she shook her head at Finn's question. "So no more mandatory monthly dinners at casa de dad?"

She rolled her eyes at him, "No, I don't know. Maybe but there isn't really a point anymore. I heard that he visited you."

"Yeah but he didn't say anything. Mom did all of the talking and he just looked uncomfortable. I mean, there are some freaky looking people here and he was just sneering at them basically...totally not cool for me," Finn explained.

"Are they – did they beat you up?" Davina asked, tone laced with worry and he shook his head, rolling his heads in fondness at her.

"No, but I've seen some fights. They happen frequently but it's fine, Vina, really. I stay out of the way and keep my head done," Finn told her, "Gibby – my cellmate – and I usually just watch from afar. They're actually pretty entertaining." ď

"Entertaining? Finn, it's people hitting each other and probably breaking bones and causing the other person to bleed – that isn't fun," Davina stressed.

"No, they are. You're just a prude," she playfully glared back at him and he smiled, "Kidding."

"Sure you are. But...you're okay, right? Like, you're okay? Gibby's nice and everything and not a murderer?" Davina questioned.

"Yes, I'm fine, V. I mean, the food's terrible and I have to be careful sometimes, but know who not to talk to now and where not to be at certain times. But I'm fine. Really. And Gibby's not a murderer, don't worry," Finn went through calmly and Davina nodded.

"Good, that's good. I just worry, you know? You're my little brother	
and you're here and I just want you to be fine," she then paused before asking, "What about Peter? Have you seen him?"	ď
Finn grew tense at his name, "No, he hasn't been to see me. I don't want him to, either."	
Davina so ened as she looked at him, "I know I shouldn't have said anything, but he really hurt you, Finn. I don't want to see you get hurt again."	
"Apparently you didn't care about that when you got his name from my phone and called him over to your apartment a er Homecoming," Finn snapped and she winced. There was a pause	
before he said, "Sorry."	່ສ
"No, you're not. And that's okay. I-I know I messed up but I just – I just thought that if I could get you two in the same room you would listen to him. You were just so happy with him and so devastated a er him and you didn't really talk about what he did to you so I didn't think it was that bad and I'm sorry," she apologized.	
"I didn't mean to say that," Finn said to her, "And I know you didn't think it would end with him breaking up with me – although he didn't even do that because we were never o icially together – and I'mI'm happy that I got to be with him for a time. He did make me happy."	đ
She gulped, "And now you're not. God, Finn, I just – I hate myself that I let all of this happen to you. I'm supposed to be your big sister, I'm supposed to protect you from everything."	
"You couldn't exactly protect me from juvie or drug possession – alleged, I know," he clarified when she opened her mouth, "And you don't hate yourself, you don't hate anyone."	đ
"Hey! I couldI could hate someone," Davina defended herself weakly, falling apart at the look he gave her, "Yeah, okay, I can't. It's just not in me."	đ
"I know. How's Asher?"	u
"Brinley's fine, misses her favorite student though," Davina teased, bringing out the fact that Brinley used to be his English teacher, and he rolled his eyes.	
"We both know that I was never and would never be her favorite student. I was terrible. Didn't do any of my homework, didn't read the books I was supposed to, and definitely would've bombed tests and quizzes if she didn't be down and quiz me over the material," Finn denied.	
"Yeah, yeah, but she does miss you. So does Rosie, I've been having to meet with her because you're gone and – oh! – she wants me to work at the diner again now that you're gone," Davina caught him up	
"Of course she does. She's lonely, now she's le with Johnny and his girlfriend. And like, they aren't bad butyou know," he trailed, giving her a knowing look that caused her to scrunch up her nose.	đ
"Ew. I mean, I get it, but really? Still? And I thought they broke up," Davina said.	
He nodded, "They did, then they got back together. And then broke up again and she got a new boyfriend and Johnny kissed her and they started fucking again and then her boyfriend found out and	
dumped her so she went back to Johnny." "Wild story. Truly," she said sarcastically before remembering	a
something, "Oh! – Don't get mad at me, but I went to a bar." "What?" he sputtered, "Davina, tell me you're joking."	
Davina sighed, "No, I'm not. I just – a er your trial, I ended up there and I met a girl but I didn't sleep with her or anything."	a
"Vina" he looked down guiltily.	
"What? No. I'm not blaming you, Finn. Why would I do that? It's not your fault that Caden was being a, you know, and got you here. God, I didn't mean to make you think that, I'm sorry," Davina rushed out, guilt already pooling in her gut because she made him look like that.	
"How can I not think that? You're twenty-six and you've never been to a bar before – swore them o because of Anna. And then I go to fucking juvie and that night you get yourself to a bar" Finn sighed.	a
She hated seeing him like that, hating being the reason he looked like that. It wasn't fair but he did nothing wrong and now he felt terrible about himself and it was all her fault and she never wanted that – ever. He didn't deserve to feel that way about himself because he was her little brother who didn't do anything. He was innocent and now he felt guilty because of her. She hated it.	5
And while Davina Royce couldn't hate people, it just wasn't in her, she hated what she did to people. Intentional or not. It made her feel so terribly guilty because that was never what she truly wanted,	9

