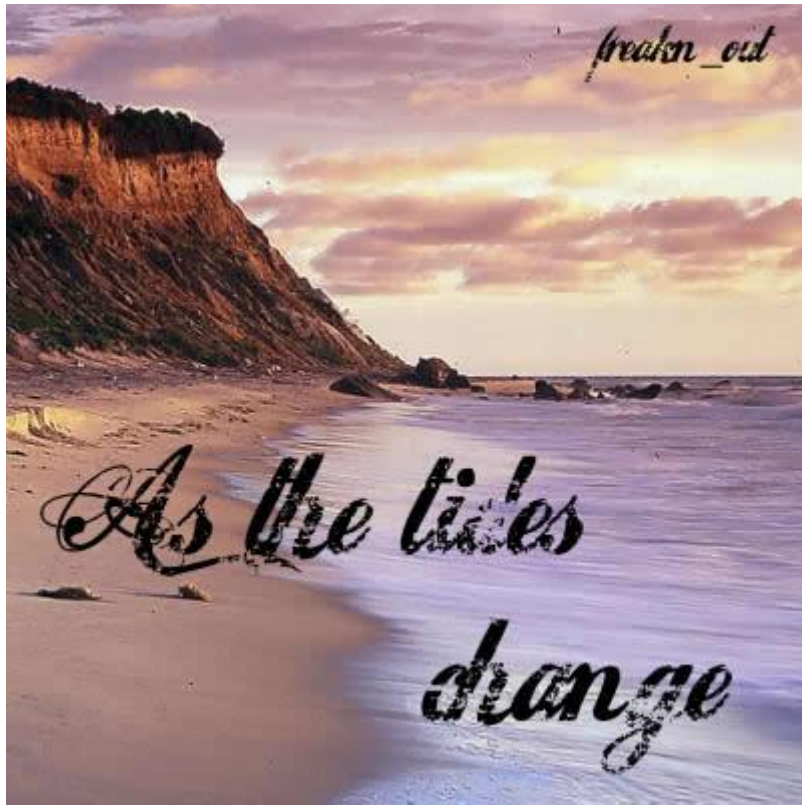


As the tides change



The boys attend a Supernatural reunion cruise. An accident casts them into the ocean, and they find themselves stranded on an island. With no way of contacting for help, they have to find a way to survive. Jensen has a fiance waiting for him at home, but could there be a possibility of something more than friendship between him and Jared? *“This should be weird, right?” His hand tightened marginally as Jared pressed closer, “Yeah.” “Is it?” he slid his hand down the lean curve of the kid’s back, resting just above his belt. In a voice barely above a whisper, Jared replied, “No.”*

24,000 words, bottom!Jared, hurt!comfort, schmoop

you can leave the island but you can't leave my love
and you can't take back what you gave away
you can leave the island but you can't leave my heart
'cause this memory remains

of the moonlit nights
when the stars were high
we could see Savannah shine across the waves
we could dance along the shore
and take our time for more
and all along I know our hearts will say

you can leave the island but you can't leave my love

and you can't take back what you gave away
you can leave the island but you can't leave my heart
'cause the memory remains

and I loved you
from the moment that we met I'm thinkin' of you
and I never will forget...
how the feelin' came a reelin',
so easy to be ... so free

on a moonlit night
when the stars are high
we can see Savannah shine across the waves
now I know you must move on...
but I'll never be alone
as long as this memory remains

and I've loved you
from the moment that we met I'm thinkin' of you
and I never will forget...
how the feelin' came a reelin',
so easy to be... so free

you can leave the island but you can't leave my love
and you can't take back what you gave away
you can leave the island but you can't leave my heart
'cause the memory remains...
this feelin' rarely ever fades...
and how I wish,
how I wish, how I wish you'd stay



“Jared. Jared! Get back here,” Jensen managed to yell between laughs.

“What’s the matter, gramps? Can’t catch me?” Jared’s teasing face peeked over his shoulder as he ran.

“Give it back!”

“Oh, no, no, no. Let’s see, what have we here...?” Jared fitted the headphones on, somehow managing to keep a couple of steps ahead of his friend.

They rounded a corner and Jensen let out a loud, “Ha!” as it was a dead end. “You are going *down*, kiddo.”

Dimples in full blast, Jared turned to face his friend, “Oh, really? Says the guy who digs... *Sunset Strippers?*”

Ignoring his blush, Jensen leapt at his friend, tackling him and locking them in a furious wrestle for the iPod. Laughing, Jared started brutalizing the song, “Trying to catch your heart... Is like trying to catch a staaaarrrr... So many people love you baby... That must be what you aaaarrrrrre...”

Growling under his breath, Jensen pinched the younger man hard enough to make him yelp and dance away laughing. “And carry your heart into my arms... That's where you belong!”

Jensen's dive knocked them both over, Jared's back slamming against the deck with a loud, metallic clang. Jared's groan morphed into more laughter as he flipped them over, each fighting for dominance.

“Who's your star, Jen? Whose heart are you trying to catch? Did you sing that to Danni when you proposed? Awww.”

Ignoring his friend's attempts to rile him up, Jensen flipped them over yet again, pressing Jared's hands up above his head.

Their battle deteriorated as they resorted to tickling, and eventually they collapsed, giggling, side by side, their puffs of air turning into mist against the star-speckled sky.

The moon was out, a crooked oval, not quite rounded yet, shining brightly in the dark sky, lighting everything up and giving it a celestial feel. Jared's quiet sigh beside him was exactly how he felt: letting out everything, forgetting everything but that moment. Just them, cheeks flushed in the icy darkness, shoulders touching easily, comfortable, like they should be. Always.

“You know I'm gonna kick your ass later, right?” Jensen broke the silence; just wanting to make sure Jared knew what was coming.

“Yeah,” Jared huffed a laugh, “right.”

“Besides, I just have the song in my playlist. *You're* the one who knows all the words.”

The soft laughter enveloped Jensen like an invisible blanket, warming him up from the inside, and he pushed up onto an elbow to peer down at his friend, a soft smile on his lips. Jared's eyes were warm and bright, reflecting the sky and stars above and Jensen couldn't look away.

“Hey...” the whisper broke through his daze, making him blink furiously back in focus. “You okay?”

He grinned down at his friend, “Yeah...” then he flopped back down, trying to ignore how close they were lying. But Jared's hair was brushing against his, the soft scent of his best friend intoxicating, fresh and clean, like the air, but warm like only Jared could be. As his eyes slipped shut, Jensen couldn't think of a single place he'd rather be.

They stayed like that, just lying there, as the seconds ticked by into what could have been hours, until they were both shivering slightly.

“Maybe we should head back inside. Eric did threaten to make us walk the plank if we skipped out on another reunion party.”

Jared groaned and rolled over, pressing his nose into Jensen’s shoulder. The older man blamed the sudden skipping in his chest on the supply of warmth emitting from the contact. It definitely wasn’t because... no, it definitely wasn’t.

His feeble attempt to shove his friend off turned into him laying a palm lightly on Jared’s back, holding him close, and pressing his nose to Jared’s hair.

“Hey, Jay...”

Jared’s hand slipped up slightly, resting over his chest, “Mmm?”

“This should be weird, right?”

His hand tightened marginally as Jared pressed closer, “Yeah.”

“Is it?” he slid his hand down the lean curve of the kid’s back, resting just above his belt.

In a voice barely above a whisper, Jared replied, “No.”

“We’re weird, man.” Jensen huffed a laugh, “Can you picture Tom and Mike ever doing the same thing with a straight face?”

Jared lifted up slightly, a wide grin lighting up his face, “Or Chris ’n Steve?”

Shifting to make Jared more comfortably, Jensen tried not to snort; “Chris’d probably take a swing at us just for suggesting it.”

So quietly, Jensen nearly thought he’d imagined it, came a muffled confession, “I’m glad we’re weird.”

Grinning up at the stars, Jensen breathed in deeply, “Yeah. Me too, Jay. Me too.”

Only a few more moments had passed when they were both suddenly sent rolling as the ship lurched, and they landed in a heap against the railing. Seconds later a thundering horn sounded off, “*Will all passengers please remain below deck. There is no need for alarm, just some minor difficulties. I repeat, please remain below deck.*”

“Shit.” Jared untangled them and got to his feet, hand locking with Jensen’s as he pulled him up. “What do you think happened?”

“I’d say we hit something, but that’s impossible. This ship has the best radars available; no way they wouldn’t pick it up. Maybe it’s just a storm rolling in or something.” They peered over the edge, straining their eyes to see anything in the faint light, both keeping the other in close contact.

An intense screeching stabbed the air, making them wince and cover their ears as the ship shuddered again. Jensen, who was still hanging over the edge, teetered for a few moments,

and would have been sent overboard had it not been for Jared yanking him backwards by his collar, arms wrapping firmly around the older man as they waited for their pounding hearts to slow.

“Thanks...” Jensen cleared his throat, still leaning back against the firm chest.

Jared just breathed out shakily against his neck, words stuck in his throat.

“We should join the others...”

“Yeah,” came the murmured agreement. Pulling apart, they turned towards the small hatch leading down to the huge ballroom below. Everyone else was down there; all dressed finely in expensive suits and stunning dresses. Simultaneously, they let out a groan.

Just as Jared was about to climb down, Jensen swore quietly as he checked his pockets, “Shit. Where’s my iPod?”

Jared searched his pockets and shook his head, “Come on, I think we left it over there by that weird pipe thing.”

“No, the boat would’ve knocked it this way, don’t you think?”

Splitting up wasn’t something they were particularly happy with, but they knew it would be quicker that way. Jared headed towards the bow of the vessel while Jensen went towards the stern.

He scratched his head, trying to retrace their steps, but he couldn’t think past the fact that he couldn’t see Jared.

“Jensen.” He spun around to see a red-faced Eric glaring at him.

“Uh...” he desperately looked around for his backup. “Eric... hi...”

“What the hell are you still doing up here? Why didn’t you come down? Where’s Jared? I swear to God, you boys are gonna be the death of me. I thought after I survived the show I was safe, turns out I was wrong.”

“Jared... uhm... he’s... up here... somewhere.”

Eric blinked at him pointedly and he quickly got his legs into motion, leading the way towards the bow, where he saw something that made his heart stop.

“Jared! What are you doing?” his voice was shrill, it had upped a few notches but he couldn’t bring himself to care. Jared was dangled over the edge, one hand wrapped around the rail, the other stretching down to reach for something.

“Just...” Jared puffed, “few more...”

Racing over to the edge, Jensen spotted his iPod banging against the hull, the cord caught around one of the ropes that fastened the sail. Jared's fingers were just brushing it, his body stretching to its full limit.

"Jared, no! Leave it, it doesn't matter! Jared!" Jensen yelled, diving forwards.

It happened so quickly. Jensen's knees hitting the deck as he scrambled to reach his friend; Jared's fingers slipping one by one as they lost hold.

"Shit," Jared's wide eyes locked with Jensen's split seconds before he keeled backwards, head bashing against the hull with a thud before he disappeared into the stormy waters.

"No!" Jensen screamed, "Jared!"

It was only Eric's painfully strong grip that kept him from diving straight after his friend.

"Jared! *Jared!*" His yells were swallowed by the endless darkness. There was no sign of his friend anywhere, the previously gorgeous ocean suddenly sinister and dangerous, waving rolling and thrashing against each other. Eric was pressing a button nearby and there was someone shouting, Jensen was in a daze, unsure as to what was happening, his eyes too blurry, his chest too tight.

Through his confusion, he somehow managed to catch sight of a dark form and Jared's hand appearing on the swell of a wave, then it was gone, sucked out of sight. Shoving Eric away, Jensen didn't think twice. Leaping up onto the railing, he tossed himself over, diving clear of the ship and into the ice water, ignoring the yelling from behind him.

Swimming towards where Jared had been, Jensen kicked off his shoes, plunging beneath the waves, calling out for his friend with every spare breath. The current was incredibly strong, pulling him away from the ship.

"Jare-," a wave knocked him down, choking him with salty water, but he tried again, "Jared!"

His arms ached like hell, but he kept going, he had to. It was *Jared*. The memory of how Jared had hit his head as he fell only served to speed up his movements. He swam harder, faster, than he ever had before.

It was nearly impossible to see anything, what with the endless waves and dips blocking view, but finally he caught sight of a shadow hiding behind the next wave. Cursing his damp clothes, Jensen swam and swam, vaguely hoping that the shape was Jared and not a shark or something equally lethal.

His heart pounded painfully in his chest. The prospect of losing Jared had adrenaline surging through him. Just the thought of never seeing his co-star's goofy grin every day was impossible to bear and Jensen knew for certain that he'd never be able to survive if Jared didn't make it.

When something brushed his arm he nearly leapt out of his skin. Then he recognized the mop of hair and couldn't help the sob of relief that escaped his lips. Yanking the limp figure

against his chest, his shaking fingers managed to find a faint pulse, but the kid didn't appear to be breathing.

Ignoring the painful protesting of his legs as he strained to keep them both above the surface Jensen swept back the hair from Jared's face, wincing at how pale his friend was.

"Jared! Jared, come on, buddy. Wake up... Jay, you can't do this to me. You can't..." his voice broke as he ducked his head against Jared's chest. Wondering how they'd been ignorant of the sea's roughness, of how rough it had grown since they'd started their stupid games on deck, Jensen shifted until he could get an arm wrapped around Jared's waist, the younger man's back pressed to his chest in a position that made it easier to tread water.

Swiveling his head in various directions, he desperately tried to decipher the ship's direction, but the water was too rough, smashing in from all sides and disorienting him. He groaned as something heavy smashed into his back, but, realizing it was a piece of driftwood, he quickly grabbed it, swinging Jared on it and scrambling up himself.

There was no sign of the ship but Jensen's biggest concern was getting his best friend breathing again. Pressing his lips over Jared's, he quickly breathed all his lungs could offer. Unable to perform the compressions on the unstable surface, he just thumped at the firm chest, begging silently.

"Don't you..." he gasped, "don't you leave me... you hear me, Jay? Don't you fuckin' dare, you asshole."

He repositioned his lips, once more pushing air into Jared until he felt dizzy. Just when he was sure to pass out, Jared's chest heaved and the man nearly rolled off the piece of debris, coughing and spluttering. When he slumped down again, his eyes searched for Jensen, his body relaxing only when he'd determined that his friend was fine.

Then he frowned, his shaking fingers reaching out to brush down Jensen's cheeks. "Jen, why're you cryin', you big girl?"

Choking out a laugh, Jensen flopped against his friend, allowing exhaustion to drag him into the darkness.



Just over two days later:

"Jared... Jared..." someone was calling him. He was sure he should wake up but he couldn't bring himself to. He felt so heavy, like something was weighing him down, holding him under. "Jared, get your ass up, you..." the voice faded again. Did he know that voice? Somehow he was sure he did. It sounded familiar.

"Jay, don't you... not again, please, Jay... fuck, wake up... I..." the voice slipped from Jared's grasp, even though he wanted to reply.

Cool lips were pressed over his, a warm scent drifting towards him, and an equally warm body pressing over him. Air was pushed into him, filling him up before it slowly drifted out

again when the lips pulled away. Then the lips were back. He breathed in deeply, taking in the warmth from the person. He knew that smell, he'd recognize it anywhere. He tried to speak but suddenly found himself coughing up water, what seemed like liters trickling out his lips. Finally he blinked his eyes open.

"Je... Jensen?"

His best friend's face broke out into a huge, relieved grin and a second later, he was being smothered in arms so strong and solid that all he could do was cling back.

As Jensen pulled back, he wiped his face surreptitiously and gave a shaky chuckle, "If I didn't know better, I'd say you did that on purpose just to get me to give you mouth-to-mouth again."

Jared's responding laugh was cut off as he tried to sit up, sending his world spinning. "Urrgghh," he groaned, clutching his pounding head, "I feel like crap, man."

"Well, that makes sense... you *look* like crap." But Jensen's words couldn't disguise the man's concern and Jared instantly felt bad for worrying his friend.

"Where... where are we?" For the first time, Jared took in their surroundings. Sand. There was sand everywhere and then water. Slowly turning his head, he saw a cliff behind them, dense vegetation at the top. "No, fucking way."

Dropping beside him, Jensen laughed, "Yeah, that's exactly what I said."

Unconsciously leaning towards the older man, Jared tried to joke, "Tell me you've read Robinson Crusoe."

Jensen shifted closer; moving so his chest was pressed to Jared's back, needing the contact. "Yeah, I did once. Never thought I'd need it as a handbook though."

Jared huffed a laugh and slouched back against his friend's solid chest for a few seconds. Then he shifted forwards, "Come on, help me up here."

They staggered up the small incline, feet sinking deep into the soft, pale sand, the sea lapping quietly behind them.

At the foot of the cliff, they sank down on one of the boulders, staring out at the empty horizon.

"Well, we know they'll be looking for us, so we just need to make sure they can find us."

"Yeah..." Jensen sounded unconvinced, making Jared look up sharply.

"What is it?"

Shaking his head, Jensen's eyes rose to meet his friend's, "Nothing, just that... well, it's been two days and no sign of anything."

“Two days?” Jared couldn’t believe it, “Seriously? Wow, I must’ve been out of it.” he glances over at his friend and snorted, “Well, now I know why you look like a sun burnt lobster.”

Jensen scrubbed at his cheeks self-consciously, wincing at the tenderness of his skin, and muttered, “Asshole...” Jared just grinned. “Anyway... You were drifting in and out of consciousness for a while; I think you hit your head pretty hard. But when the shoreline came into view, there were rocks ’n shit. We were tossed from the platform and I had to drag your ass all the way.”

An impish grin formed on Jared’s lips, “And then you got to smooch me again, didn’t you?”

“Shut up,” Jensen growled, weariness making his tone sharper than he intended, “you’re such a jerk... even after I saved your life and all. Twice. *Twice!* What the hell were you thinking? For a fucking *iPod?*”

That snapped Jared’s mouth shut, his gaze dropping to the sand as he mumbled, “I... fuck... Jensen, I just... well...it was yours an’... I know how much you like listening to music on the ship, makes you less seasick... and...”

Jensen watched the guilt tearing across his best friend’s face and shook his head, a fond smile tugging at his lips as he muttered, “Only you, Jare... Only you...” then he let out a soft sigh and nudged the man’s shoulder, “How’s your head?”

Biting his lip and still shamefaced, Jared whispered back, “Dizzy, ’s all. I’d die for somethin’ to drink.”

Jensen nodded; it had been something on his mind quite frequently too. “Yeah, I feel ya... we’re probably seriously dehydrated and shit...”

“Well,” Jared turned to squint along the shore, “If there’re any rivers, which there must be, they’d all probably lead to the sea, so let’s just follow the coastline.”

Nodding his agreement, Jensen slid his arm around Jared, giving an exaggerated groan as he hoisted his friend up. “Man, you weigh a goddamn ton, you know that?”

“Agh, go to hell, jerk,” was Jared’s good-natured response.

“For you, babe, I’d go anywhere,” Jensen lisped in his ear, and they burst into hysterical laughter, throats raw and croaky from lack of moisture, cheeks sun burnt, muscles aching and stiff. But it was all good: they were together.



A few hours later:

Jensen knew his friend was dead tired, definitely dehydrated, and probably concussed. It killed him to see him like this: face so pale it was like all his blood had been sucked out; his body trembled against Jensen’s regardless of how close he held the kid, and they stumbled with every other step. Jensen wasn’t sure how much longer they could go on.

Numerous breaks later, they finally rounded a corner and took in the stunning cascade of water as it gushed down the side of the cliff.

“Oh, that looks like one hell of a shower,” Jared croaked, grinning lopsidedly at him as they staggered beneath it.

Jared hissed and swayed as his head hit the spray, and Jensen instantly moved towards him, steadying him by the arms. After they’d slurped enough down, Jensen carefully guided Jared towards a nearby rock, just out of the waterfall’s range. “Let me take a look at that.”

He stepped behind the man, knees pressed to Jared’s back as he carefully examined the cut along the kid’s head. “It’s not too bad, just a scratch actually, but it’s pretty bruised. Not that you didn’t have a swollen head before, but anyway...”

“Hey!” Jared whined in protest, reaching behind him to smack at the older man’s leg. “Ass.”

Moving to stand before Jared, Jensen grinned down at his pouting friend, his hand unnoticed, still curled up in the younger man’s hair. The water pounded behind them, but Jensen couldn’t drag his eyes away from the droplets mapping their way down Jared’s tanned skin.

He’d nearly lost Jared today.

The realization had him sinking to the ground, slumping back between Jared’s knees and staring out at the endless ocean, numbness seeping over him.

“Jen? You okay?” Warm hands slid down to his shoulders, massaging gently, easing the tension from his muscles and stealing a soft whimper from his lips as Jared’s fingers worked out the various knots.

It took him a few tries before he managed to clear his throat and reply, “I’m marooned on an island in the middle of god-knows-where, with a sasquatch who’ll probably eat any food we find, and no way of contacting the civilized world, yup, I’m peachy.” But he wrapped his hand around Jared’s calf and squeezed gently, letting him know his sarcasm wasn’t sincere.

His fingers kept up their massage until Jensen felt loose limbed and relaxed, and Jared’s voice was quiet when he spoke, “Does this feel real to you? I mean, I keep expecting Eric and the crew to jump out and yell ‘surprise’. Or at least, I keep expecting to wake up, you know? Back home in Vancou-”

When Jared cut off with a soft gasp, Jensen turned to see his friend’s face pale even further, turning a sickly color as wide, frantic eyes dropped to Jensen’s, “The dogs, Jen. Oh, god. The sitter’s only there for a few more days, tops. We won’t be back by then. They... Jen... they...” he broke off, his eyes wide and glistening, a deep, worried frown creasing his forehead.

It was enough to make even a hardened block of cement’s heart melt, and Jensen felt his chest clench painfully, his throat closing up. Clamping his hands firmly on Jared’s knees, he leaned forward until their faces were inches apart. “Listen to me, Jay. The dog sitter won’t leave until she knows you’re there, right? And Eric and everybody, they all know we’re out here, so Eric will make sure someone checks on them, okay?”

Slowly, ever so slowly, Jared nodded, his hand reaching out for Jensen's shoulder, steadying himself. Then he was suddenly falling forwards, collapsing straight into Jensen as he passed out.

Jensen's groan was forced, put on more for stifling the soft sob that was threatening to escape than for anything else. He hoisted Jared up into his arms, moving them out of the waterfall's range before carefully laying him down and cushioning the kid's head on his lap.

Brushing the hair back from his friend's face, Jensen pulled him closer, shifting him until he was using Jensen's chest to lean back on, allowing Jensen to wrap his arms firmly around the slim waist. Pressing his lips to the cold skin of Jared's pulse point, Jensen tried desperately not to panic. This was the third time Jared had fallen unconscious and it didn't get any easier.