"Finn, really. It's not your fault at all. Yeah, I went to a bar, but I didn't even get drunk. I had, like, one beer and talked to this girl and it was fine. I haven't been back and I haven't really thought about it, so it's fine," Davina tried, shi ing the blame he felt from him. "It was all me. I wanted to go there because I wanted to forget and avoid everyone who knew, like Brinley, and that seemed like the only place that no one would look for me at. Really, it's not your fault at all so don't even think that."

emotions just got in the way or wording and she knew she should've

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never opened up her mouth in the first place. It was truly the worst

feeling in the world to her.

"Okay," Finn said but he sounded unconvinced, "Thanks for visiting me. I missed you."

Her heart gave a hard ache at his confession, feeling even worse about herself because it had been a month and a half and this was the first time she had gone to see him. She could've gone sooner, so many times, but she hadn't. Like a coward, she had avoided him and everything about it and tried to go on with her life like he was never apart of it. But he was, she could barely remember a time when he hadn't even been alive. He had always been there, always there for her, and she had just le him to rot.

"I missed you, too," she said, more guilt pooling but she tried not to think about it or cry from how terrible she felt about herself. Or cry because this was her little brother and she couldn't even touch him, "I'm sorry for not visiting sooner, either. I just – I don't know, I didn't want to see you like this and that's a terrible excuse and, God, Finn, I should've come sooner."

He smiled at her the best he could, "It's okay, V. Tessa came a er my first week here. And Rosie last week along with mom and dad."

That didn't help anything. She was essentially the last person to come and see him. "Has – Has Brinley visited?" she asked meekly.

Finn nodded slowly, "Like two weeks ago or something. But I get why it took you a while, don't worry."

"I'm sorry."

"It's okay."

"No, it's not. And I'm so sorry because this wasn't fair to you at all but I just – I couldn't do it and I'll come as o en as I can, okay?" Davina said, just wanting to make up for this.

"You don't have to do that, Vina," Finn shook his head but she kept on going.

"I do, though, that's the thing. Not just for you but for me. How about...once a month, okay? I'll make it up here once a month andand we can just talk for as long as they'll let us, okay? How does that sound?" Davina suggested, urging him to agree because she needed to do this.

He smiled. A real, genuine wide smile, "Sounds amazing, Davina."

And she smiled back at him. She couldn't move on with her life without him, he was apart of her life more than she had realized before. And trying to move on without him didn't work. No, that had failed. But this...it was good. She could live with this.

For the first time since his arrest, Davina felt truly happy, truly good. It was such a nice feeling.

gah I love this chapter. tbh I've been missing finn so it was great to write for him again. also, this chapter kinda closes a chapter for davina. this whole time she's been thinking about finn and feeling guilty that of course she isn't in juvie and gets to keep living her life, so this is lessening it. she's really moving on from that now.

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