That afternoon:

“Jay? Jay, you with me?”

Slowly blinking the world into focus, Jared squinted up at the upside down image of his friend, “Jen?”

The image righted itself and Jared found himself staring up at a sheet-white face. “Jen, wha's the matter?”

The older man's lips were red and raw, like he'd been chewing them for a while, and his eyes were wide and desperate as they raked over Jared's face. At Jared's words, the man scowled, his lips forming a pout, “I swear I'm gonna kill you...” he muttered under his breath, but his hands were soft and gentle as they brushed the hair back from Jared's face. “Think you can try not to ditch me this time, huh?”

Jared grinned weakly, “I'll do my best. How long was I out?”

“A coupl'a hours. Here, eat this, you must be starvin'.” Jensen shoved some weird green leaves at him, to which Jared's only response was to stare at his friend blankly.

Rolling his eyes, Jensen took a big bite, “See? Happy now? It's wild spinach, I managed to find a clump just back over there.”

“Who are you and what have you done with my Jensen?”

“Just...” Jensen sighed, rolling his eyes in pre-emption of the teasing that was surely ahead. “Okay, fine.... My momma used to grow some in the back garden and one of my chores was to make sure the caterpillars didn't get it. Now, will you please eat before you drop dead of starvation?”

Taking the food with a smirk, Jared coughed, “Mama's boy.”

Jensen kicked him; “Just shut up and eat, ungrateful bastard.”

As he felt some energy seeping into him with each bite, Jared nudged his friend's knee with his own, "Hey..."

Jensen looked up, "Hmmm?"

"Thank you."

"Yeah, yeah."

Once he'd eaten, Jared got to his feet, relieved that his level of dizziness was far less than it had been before. "Okay, so what do you think we should do now? We could try a hand at lighting a fire; see if we can signal our position to anyone."

"Yeah..." Jensen squinted up at the darkening sky, not liking the heavy clouds or vanishing sunlight. "I think we should find somewhere to stay tonight. We need some shelter at least."

Following his gaze upwards, Jared nodded in agreement, "Okay, how far did you go while I was out?"

Jensen shifted slightly, a faint blush rising to his cheeks as he mumbled, "Uhm... didn't... go far... you... sight..." He trailed off before clearing his throat, "Anyway, let's get a move on."

A warm bubble swelled in his chest, but the younger man wisely decided to stay quiet as they headed further along the beach.

"There's got to be a way up that somewhere," Jensen complained a while later, staring up at the stubbornly resistant cliff.

"I could probably free solo it up," Jared murmured, examining the cliff face, "then I could see what's up there and find something to pull you up with."

"Like hell," Jensen growled, yanking the younger man away from the wall and marching him along the endless beach. "No way are you going up there bare handed."

"Jen... I'm being serious, I used to free solo a lot back in 'Tonio."

Keeping his hand flat on the hard panes of Jared's back, Jensen continued their brisk walk, his teeth clenched tightly together.



Later:

His calves ached painfully, his eyes were tender from salt, lack of sleep and sand, but despite this, he found himself laughing, not for the first time amazed at how Jared's mere presence could ease tons of tension from his shoulders, making it virtually impossible to be unhappy.

"So there're three chicks stranded on a desert island, a blonde, a brunette and a redhead, 'kay?"

“Man, not another one,” Jensen groaned, crashing his shoulder against his friend’s.

“Shut up, you know you love it.... Okay, so the brunette looks out to sea and says she’s gonna swim to the mainland. She swims about five miles – all good. But by ten miles, she gets really tired and drowns.”

“Nice.”

Ignoring him, Jared continued, “So then the second chick, the redhead, stares out and wonders whether the brunette made it. Eventually she decides it’s better to try than to stay on the island, so she begins swimming. By fifteen miles she gets too tired to go on, so she drowns.”

“Sheesh, the sharks musta been having a ball.”

“Anyway, the blonde decides to give it a shot as well, so she starts swimming. She gets past the five mile mark, ten mile mark, the fifteen mile mark, and eventually gets to nineteen miles. The shore’s just in sight, but then the blonde decides she’s tired, so she swims all the way back....”

Jared turned to grin at his friend, just waiting for the escaping huff of laughter as Jensen groaned, “God, that’s so *lame*.”

“*You’re* lame,” Jared pouted.

“You’re lamer.”

“You’re the *lamest* lame who ever lamed.”

They stared at one another for a few seconds before loud guffaws of laughter escaped them, quickly turning into squeaky giggles and painful stomachs as they lowered their exhausted bodies to the ground, stretching their aching muscles out. When they finally calmed down, their jaws were sore and they felt more drained than ever.

“There’s sand everywhere. I think there’s even some in my boxers ‘cause my ass is sore.” Jared muttered, shifting uncomfortably. “Or salty seawater... whatever.”

“Dude! I do *not* want to hear about your ass or how it’s doing, thank you very much!” Jensen’s ears were pink.

“You mean you *don’t care* that I might be getting a rash down there?” Jared asked, looking positively aghast, “I’ll have you know that my ass has been given *numerous* compliments from people over the years. Not one complaint actually, apparently it’s rather-”

“Okay! Break’s over, let’s get a move on, Sasquatch.” The older man scrambled to his feet and set off at a brisk pace.

Barely holding in his laughter, Jared called out to his friend, “Uhm... Jen, not to ruin your... uh, manly moment, but... that’s the way we just came from.”

As Jensen returned, Jared couldn't keep a straight face despite the glares being sent in his direction.

"Shut up."

"What?" Jared asked with wide, innocent eyes. "I didn't say anything."

"It's what you were thinking that counts," Jensen grumbled.



Evening:

Just when he thought it was safe, there was a loud, "Ooooh, wait I know another one," and he turned to grin at his friend, "What are you, a walking joke?"

Undeterred, Jared chewed his bottom lip in thought, "But this one's *really* gross, I don't even know why I know it."

"Dude, it's me, I don't care."

Jared snorted, "Okay, but don't say I didn't warn you.... There're three people who get stranded on a desert island, two men and a woman.... They stay there for ages, and eventually get really lonely so the woman begins fooling around with each of the men, y'know... This goes on for a while, but then the woman feels so guilty about cheating on her husband back at home that she kills herself. Some time passes, and the men get really lonely, so they begin fooling around, y'know..."

Jensen shoved his hands into his pockets awkwardly, but Jared just continued, "This goes on for a while and then one of the men begins feeling guilty and asks the other man whether they should stop. The man agrees and says, 'Yeah, I feel bad, too. Maybe we should bury her now...'"

Staring at his friend, Jensen doesn't even realize his mouth is open until he snaps it shut, "Eeeew! Man, *no*. That's just... so they... that's just. Eeeew! *Gross*, seriously where the *hell* did you hear that one?"

"I dunno... probably Chad. Anyway, I did warn ya."

"Yeah, maybe next time you could mention necrophilia in the warnings."

"I'll try to remember that. Hey, maybe that's why Sandy chucked that beer at me that one time."

"Maybe."

"No wait... that was when I stuck the chopsticks in my ears; sorry, wrong time."

Jensen snorted and shook his head. "Dude, I'm amazed she stuck with you for so long, a girl like that with *you* shouldn't have lasted more'n a few hours."

When Jared's only response was to fall silent, Jensen knew he'd pushed the teasing too far. Even with their freakishly abnormal friendship there were still boundaries. And in his weariness, he'd just crossed one.

"Man, I'm sorry. I shouldn't've said that." He reached a hand out for his friend's shoulder and flinched when Jared stepped away. "You know I didn't mean anything by it, I--"

Jared interrupted him, pointing up ahead, "There's another river. Look, it's gonna start raining soon; I'm actually amazed it kept dry all day, and it's nearly dark. I don't think the cliffs are ever gonna end and I really just wanna go to sleep. I'm going to free solo up."

"Jay..."

"No, Jen. We've been walking for hours and we haven't seen anything by sea, sand, cliff and those clumps of bush around waterfalls. We could stay down here, but have you noticed how much the tide's come in? I don't think the cliff's here by chance. So either we stay down here, get soaked, probably drowned and tossed against the rocks, or I go up and we find a safe place to sleep."

After that, all of Jensen's protests fell on deaf ears, and he had to watch as his best friend gripped at the crumbly rock face with his bare hands. Pure, plain torture, not even stopping at sweaty palms but also moving down to sweaty feet and a paper dry throat. Barely able to hear beyond his pounding heart, Jensen shifted to move directly beneath Jared, just in case it would make the slightest difference if his friend fell.

But Jared was lithe, his lean body stretching and contracting with each move, completely at ease ten feet above ground. When he got to about twenty feet, there was a section that jutted out from the wall, forcing him lose hold of the rock face for a split second before his motion propelled him up, enabling him to grasp at the rock above the outcrop.

"How's my ass look from down there?" Jared laughed between breaths.

There was nothing wrong with Jared's ass, of course, but Jensen was too stressed out to talk, he wasn't even sure if oxygen was an option. His chest jumped when Jared slipped slightly, his foothold giving way and scattering pebbles down upon Jensen's shoulders. Dangling from his arms, Jared swung backwards and forwards, getting enough motion to slide his body across to the next available ledge.

It was only when Jared's body slid over the top, his legs jutting out parallel to the ground, that Jensen relaxed, took in a deep breath and wiped his sweaty palms on his trousers.

"Wow, shit, Jen. You've gotta see this place. It's amazing." Jared's head peered over the edge and he paused, "You look like you just ran a marathon, you okay?"

"'m I okay? Jesus Christ."

"Uhm... okay, I'll find something to pull you up with."

He disappeared out of sight and Jensen was left to stare up at the daunting rock face and wonder how the heck he was supposed to get up there. He would've said what Jared did was impossible had he not seen it for himself.

"Hey, Indiana Jones, you find your trusty rope yet?"

Jared's laughter reassured him somewhat, but he still couldn't help wondering what the hell he'd gotten himself into.

"Dude, Lady Luck loves us and wants to have our babies," Jared reappeared over the edge, thick vines draped around his neck.

"Uhm... Jay..."

"Don't worry, I checked, this ain't poison ivy and it ain't a snake."

Jensen was still hesitant as he murmured, "Okay..."

The coils slinked down the cliff face, and Jared called down, "Tie a loop for your foot."

After doing as he was told, Jensen stood on the loop and nodded at his friend, grasping the vine tightly with both hands.

The vine pulled tauter and seconds before his feet lifted from the ground, he yelled up, "If you drop me, I'll kill you."

He managed to angle his back so it was the part subjected to the bashing into the cliff and squeezed his eyes shut.

"'m gonna die. 'm gonna die. 'm gonna die." He kept up his constant mantra, desperately wishing he was anywhere but here.

"Jen, you okay?"

He opened one eye slightly, about to tell Jared to fuck off and leave him to have his death moment in peace, when he realized something. He was flat on his back. Blue sky silhouetted Jared's floppy hair and Jared was smiling fondly down at him, hands warm on his chest and cupping the back of his head.

"'m I dead?"

"Yup. And I'm an angel, wooh," Jared did a ghost impression and Jensen mentally made a note to get Misha to educate Jared in the dos and don'ts of angels. Rule one: angels don't 'wooh' anyone.

"Ass."

"Jerk."

"Bitch."

It started to rain.

“Awesome.”

In a matter of seconds they were both drenched, water droplets trickling down every plain of their bodies and making their clothes cling like second skins. But, it wasn't altogether horrible as the moisture was warm and clean, refreshing.

His very first look at the place and Jensen already found himself mesmerized by the rolling slopes and deep valleys, nothing but greenery everywhere he looked. It was more like an illusion than anything else, but at that very moment, the sun was angled between two mounds, rays of orange light stretching along the plains, catching the falling raindrops and scattering glitters of light, silhouetting Jared and his windswept chestnut hair, him against the backdrop, the ocean lining the horizon beyond the island.

Jared's face was clear and open, forehead smooth of all the worries of the world, tilted upwards to welcome the clouds and allow the sun to catch his bronzed skin in a glow of warmth and innocence. As his hazel eyes caught Jensen staring, a small smile played over his lips and he nudged his head at the view behind him, “Beautiful, isn't it?”



Sometime in the early hours of the morning:

“Jen...” a soft whisper pulled him from his sleep and he blinked, rolling over towards his friend.

“Hmmm?”

“m so... so cold...”

As Jensen's eyes began to focus, he realized Jared was actually shaking, his teeth clinking occasionally.

“Shit, man. Get over here.” Immediately reaching out for his friend, he pulled Jared against him, curling around to keep the younger man protected in his circle of arms.

His nose was pressed to the side of Jared's neck, his lips just brushing the vulnerable skin above his friend's pulse, and he smiled as he felt the shivers gradually easing as Jared relaxed into him.

Imagine hugging your favorite teddy. Now imagine hugging your best friend. Now imagine hugging the most important person in your life, the person you'd die without, die *for*. Merge them all into one and that's what it was. A hug of comfort, warmth, lo- Jensen nearly let out a snort. It was obvious how exhausted he was if he was resorting to poetry.

“Jen...”

“Hmmm?” he murmured, tilting his head so his lips brushed (accidentally, of course) along Jared's jaw.

“Y’know that thing where they ask what you’d take with you if you were stranded on a deserted island?”

“Yeah.”

Jared slipped closer, his chest hard and firm against Jensen’s, his hands holding Jensen tightly. In a whisper so soft it made him wonder whether it had even broken the silence, Jared sighed, “I’d pick you.”



The following morning: - Day 3

Jensen woke up with a wide yawn, stretching languidly as he rolled over, expecting to throw his feet over the edge of the bed. All he got was a mouthful of leaves and dirt.

While he was swearing and spitting, he realized that Jared wasn’t curled in his arms anymore.

Suddenly wide-awake, he scrambled to his feet, eyes roaming the area frantically as he tried not to panic. His breathing began to shorten, his heart thumping frantically. *Jared’s missing. Jared’s missing. Jared’s missing. Jared’s...* a loud splash came from somewhere nearby and Jensen was moving.

As he shoved the bushes out of the way, he hardly dared to breathe. With one final, angry shove, he stumbled out of the undergrowth and onto the riverbank. What he saw next stole his breath for a completely different reason.

Jared was there, in the midst of the swiftly flowing, crystal clear water. Jared was there, Jared was fine, and Jared was naked.

He hadn’t noticed Jensen yet, due to there still being a few scatterings of bushes conveniently shielding him from sight. And Jensen couldn’t move.

The tanned muscles gleamed damply in the early morning light, shifting and tensing like some sort of choreographed dance; Jared’s firm chest stretched powerfully, his back strong and broad; and his long, muscled legs tensed against the current. The man looked like he’d been sculpted from marble, like those Greek gods of old; but Jensen knew how warm and comfortable it felt to be pressed up against him, how completely different he was to marble.

As Jensen’s eyes dropped down to Jared’s dick, a heated blush spread over his cheeks and down his neck, making his shirt seem suffocating and his pants feel too tight. Even limp, Jared’s dick was a thing of beauty, thick and long, something that would make whoever took it feel it for *days*.

Jensen dropped his gaze to the pebbled ground, feeling sleazy for perving over his best friend. But even though he hated himself for it, it didn’t make him any less aroused. Quickly checking that he was still completely out of sight, he trailed his fingers down to his pants, lightly fingering the zipper.

His dick throbbed and twitched, begging to be touched, and Jensen bit his lip at how *wrong* it was. Undoing his pants, he slipped his hand down to circle around his member, stifling a groan by biting the back of his other hand.

Eyes glued on his friend's gorgeous body, Jensen began to stroke himself, picturing what he wanted to do to that man, imagining his taste, his soft murmurs, his everything. Jared turned slightly, his hair catching in the sunlight, sending golden splatters of light across his face and making him look so innocent, so vulnerable.

Jensen came with a soft, muffled sound, squeezing his eyes shut as he stroked himself through one of his best orgasms ever. He felt pathetic and wrong for thinking about Jared like that. Jared was *Jared*, the best friend he'd ever had and someone who was as perfect as they come, inside and out; and here Jensen was sleazing over him. And even worse, Jensen was engaged, to a wonderful girl. He was *engaged* and he was perverting over his best friend.

Cleaning up as best he could with some leaves; Jensen backtracked and then stumbled out into the clearing as if for the first time.

He felt lower than dirt when Jared looked up, his eyes lightening instantly and a wide, dimpled smile spreading across his lips. Jensen knew he didn't deserve to be on the receiving end of that.

"Jen," Jared called, splashing over; no sense of modesty at all, "Jen, look! Come look over here."

Jensen shivered as Jared's strong, slender fingers slipped around his wrist and tugged him towards a nearby rock. Against Jensen's heated skin, Jared's hand was so cool and did wonders to calm him down.

"Look what I caught!" Jared grinned proudly, his eyes bright and reflecting glimmers of gold.

Momentarily distracted from his perverting, Jensen gasped, "No. Fucking. Way."

"Way!" Jared replied, grinning cheekily.

"Dude, how the hell did you manage to catch all of those?"

Jared shrugged, "After you took care of me yesterday, I figured it was my turn. So, I made this..." he held up a length of stick, the end sharpened to a fine point, "I got it sharp by scraping it against that rock. I didn't really think it would work, but it did."

After laughing happily at the thought of food, Jensen suddenly stopped. "Man, how the fuck are we gonna cook it? Are we gonna eat it as sushi?"

"You hate sushi."

"Not many options out here, Jay."

"Uhm..."

Jensen watched in interest as a flush stained Jared's cheeks. "Jay?"

"I could probably start a fire," Jared mumbled.

"What? How? And, *dude*, put some pants on!"

Jared looked up with an embarrassed grin, "Sorry, man. I kinda forgot for a bit there. I just washed my clothes; they're busy drying. You should probably do yours as well. Oh, and the fire, I'll show you now."

Gaping at his friend, Jensen shook his head, "Okay, G.I. Jane, what the fuck did you do to my Jared?"

Jared smirked, "Dude, that's the first time you've called me *your* Jared."

Fighting the oncoming blush, Jensen replied, "Fuck you, asshole."

Jared waggled his fingers, "You'd better be nice to me; else I won't be feeding you."

"Okay, I take it all back, you're awesome and all that, please feed me, oh, mighty Jared."

"Now, *that's* more like it! Come on, help me carry these." When Jared handed him the limp fish, Jensen couldn't keep the squeamish look off his face, and the younger man unfortunately noticed it. "Wuss."

"Shut up. Just because I'm not all *fear factor* like you are, doesn't mean I'm a *wuss*."

Jared just grinned.



Several minutes later:

"So... you make a... wait, *what?*" Jensen stared at his friend, "Jared, we need to make a *fire*. What the *hell* are you doing?"

"Just trust me on this," Jared muttered distractedly, too busy stripping the bark from a slender branch, "This'll be perfect."

Watching his friend apprehensively, Jensen decided to just give him the benefit of the doubt. On the ground before them was a piece of dry bark with a small notch in it. Around the notch, they'd scraped bits of dry chips and grass, and beside Jared was the short stick they were going to use to cause the friction spark to start the fire. Or at least that's what Jensen had thought, but Jared seemed to have other ideas.

Finally unable to contain it any longer, Jensen tried again, "Dude, why the hell are you making a bow?"

Jared grinned up from where he was stripping a long, thick piece of thread from his jacket. “You’ll see.”

After quickly tying the thread to each end of the bendy stick, Jared picked up the short stick and looped it in the bowstring once.

Then, taking another piece of dried bark and placing it over one end of the short stick, Jared nestled the short stick in the notch.

Now extremely curious, Jensen shifted forwards, wondering how the hell this was going to work.

Jared casually moved the bow back and forth, the movement causing the short stick (which was wrapped in the bow’s string) to spin rapidly in the notch.

“Holy *crap*,” Jensen swore softly, “That’s brilliant!” He moved closer to hold the short stick in place, allowing Jared to focus entirely on the bow.

In an amazingly short time later, smoke began to take shape and a few more plays from the bow later, and Jared was blowing on tiny red embers, egging them towards the dry kindling.

As the flames caught and grew, Jensen sat back on his haunches, staring at his friend. “Man, who the *fuck* are you, and where the hell has Jared gone off to?”

Jared just flushed and kept his gaze lowered to the fire, shifting more wood over the thriving tongues. “Let’s give it about fifteen minutes before we start cooking.”

“Come’re, let me check that big head of yours.”

Despite Jared putting on his best bitch face, Jensen wasn’t satisfied until he’d seen for himself that the small cut was healing well.



Around midday:

“Man, we are *awesome!*” Jensen murmured as he took in the structure before him.

Jared’s head peeked out from behind the leafy cover, “Don’t get too cocky, we’ll find out just how awesome this is when it starts raining.”

“Pffft,” Jensen waved his hand, “Schematics.”

They’d made the base slightly raised from the ground by laying sticks parallel to one another, with another layer perpendicular to that, forming some sort of deck. On top of this was a thick layer of leaves and soft shrubs.

And then, of course, came the roof. Leaning branches against one another, they’d managed to make a tent-like structure, and Jensen was feeling pretty damn proud of their creation.

“We fucking *rock*. Admit it!”

Jared burst out laughing, “Okay, okay, we are pretty awesome. But I’m just glad we don’t have to spend another night like last night. That was completely crappy.”

Falling silent, Jensen bit his lip at the fact that he’d quite enjoyed the previous night. Despite the fact that they’d been freezing and soaking wet, Jensen had been allowed to hold his best friend and that had made it one of the best nights in his life, and that was pretty pathetic.

“So, I say we try find some more food to keep us going for the rest of the day, then we can head back to the beach, I think we need to leave some marker or something to say that we’re here in case anyone shows up,” Jared continued.

Glancing over at his friend, Jensen squinted at him, “Dude. It’s freaking me out how comfortable you are with all this. How the hell are you so calm and organized when we’re stuck on a *freakin’* island in the middle of nowhere?”

Blushing, the younger man just ducked his head, “I... uhm... just... this is kinda fun... like...” when he sees the incredulous look on Jensen’s face he grins, “Oh, come on! Don’t tell me you never imagined being stuck on a deserted island when you were a kid?”

“Yeah... but... man...” Jensen gave up and just shook his head with a fond smile, “You’re absolutely insane.”

Bounding over, Jared threw his arms around the older man, earning a surprised gasp as he nearly lifted Jensen off the ground, “*And* I got my bestest friend in the whole wide world with me, what could be better?”

Jensen batted his friend away half-heartedly, while inside he was practically glowing, “Get off me, you giant freak.”

Laughing happily and completely undeterred, Jared just wrapped his fingers around Jensen’s wrist and dragged him off into the undergrowth, “Come on, I think I found some mangos when I was wandering around earlier.”

“Dude, just remember your name’s not Tarzan, okay? I don’t want to turn around only to see you swinging from trees with monkeys.”

Jared let out a full belly laugh, his grip tightening around Jensen’s wrist as he ducked under a branch, “Does that make you Jane?”

When Jensen tripped and nearly landed nose first on the ground, Jared turned quickly, causing the older man to crash into his chest instead. Straightening up with his face burning, Jensen shoved the man away, “Come on, asshole, I’m starving.”



That afternoon:

“Okay, so how’re we going to do this?” Jensen peered over the edge of the cliff and swallowed as he watched pebbles tumbling down to the bottom.

“Well,” Jared’s nose scrunched up in the way it always did when he was thinking hard. “We need to make a pile of sticks and grass and stuff that’ll burn really quickly. There’s no point lighting it now, but if we get it all set up so we can get it going quickly when we see a ship or plane, that’d be best.”

Jensen just stared at his friend.

“And we’ll have to shelter it so the rain doesn’t dampen it. The fire we got going this morning will be easy to feed for now; we just need to make sure it doesn’t go out. Then if we need to light a beacon, we can just carry some – oh, we’ll have to make a stick we can use to transport the fire when we need to. But we can do that later.”

Jensen just stared at his friend.

“I think, because you’re such a wuss, I’ll climb down to beach again, you can toss me branches and stuff, and I’ll make it.”

Jared turned around to glance at his friend and noticed for the first time that the older man was gaping at him. “What?” he asked, blushing and self-consciously rubbing the back of his neck.

“Nothing,” Jensen shook his head, then he punched his friend’s shoulder, “And that’s for calling me a wuss.”



“Okay, so you need to start looking for dry branches and grass, and toss them down to me. I’ll start looking for the best place to make it,” Jared called up from the beach.

It sounded easy. Find branches? Sure, just glance anywhere. Find *dry* branches? Not a chance. The place clearly got rainfall nearly every day, and *everything* was damp. When Jensen eventually managed to find a dead tree with a dried, crumbly interior, he tossed it down to Jared, and the younger man grinned like Christmas had come early. That had Jensen grinning back proudly.

Then he felt stupid, because it’s not like he was trying to *impress* Jared or anything. But it always felt nice to be on the receiving end of that dimpled smile. Anyway, Jensen returned to his scavenging for dry fuel with a red face, relieved that Jared couldn’t see it.

After he’d tossed down a whole heap, he lay flat on his stomach, peering over the edge as he watched Jared work. The younger man had removed his shirt and pants, walking around in only his boxers, and there was a faint sheen of sweat on his tanned skin, his muscled body gleaming in the sunlight.

Again, Jensen’s disobedient cock began to perk up at the sight of him, and he let out a low groan. He hated feeling like this about his best friend; his best friend who was completely oblivious to the fact that every time he simply *breathed*, Jensen had to fight not to get hard.

As Jensen shifted, his lower body slide over the ground and he had to bite down painfully hard on his lip to stop his whimper from escaping. But as Jared continued working, his back arching beautifully every time he bend down, his butt on display in the tight black boxers, Jensen couldn't stand it anymore.

Moving back from the cliff's edge, making sure he was out of sight in case Jared's looked up, Jensen slipped his hand into his pants, squeezing his eyes shut as he pictured the long, lean curve of Jared's back as the kid bent over, imagining how it would feel to trail his fingers down the firm muscles to grip at the slender hips, imagining the sounds the would escape his friend's lips as Jensen yanked down the boxers, displaying Jared's ass to the world.

He'd run his hands down the trembling thighs, spreading Jared's legs and moving up to press against him. Jared would gasp as he felt Jensen's erection, hard and straining, brushing against the crease of his perfect, tight ass. Jensen would reach around to tilt Jared's head towards him, pressing their lips together, Jared's gorgeous hazel eyes sparkling happily.

Jensen came so hard he bit his lip bloody to stifle his moan. Panting, he lay there, staring up at the perfect blue sky, wondering which circle of hell he was heading to for this.

"Jen?" called a voice from the beach, making him jump and wipe his hands frantically over the grass, yanking his pants back up.

Peeking his head over the edge and hoping he didn't look too guilty or flushed, he replied, "Yeah, Jay?"

Jared just grinned up at him, "No, nothing. Just checking that you're okay. Wouldn't want to be rescued and have to tell everyone I lost you to cannibals or something."

Despite himself, Jensen glanced behind him, checking for any visitors, "Nah, I think I'm good."

Continuing his work, Jared nodded, "Seriously though, we need to check the rest of the island, see if there are any inhabitants. I'd feel pretty stupid if we were right next door to a holiday resort or something."

"Yeah. Dude, if this isn't, then how the hell has it gone unnoticed for so long? This place is, like, better than Hawaii, I bet."

Shielding his eyes from the sun, Jared straightened up, his voice lower and more serious, "I'm kind of glad... that we haven't seen anyone else here... It... I know it sounds weird, but... this is like..." his voice went even quieter, "It's ours... you know?"

"Yeah," Jensen murmured back. He understood exactly what his friend meant, and to be honest, he felt the same way. The island felt like it was theirs, just Jared and him alone in the world. "Hey," he called, "Maybe when we get rescued and all that, we could come back here during our hiatus or something."

Jared broke out into a wide grin, his whole face glowing, and Jensen could've sworn he even *bounced*. "Seriously? Oh, man, yeah! But next time let's come with beer. And steak and a waterproof tent and more clothes and-"

“Jay,” Jensen burst out laughing, “I think you’re getting a bit ahead of yourself.”

Still glowing, Jared went back to work.

It wasn’t long before it was raining again. Jared barely managed to make it back up the cliff again before it started pouring. It was amazing how quickly the weather turned around, barely giving them any warning.

“Did you manage to put a sheltering layer over it?” Jensen asked as they made their way back to their shelter, not even bothering to run as they were already drenched to the bone.

Jared made a face, “Sort of. I managed to get some palm branches over the most essential parts, the larger logs are going to have to fend for themselves.”

“Man, how the hell’d it start raining so quickly? It was, like, blue sky and everything less than half an hour ago.”

“The climate’s like this I guess. More low pressure systems and therefore hotter weather and more rainfall.”

Jensen shoved his friend, “Dude, stop sounding so smart, you’re really freaking me out.”

Laughing, Jared just slung his arm around Jensen’s neck, tugging him to his side, “You think I’m just *awesome*.”

“You wish,” Jensen mumbled, his voice muffled against the dip of the other man’s shoulder, “Let me go, you giant ape.”

“No, you’re warm,” Jared replied, laughing down at Jensen’s indignant scowl.

Their clothes were plastered to them and their skin was icy, but from where Jensen was pressed against Jared’s bare torso, his skin tingled and burned. As he felt a rising blush beginning to spread, he ducked his head, gazing at the floor under the pretence of watching the ground for any obstacles.

Earlier on, they’d decided that they needed to wear shoes at all times. It was the jungle after all, and the last thing they wanted was to step on some poisonous creature and end up dead. Jared did look quite hilarious, wearing nothing but boxers and formal black shoes. But Jensen felt like kicking himself when he just thought it looked hot. He was hopeless when it came to his friend.

Jensen was at least wearing the black pants and the t-shirt he’d worn underneath his suit, so his shoes didn’t look so out of place. Then he wondered why he even cared, it was just Jared and him out here.



When they got back to the shelter and Jared began stripping off his boxers, Jensen nearly had a heart attack. Keeping his eyes averted, he shifted on the leafy mattress. He jumped when Jared’s hands came to tug at his tee, and his voice squeaked, “What... what’re you doing?”

“Dude, you’re soaked, you’re going to get a cold. You have to change.” Jared was now in his suit pants and soft tee, and he had Jensen’s jacket in his hand.

“Oh,” Jensen replied dumbly. Then he realized he was expected to do something, so he took his dry clothes from Jared and turned around, blushing furiously, to change.

When he turned back, it was to see Jared peering sadly out at what had been their fire. With a soft sigh, the younger man murmured, “We’ll have to start a new one tomorrow.

“Yeah,” Jensen replied, shifting and pulling some leaves over him. “At least this thing is waterproof; I really thought it’d be like last night.”

He shivered, regretting the fact that he’d been bashful during the day and had worn the pants. If he’d been smart like Jared, he wouldn’t have been lying there in only boxers and shirt.

Jared noticed and immediately frowned, tossing his blissfully dry jacket over Jensen’s legs.

“No, man; you need it,” Jensen protested weakly. Grinning mischievously, Jared shook his head and dove on Jensen, making all the air leave him in a whoosh. Groaning, he shoved at the man using his stomach as a teddy. “Dude, get off me. What the hell are you doing?”

“Using my awesome survival skills to keep us both from shriveling up and dying young: body heat is the best source of warmth. It’s a proven fact.”

Jensen was actually beginning to hyperventilate. This was Jared pressing him down. This was Jared, the man he’d jerked off to a few hours earlier. This was the man who he had a seriously fucking *huge* crush on. This was... warm.

The younger man shifted so he was lying beside him instead of on top of him, and wriggled around until they were both covered with leaves. After rubbing his nose playfully over Jensen’s collarbone, Jared grinned impishly up at his friend, “See? The best blanket in the world. Besides, now you get to say you had someone as hot as me in your bed. It’ll bring up your public standing like woah.”

It took all the effort in the world to scoff instead of moan, “Sure, Jay... you *wish*.”

Cautiously moving his hands, Jensen dared to slide them up to rest at Jared’s waist, holding the man back. Feeling the man’s defined muscles shifting beneath his fingertips, Jensen had to bite his lip to prevent any embarrassing sounds from escaping.

Jared just curled closer, causing Jensen’s hands to move up to rest at the small of the younger man’s back. “Night, Jens’n.”

“Night, Jay,” he managed to get out through gritted teeth.

He lay awake for what seemed like hours, just *feeling*. Every soft puff of air that grazed against his neck sent tingles racing through him. Jared’s every shift and every sound seemed magnified in the darkness, the only other sound being the soft patter of the rain outside. Jensen’s senses were on hyper-alert, taking in the warm, strong scent of his friend and

branding it to his memory, memorizing the way the rise and fall of Jared's chest against his seemed synchronized, wondering at how perfectly they fit.

When he finally fell asleep, it was with his nose buried in Jared's soft hair and his hands clutching the man as close as he dared.



Soft hands shook him awake and he squinted up, trying to see something in the darkness. "Jay?" he sat up, nose colliding with a warm cheek and making them both start.

"Ouch! Yeah, Jens; it's me... come on, I want to show you something."

"Dude," Jensen scrubbed a hand over his face, "It's, like, the middle of the night." But he obediently crawled after Jared to the opening of their shelter, fumbling for his shoes and after shaking them thoroughly (to avoid any unwanted surprises) he slipped them on.

Now out in the open, he could vaguely make out Jared's form in the starlight. "What is it?"

Wrapping his fingers around Jensen's wrist and dragging him, Jared just laughed softly, "Come on..."

Jensen opened his mouth; about to demand a better explanation as to why he was being dragged out of bed by the madman, suddenly fell silent with a sharp intake of breath.

Feeling the warmth of his best friend beside him, Jensen just gaped at the sight before him.

"Holy crap..." he managed to breathe after a few moments.

The moon was up. And it was huge; hanging low on the horizon, illuminating a streak across the ocean, right up to them, as if it was mapping the pathway to... dare he say it... to heaven.

A soft, warm laugh came from beside him, and he turned towards Jared, "Dude, this is amazing."

"Yeah... I just came out to pee, but then I saw this and had to wake you."

Lowering themselves to sit on the ground, wrapping their arms around their knees, they just gazed out at the miles of openness, the miles of glistening ocean. Jensen had never seen anything as beautiful... besides the thing sitting beside him... he flushed just at the corny thought.

Glancing sideways at his friend, Jensen's breath caught and he decided for sure that the sight of Jared lit up in the moonlight was *the* best thing he'd ever seen, no competition at all; lameness aside. Biting his lip, he dropped his gaze to the sea below them.

"What's the matter," a soft voice whispered, making him jump.

"Nothing, man... Just... not sure if I'll *want* to leave here if the time ever comes."

Jared knocked their shoulders together with a small smile, “Wait till we’ve been eating nothing but fruit and fish for a while. Then you’ll be thinking differently.”

Doubting it, Jensen just nodded. How could he admit that just being with Jared all the time was so worth eating only fish and fruit?



Day 10:

It only took them a week to find themselves falling into routine. Every morning, they would head to the river for a bath, washing their clothes as well and hanging the items on a nearby tree.

Then they’d go scrounging for breakfast, sometimes roots, nuts and berries, other times fish and coconut, but always fruit. It seemed there was an abundance of it around the forest.

Jared had surprised Jensen yet again when he’d quickly determined which berries they could eat. At first Jensen had been hesitant, but after Jared had happily munched a whole handful without dying, he decided it had to be safe. And if it wasn’t, well, rather they both die than Jensen being stuck here alone.

They spent a lot of time exploring the island, and had yet to find anything other than a whole bunch of monkeys that had shrieked and tossed things at them. It seemed as though the island was one of the last unpopulated areas in the world and they both admitted to being slightly pleased at the fact.

Despite this, they still kept watch over the horizon, knowing that that was where their potential rescuers would be coming from.



Day 22:

Something was bugging Jensen. Jared just knew what to do all the time. He’d made them a spear with a point made from a sharpened stone, he was the one who got the fires going, he was the one who knew which plants and animals they could eat, he was the one that basically kept them alive, and Jensen wanted to know why.

He caught Jared as he was climbing up a wild fig tree, and grinned as his friend showed off by leaping from the branch to land on the ground with a thump.

“I see you’ve regressed a few evolutions,” Jensen teased, his eyes sparkling.

Jared just laughed happily, “You’re just jealous of my skills. You should just admit and save yourself all this sarcasm. It can’t be good for your blood pressure.”

Snorting, Jensen shook his head, “Seriously, though... how the hell do you know all this survival crap? I mean...” he found himself blushing at the next whiny statement, “You never told me you were a scout...”

A few stunned moments later, Jared broke out into one of his widest grins, then he burst out laughing so hard he had to steady himself on Jensen’s shoulder.

“Oh... man...” Jared puffed. “Dude...I wasn’t ever a scout, that’s my kid sister you’re thinking of, man...”

“Then what?” Jensen asked, wrinkling up his nose.

“Uhm...” Jared fell silent, a deep flush rising on his cheeks, making Jensen even more curious.

“Spit,” Jensen ordered.

“Imitehavamancrushnbeargrils....” Jared mumbled.

“Come again?”

Jared sighed and shoved his friend, “Okay, fine.... I might *maybe* possibly have a man-crush on Bear Grylls....”

Jensen’s eyes widened and he gaped at his friend.

Going even redder, Jared shrugged, “What? I mean, he’s *so* awesome and he knows everything and... he’s...all his stuff works... he’s just so awesome.”

“Uhm...” Jensen didn’t really know what to say. “Remind me to send him a thank you note. I’ll sign ‘Love and kisses, from Jared’, shall I?”

Jared scowled and pouted, which only made the older man laugh even harder.

“Ass.... See if I keep you alive any longer...”

Then Jensen had a thought that caused jealousy to curl bitterly in the pit of his stomach, “Wait... so... you like him? Like, *like* him?”

Jared made a face, “He’s hot an all, but he’s married....”

And now Jensen was in shock, “You think he’s hot? Since when have you been into men?”

“I...” Jared went crimson, “I’m not into guys... I just... I have *eyes*, okay? Besides, you’ve always known I’m open about things like that.”

And Jensen decided that right then would be a good time to sit down before he fell down.

“Wait... you’ve never been with a guy before, have you?” Jensen glanced sharply over at the younger man.

Jared spluttered, “Wha... what? No... no way, man... You’d be the first to know if I ever...”

There were too many ways for Jensen to interpret that, so he decided not to try.

“I...” Jared came to join him on the floor, “I swear, man. I don’t like Bear Grylls like that... I don’t like any other guy like that....”

Vaguely, Jensen wondered why Jared had included the ‘other’ in that sentence, but he put it out of his mind.



Day 34:

He found Jared stretched out over the soft grass at the top of the cliff, his skin even more tanned than it used to be, now a dark golden-bronze color. Jared’s eyes were closed, his face relaxed and carefree in the sunlight. A random smudge of dirt across the kid’s cheek made Jensen feel like melting, but mostly it was the way Jared’s lips formed a gentle smile as, without opening his eyes, the man murmured, “Hey, Jens...”

“Hey...”

Hazel eyes blinked open to gaze up at the older man, and Jensen felt his chest glowing at the warmth in those orbs. When Jared’s hand reached out, it wasn’t even a conscious decision for Jensen to take it, but he did. A split second later, he found himself stretched out on the ground, his head using Jared’s bare abdomen as his pillow.

Breathing out softly, Jensen decided, for once, he could allow himself this. Closing his eyes, he relaxed, resting his cheek against Jared’s warm skin.

Gentle fingers ran through his hair and a concerned voice asked, “You okay?”

Burying his face against his friend’s chest, Jensen mumbled a soft, “Just... I dunno...”

The warm hands slid down to rest at Jensen’s waist, pulling him closer to the younger man, “Yeah... I know what you mean,” Jared whispered softly.

And it was strange, even though Jensen had no idea why he was feeling like this, Jared just automatically understood that what he needed was this gentleness, it was one of the infinite things that made him love the man.

“Do you miss home?” Jensen asked quietly.

The man was silent for a long while, his fingers tracing soothing patterns on Jensen’s back. Then he finally broke the silence, “No... I mean... I know it sounds weird... but... I... I ...” the arms tighten around Jensen, “it’s so fucking weird, man ... I mean, when I was filming up in ‘Jersey, I was so fucking homesick, you wouldn’t believe... but now... I’m really not.” Jared laughed softly.

Jensen remembered that time; he had been so depressed it was embarrassing. “Yeah...”

“I do miss my pups though... like crazy... They’re gonna kill me...”

The worry was evident in Jared’s voice, and Jensen instinctively pressed closer. “They’re okay, man. Probably driving the dog sitter insane.”

“Yeah...” Then something changed in Jared’s posture, his voice sounding strange as he murmured, “Danneel’s probably worried sick about you...”

Jensen shook his head, not wanting to think of the fiancé he had waiting for him at home, “Jared... I...”

Before Jensen could finish, the younger man was already standing up, his hands gently easing Jensen off him. “Come on, we should try check out the north-western corner of the island. We didn’t manage to search it properly yet...”

“Jay...” Jensen’s calls were met only by Jared’s retreating back.



Day 45:

Jensen was swimming in the river when Jared sloshed over, “Hey, man. I’m just going to head down to the beach, check that everything’s still fine with the fire.”

“Cool,” Jensen nodded, diving under again.

A couple of hours later, when Jared still hadn’t returned, Jensen was beginning to get worried. And he was pissed that it was probably just because Jared had gotten distracted by another ‘cute, little crab’ like last time.

He grumbled all along the track they’d made heading towards the cliff, kicking angrily at loose pebbles.

But when he reached the end, he stopped dead at the sight before him. Jared was lying there, treacherously close to the sheer drop, blood seeping from his side, fingers slicked red and his eyes shut. It was only the rapidly rising and falling chest that let Jensen know his friend was alive.

Letting out a stifled gasp, he rushed forwards, gripping beneath the man’s arms and moving the kid away from the edge, before quickly surveying the damage. He yanked off his own shirt and desperately tried to stem the flow of blood. At the touch, Jared’s pained eyes flickered open.

A weak smile graced the kid’s lips and he murmured, “Don’t worry.... Jen.... ‘m... fine....”

Choking on a sob at how his injured friend was trying to comfort *him*, Jensen carefully ran his fingers over Jared’s body, searching for any breaks and trying to reassure himself that Jared was still with him.

The injured man laughed hoarsely, “Coppin’... a feel... hey, Jen?”

Flushing, Jensen ignored him. “What the fuck... What the fuck happened, Jare?”

“The... the rain... side of cliff broke off.... Fell... fell down...”

Jensen’s frown deepened, and his hands pausing in their frantic ‘Jared-molesting’, “Wait... what? But... you’re up here?”

Laughing and wincing at the same time, Jared reached a shaky hand out, squeezing Jensen’s shoulder. “Didn’t... didn’t want you getting hurt to... to climb down to me...”

“You *climbed* all the way up... up a crumbling cliff-face, with a bleeding side, just to make sure I didn’t get hurt coming to help you?” Jensen’s heart felt like it was about to thud out of his chest and his teeth clenched and unclenched in a mixture of anger and love – mainly love.

“Yeah...”

“You fucking moron,” Jensen gritted out, carefully pulling Jared up into his arms and burying his face in the younger man’s shoulder to hide his tear-filled eyes.

As he shakily breathed in the familiar, soothing scent of his friend, he felt warm fingers sliding up and down his sides, comforting him.

“You’re an idiot,” Jensen muttered, “You’re such a fucking idiot... Are you hurt anywhere else?”

Jared’s eyes were closed, his voice hoarse, as he murmured, “No, just tired.”

Snapping himself out of it, Jensen quickly forced his own fears away. Deciding it best to move Jared back to their shelter before it got dark, he carefully slid his hand under Jared’s torso and his other under Jared’s knees, hoisting him up against Jensen’s chest, wincing at the kid’s weak groan. Then, he shifted his grip under Jared’s thighs, holding him as close as possible and smiling faintly when Jared instantly tried to make it easier by wrapping his arms around Jensen’s neck.

“You... you wife-carryin’ me, Jen?” Jared mumbled beside the older man’s ear.

Beginning to walk slowly, Jensen tried not to cry at how fragile his friend sounded. “You’re not the only one who used your gym, buddy.”

Jared just laughed softly, his fingers brushing lightly through Jensen’s hair. “When’s... when’s the wedding?”

When the shelter came into view, Jensen’s knees nearly buckled with relief. After carefully laying his friend down, cushioning his head and shoulders with the nearby pair of trousers, Jensen carefully peeled back his shirt from Jared’s side, wincing as it came off soaked through.

With every bitten off whimper his friend made, Jensen felt a step closer to falling apart. As tears filled the young hazel eyes; tears filled his own. As Jared reached up to grip at Jensen's shoulder; it was all Jensen could do not to bury himself in his friend's arms.

"I'm just checking for any dirt, 'kay, Jare?"

A small, painful smile graced Jared's lips and he looked straight up into Jensen's eyes, "Trust you, Jen... Trust you so much..."

Even though he felt close to tears, Jensen still managed to nudge his friend and press him down flat, "Shhh, no talking..."

Once he'd removed the tiny little grains of dirt from the laceration as best he could, Jensen grabbed his shirt once again, quickly tearing a long, thick strip from the fraying hem. After lifting Jared to wrap it carefully around the younger man's torso and tying it off, Jensen sat back to check how his friend was doing.

Jared was breathing heavily, his face twisted in pain; eyes squeezed tightly shut. Grabbing one of their half coconut shells, Jensen knelt beside his friend, stroking his shaking fingers along Jared's sweat-slick cheek, "I'm just going to get you some water, okay?"

Jared's hand reached out to grab the older man's wrist, but then he relaxed and let go, "'kay... don't... don't be long..."

Jensen ran the whole way there, but forced himself to slow down on the way back so he didn't spill.

Tilting Jared's head up slightly, he helped the kid drink a few sips, thumbing away the escaping droplets. He didn't realize that he'd been sitting there motionless, staring at his friend with his hand against Jared's cheek, for the past five minutes; until soft fingers brushed down his arm and Jared tugged him down to lay on the side opposite the wound.

With his nose buried in the dip of Jared's shoulder, Jensen felt sure he should move. But he couldn't bring himself to leave the warm arms. He could feel the rise and fall of Jared's chest against his own, could feel the soft whisper of air against the side of his head as Jared breathed, he shifted his fingers and could feel the steady thumping of his friend's heart. He could feel all the signs that Jared was alive.

He shifted his fingers to press lightly over the already soaked bandage, wincing at Jared's soft hiss of breath. "Don't you fucking do this to me," Jensen whispered softly, tilting his head so his nose pressed against Jared's neck. "Don't you..."

It was just like when they'd first arrived on the island and Jensen had been alone with an unconscious Jared before him. A shiver raced through him, making Jared pull him closer. "I'm sorry," Jared mumbled, his lips gentle against Jensen's forehead, "Hate makin' you cry..."

"I'm not crying..." Jensen choked out in a half-hearted laugh, hiding his face further under his friend's chin.



Day 47:

Jared's skin burned and sweat trickled like he was in a furnace. He kept mumbling inaudible things, his head tossing from side to side uncontrollably.

Jensen didn't know what to do. He'd done a first aid course, sure. But that didn't mean a thing in the real world. Not really. He was absolutely terrified of doing something wrong – doing something that could make this worse. His time was spent running back and forth, dampening cloths at the river as he desperately tried to break the fever that had taken Jared. Any spare moments were spent trying not to break down.

Peeling back the makeshift bandage revealed the angry wound, yellowish and swollen. Jared whimpered and moaned beneath his touch, making Jensen have to bite down painfully on his lip to keep control over himself; to make sure he didn't just break down.

The worst was when Jared was conscious enough to talk, murmuring Jensen's name, whispering how much it hurt, asking him to stop the pain. Jensen couldn't do that. He'd give *anything* to have painkillers or something to help his friend, but he couldn't.

He made Jared drink and tried to get him to eat some banana, but nothing seemed to work.

Despite the heat that was pooling off him, Jared was constantly shivering like crazy. His hands clutched at Jensen, begging him, "Je...Jen... ple...please... so... so... co...cold..." and all Jensen could do was curl around his friend, holding him as close as was possible without hurting the wound.



Day 49:

The fever lasted two more days. By the time it broke, they were both utterly exhausted. As Jared sagged back to the ground after a final shudder, Jensen allowed himself to breathe for the first time since it began.

Jared was through the worst of it. The wound was still puffy and swollen, but the bleeding had ceased and the surrounding skin was no longer that angry yellow color.

When Jared ate the pieces of fruit without complaint, Jensen nearly cheered. Well, he would have, had he not been torn between laughing hysterically and crying hysterically, so he decided to hide his face against Jared's shoulder instead, refusing to come out despite Jared's attempts.

"I don't... I don't know what I'd do without you, Jay," he choked, his face heating up at the confession.

But Jared didn't laugh. He simply pressed Jensen closer. "You too."



Day 53:

It was like they'd finally realized that this was actually real. It wasn't just fun and games, like in storybooks. It was their lives at stake. Out here, one injury could easily escalate with infection. They both knew Jared had dodged a bullet.

He slowly regained his strength, favoring his side and frequently getting annoyed with his own limitations. Jensen often had to intervene, keeping Jared from trying anything too crazy or strenuous. He could tell it frustrated the man, but it warmed him to know the frustration was never directed at *him*.

Something had changed between them. As if a barrier neither had known was there had crumbled away. Jensen found himself constantly reaching out to touch the younger man, needing to know he was really there, and Jared, in turn, allowed the contact. He seemed to know how much Jensen needed it.

And at night, Jensen would fold himself around the kid, holding him close, fingers splayed over Jared's heart.

Jared didn't mind. He needed Jensen just as much.



Day 65:

"Jensen..." Jared's soft voice broke the silence, making him reach out to slide his fingers over the younger man's face.

"Yeah?"

Jensen's fingers traced the words on Jared's lips, feeling the tickle of the man's fuzz of beard, as he whispered, "Do you think everyone else thinks we're dead?"

Gently thumbing the dip where Jared's dimples were hiding, Jensen replied, "It's only been about two months, Jare..."

Huffing a soft laugh, Jared's hand playfully ruffled the older man's hair. He left his fingers there, threading through the lengthening strands, his arm curled around Jensen's head. "Yeah, I know... but, it just... What if our families, our friends... all of them... What if... they..."

Jensen slid his arm under Jared's neck, hooking his fingers around the younger man's shoulder, "They won't, Jare... it doesn't matter how long it takes... they won't give up on us..."

Breathing out shakily, Jared tilted his head down towards his friend, putting their faces barely inches apart. Jensen hardly dared to breathe. His left palm was still cradling the side of Jared's face and, as he somehow had the guts to brush his thumb down the younger man's cheek again, Jared's eyes slid shut and he leaned into the touch.

"I would be dead without you..." Jared murmured softly.

Jensen's breath hitched and his fingers tightened, "Don't say that."

"It's true..." the younger man whispered. "And you would've been safe on the ship with everybody else if it hadn't been for me... Why did you jump after me?"

"It wasn't *you*, it was the iPod," Jensen protested weakly.

At Jared's pointed silence, he let out a sigh, "How could I not, Jared? The moment I saw you go over... I just... nothing else mattered... I knew that if I lost you, I'd never be okay again..."

After a long pause, Jared asked quietly, "Do you think Sam and Dean are possessing us for ending the show?"

"Why?"

Soft lips brushed over Jensen's forehead and the younger man breathed, "Because it isn't natural how much I love you."

Jensen inhaled sharply and looked up, locking eyes with Jared's. "What do you...?"

Time seemed to freeze as they gazed at one another in the dim light. Swaying forward slowly, Jensen let out a soft breath. The younger man's lips parted slightly, snagging his attention, making him lean even closer.

Just as their lips were about to touch, Jared looked away, breaking the spell and nearly making Jensen curse.

"I'm sure Danneel's worried sick about you.... I would be..." Jared whispered quietly, staring up at the ceiling of their structure.

Dropping his head back against Jared's shoulder, Jensen desperately tried to regain control over himself. He was achingly hard, grateful for the fact that he was in his pants tonight and hoping desperately that Jared couldn't feel it.



He'd never thought it possible for Jared to like him the same way. The kid had always been an untouchable obsession. Never *meant* to be his.

But things had changed, leaving Jensen off kilter, wondering what the hell he's supposed to do now.

After wanting for so long, Jensen couldn't believe his feelings were requited.

And, God, did Jensen want him.



Day 71:

The worst part of it was that Jared now kept himself distanced from Jensen. His touches were limited to those strictly necessary, his eyes always shifting away in case they lingered too long.

Jensen hated it so much he felt he'd cut his own arm off just so they could go back.

It was about a week after the almost kiss when they were really friends again.

Jared was swimming in boxers when Jensen joined him, splashing water at the younger man. Faking indignation, Jared splashed him back.

A few moments they were laughing and chasing each other. As Jared raced up the shore, Jensen was quick to follow, grinning as Jared defended himself with his shirt.

Grabbing the cloth, Jensen tried to tug it from his friend's grasp, but Jared just held on. Their tug of war escalated, until finally Jensen gave a great heave, yanking Jared right into him, making them both gasp. Automatically his hands came out to catch the younger man, fingers sliding across damp skin, their lips only a breath apart; they both froze.

Cautiously sliding his fingers up Jared's side, Jensen smiled as the kid shivered, both unable to pull apart. Reaching up to cradle Jared's face, the older man pulled him closer, closing the distance between them and pressing his lips against the kid's smooth ones, tasting the delicious coolness and moving even closer as Jared's lips parted in a gasp.

It was such a sweet, tentative kiss, just the brushing of lips and tickling of beards, nothing more. And yet, it was the best thing Jensen had ever experienced. Curling closer, he slid his fingers back through Jared's messy, tangle of hair, brushing it from his face and deepening the kiss.

But then, with a soft, choked-off sound, Jared pushed him away, eyes still closed and lips parted slightly. "We can't do this," Jared whispered desperately.

Jensen tried to pull him back, skimming his fingers across the defined features of Jared's face. "Why not?"

Shaking his head and laughing unsteadily, Jared stepped back and out of the older man's arms. "I'm not going to be the reason you cheat on your fiancé."

Jensen flinched.

The conversation or whatever that had been was over.



Jensen was so angry. He didn't even know exactly what he was mad *at*, just that he was *mad*. He hadn't even bothered to tell Jared where he was going; he'd just needed to get away.

Storming through the forest, Jensen didn't even care to notice that his already ragged shirt was being shredded to tatters. He didn't care about the scratches or the branches hitting him in the face. He just needed time.

When he calmed down enough to realize that he'd not only snapped at Jared, he'd also shoved him away when the younger man had tried to stop him from leaving. The hurt shock on Jared's face as he'd peered up at Jensen from the ground was enough to have him sagging to the grass and hating himself even more.

He had no right to treat Jared like that. Jared was being the better man. And here Jensen was expecting the kid to become the 'other woman'. How the fuck could he expect *Jared*, the most amazing person in the world, to be a dirty little secret, a sordid affair due 'only to the fact that two hot-blooded males were stranded on an island together'?

How could he be so selfish?

But Jensen just needed the man so badly. He knew it wasn't just because of this cursed island. He knew he'd wanted Jared long before that; he'd just been too cowardly to fess up. He'd never told Danneel the truth, his fear had even pushed him to propose, and now he was paying for it.

It was just so unfair, after all of this, everything they've been through together, Jensen's still not allowed to have everything of Jared.

Tucking his knees up against his chest and hugging them, he buried his face in his arms, searching for an answer.



About an hour later, warm hands slid down his back and around his waist. An equally warm body slipped down to sit behind him, bracketing him between long, bare legs. Once Jared had his arms firmly around him, Jensen found himself melting back against the solid chest.

"I'm sorry," he breathed, wrapping his fingers around Jared's wrist and pressing it to his stomach.

"'s okay... I get it..."

"Do you?"

Jared's hand pulled free of his and slid up to cradle his face, tilting it around and brushing their lips together. The man whispered softly, "Yes... I do..."

Jensen moved quickly, twisting around in Jared's arms and pushing the man to lie back, crawling up to straddle his thighs. Peering down at the young, innocent, wide-eyed man beneath him, he felt the familiar surge of protectiveness and he cupped Jared's face firmly in his hands. "You know how much I... how much I care for you?" Soft fingers brushed over the skin at his sides, and he took a deep breath before continuing, "I'd give *anything* to be able to call you mine."

Jared's eyes slid shut and he bit his lip. But he didn't pull away.

"I know..." Jensen murmured, stroking his fingers over the man's gorgeous features, smiling at the brown, tickling beard, and brushing the chestnut bangs from his eyes, "I know this isn't

fair. To you... to Danneel...; but... I just... I can't keep lying to myself... I'm sorry, Jared..."

As Jared pressed his palms flat against Jensen's sides, the younger man's eyes opened slowly, swirling with confusion and fear.

Brushing his fingers lightly down Jared's neck and curling a fist over his shoulder, Jensen pleaded softly, "Just... let me...please..."

"Okay... okay..." Jared choked out, leaning up towards him.

As their lips met, a pathetically desperate sound escaped Jensen's lips and he slid his fingers up to press at Jared's bare shoulders, holding him in place, so terrified of the kid changing his mind. But Jared just pulled him closer, hands fisting tightly in Jensen's ripped shirt.

"Jen..." he whispered brokenly. "Jens..."

"Shhh," Jensen murmured, brushing the fear from his best friend's face and deepening the kiss, moaning in approval as the kid's lips finally parted, surrendering to him; allowing him to plunge into Jared's warmth.

Needing more, Jensen's hands began roaming the man's toned form, fingers skimming over the pure perfection as he tried to learn Jared's body. When he ground down slightly, letting the younger man know how aroused he was, Jared's head turned to the side and the kid gasped, "Jen... I... I've never..." he cut off with a choked sound as Jensen's fingers swept across his forehead, brushing the hair out of his eyes.

"You trust me, Jare?" the older man murmured softly against Jared's cheek, his lips lightly skimming over the soft beard.

Delicate eyelashes fluttered closed and Jared nodded, his muscles relaxing and making it possible for Jensen's body to press even closer. "You know I do," Jared whispered. "But so does Dan-"

Jensen swooped down to silence the man, swallowing up his protests in a heated kiss. A low moan escaped Jared as his lip was sucked into the older man's mouth and nibbled softly. "Fuck, Jensen... Fuck..." The kid heaved in a shaky breath, "We... we should stop... ungh..." again his eyes squeezed closed and he turned to the side, "Stop, Jensen... please..."

Undeterred, Jensen merely followed the man, pressing up against his back and wrapping him tightly in his arms. "It's okay, Jared," he brushed his lips over the delicate skin at Jared's neck, "It's okay."

Jared shook his head, hair flopping around as he started struggling to pull away. "It's not okay, Jens. I... fuck... I thought it would be... but... but it's not... It's never gonna be okay..."

"Jay..." Jensen choked out weakly, his arms remaining firmly locked around the man. "What do you... you said ... but I thought ... You don't want this?"

And the bitter laugh that escaped his friend's lips is one Jensen never *ever* wants to hear again. Firm hands began untangling Jared from Jensen's arms and a few seconds later Jared pulled away, his eyes downcast.

"That's the problem, Jen.... I've never wanted anything more... But... you and me... when we get back to the real world... where will I be then, Jensen?" Tormented hazel eyes slid up to meet Jensen's. "You remember how torn up I was after Sandy... I won't..." the man ran a hand roughly through his hair and turned away. "I *can't* go through that again. Not even... *especially* not with you.... You're my best friend, man...."

And then Jared was gone, the bushes swaying slightly in his wake.



Day 80:

Things were awkward and strained after that. Their eyes danced around each other and their conversations were barely more than monosyllabic on both their parts. Jensen was hurting. His chest felt like it was about to break open and all his insides were about to spew out. But he knew Jared was hurting just as badly, if not worse.

It was a lose-lose situation and Jensen wished he'd never brought this about. Only he couldn't regret it: the faded memories of Jared's silky skin and how it felt to be able to trace all the contours of the man's defined body were there every time Jensen let his guard slip. When he closed his eyes, all he could see was the beautiful sight of Jared laid out beneath him, the man's gorgeous face open with vulnerable arousal. Often, Jensen would find himself staring at the Adonis, unable to believe he was real. And then Jared would glance back up and the same desperate desire would be mirrored there.

It should have been so simple. They both wanted it; they both cared deeply for each other. But Jensen couldn't bring himself to promise anything he couldn't guarantee. He remembered with awful clarity how terrible the post-Sandy months had been; how distraught and broken his best friend had been. How wrecked *Jensen* had felt just to be unable to stop his friend from hurting.

The thought of doing that to the kid, making him go through that pain again, it kept Jensen awake right through to the early hours of the morning. During this time, Jensen stared through the darkness at Jared's barely visible form, all the way at the opposite end of the shelter, no longer curled safely in his arms.

He missed his friend in a way he'd never missed anyone before.

And the worst part was that Jensen himself was the only one who could end both their suffering. He could promise Jared the world and in return the man would give him his whole being. To Jensen it sounded so easy, so obvious what his choice was, but for some reason he couldn't bring himself to utter the words.

He was a coward and he knew it.

He jabbed a jagged rock brutally at a piece of fish, trying to cut it into edible pieces. His eyes cut towards the distant image appearing on the horizon and his chest warmed slightly at the thought that Jared was nearly home.

Then he stopped.

Home.

Raising the rock again and smashing down fiercely, he let out a sharp yell of pain as his finger got in the way, crushed between the rock and the boulder. "Fuck!" he cursed, yanking his hand back and staring at the throbbing thumb.

Heavy footfalls had his head jolting up and he realized Jared was right beside him, the man already reaching out for the injured digit. "Clumsy bugger," Jared murmured without heat, his forehead creased in concentration as he carefully examined the finger, prodding and poking it until he gave a satisfied nod, "It'll heal in a coupl'a days, tops. What were you trying to do?"

Scowling at the mangled food responsible for it all, Jensen grumbled, "Cut a piece of fish."

Jared didn't look up as he silently tore a piece of material from his already ragged shirt and gently wrapped it around the older man's finger. After nimbly tying a tiny knot, he pressed the hand to Jensen's chest and breathed quietly, "There you go; good as new."

"Thanks," Jensen replied: his voice husky and clogged, a light blush spread across his cheeks. As Jared turned away, panic surged inside of the older man and his uninjured hand darted out to grab his friend. "Jay... can we... can we talk?"

Jared's shoulders tensed up, but he slowly turned around, his eyes locking with Jensen's properly for the first time since the ordeal. "About what?" the man bit out evenly.

"Don't do that, man."

Some of the fight seeped out of Jared and his shoulders drooped. "Okay, Jensen."

When they were both settled on the comfortable grassy mounds, Jensen broke the uneasy silence. "I really want you, Jared."

The man's gaze remained fixed on the distant horizon. "I know."

"And... and I think you want me too... unless that was a sword poking me the other day?" Jensen chuckled weakly.

His expression unchanged, Jared just murmured back, "Yeah, I do."

Letting out a breath he hadn't known he was holding, Jensen nudged his friend's shoulder, steeling himself for the biggest and, most likely, *easiest* decision of his life. "I want you more than just for sex, Jare. It's not because of being stranded on this island or trauma or anything else like that. I *really* like you. And..." he reached out cautiously and brushed the back of his

hand down Jared's cheek, "And I really want our house to always be *our home* and... and maybe one day your pups will be *our pups* and... I just want you, Jared... in every way..."

"What..." Jared swallowed and his gaze dropped to his lap, bangs falling into his face. "What about Danneel? Our parents? Everyone? Do you... you want us to lie to them?" It was painfully clear how much the thought of deceiving everyone was weighing heavily on the younger man and Jensen's heart twinged.

Taking Jared's hand in his, he shook his head, "No. I don't want us to be a dirty little secret. I'd never do that to you. Danneel... I'll tell her the truth... tell her how much you... you mean to me and that... I... how much I care for you... And we tell our parents, friends, everyone who matters... and the rest... we decide in time... But, we do it all together... That's what I want, Jare... I promise-"

Jared sounded completely wrecked when he murmured softly, "Don't promise... Please... don't..."

"Okay, Jay..." the older man whispered, pulling the man closer. His fingers slid up the delicate curve of Jared's throat, tracing through his beard and over his lips. "But, I mean it all. Every word. Just, trust me. Please?"

Swirling hazel eyes latched onto his, searching for something. Jensen steadily held the gaze, hoping everything he felt for this kid was showing in his eyes.

Finally Jared's lips quirked into a smile and, taking that as some form of permission, Jensen leant forwards, brushing his lips lightly over his friend's.

When the kid just ducked his head, a soft blush staining his cheeks, Jensen nearly melted. This was Jared, his best friend, the man Jensen respected and admired, and yet, here he was, basically a blushing virgin. It made Jensen's chest tighten with the need to mark and claim and shield and protect, all of which were ridiculous, especially his protective urge, considering the fact that Jared could take perfectly good care of himself.

But that didn't change a thing. Carefully pulling the man into his arms, Jensen sealed their lips together, smiling into the kiss at how Jared just *let* himself be manhandled. He gently sucked Jared's bottom lip into his mouth, tugging at it with his teeth and eliciting a small moan from the man.

"You're so fucking perfect, Jay..." he found himself murmuring into the kid's ear. "You have no fucking *idea* what I want to do with you... to you..."

A shudder passed through Jared and his eyes fluttered closed.

Jensen nipped at the skin of his friend's throat, soothing the burn with a soft kiss before growling throatily, "God, I've wanted you for so long... thought of this, Jay... Thought of *you*. Every," he rolled his arousal against the man's hip, "fucking," another thrust, "time."

"Jen," Jared groans, hiding his burning face in the dip of Jensen's shoulder. "'m not a fuckin' girl..."

Smirking against Jared's forehead, Jensen decided not to reply to that. Instead he moved forwards, stretching Jared's lean form across the ground and plastering himself atop him.

Licking his way into Jared's mouth, Jensen moaned at the warmth and delicious flavor he found within. His tongue flicked back and forth, fighting for control against the other man's. Jared's hands fluttered against his chest, skimming over his abdomen and shoulders before sliding around his neck, pulling him closer.

Jensen stole a whine of protest from the kid when he pulled back, but appeased Jared by slipping his shirt off. A raised eyebrow in question had Jared nodding and raising his arms, allowing the older man to strip him. And then it was skin against skin. Jared's muscles gleamed a golden chestnut color and, not for the first time, Jensen's mouth dried out at the sight. Unable to stop himself ogling the kid, Jensen began tracing his fingers over him, learning his body and committing it to memory.

A tiny giggle bubbled from the man's lips, and he began squirming under Jensen's ministrations. "No fair!" he pouted, his legs wrapping around the older man's waist and yanking him down. Taken by surprise, Jensen ended up sprawled across him, nose pressed to the man's collarbone. Inhaling deeply, Jensen caught the soothingly familiar scent and broke out into a grin.

"What do you want to do to me?" Jared whispered, biting his lips in an embarrassed grin.

Before Jensen replied, he slid his fingers down to hook in the waistband of Jared's boxers, making the man jump slightly. Then, slowly inching them down, Jensen murmured gently, "I want to make you feel things you've never even imagined... I want to be your first.... I want to feel what it's like to be buried so deep we can't tell where I end and you begin. I want you... Jare... I want you so fucking bad it hurts."

At that, Jared chokes out a strained laugh, "Melodramatic much?"

Jensen grinned predatorily and wriggled down the kid's body. "Nope, just honest, baby."

Before Jared could protest at the pet name, Jensen yanked the boxers the rest of the way down and sucked the man's member into his mouth, making Jared cry out, his head thumping against the ground as his body arched into a beautiful bow. "Fuck! Oh... oh, god, Jen.... Don't... Ah! Don't stop... Urgh..."

Moaning around the musky taste, Jensen swirled his tongue over the slit, noting the way Jared's body quivered and tensed in pleasure, and storing every detail and response safely away. He wanted to know everything about the kid, what turned him on, what didn't, what made him nearly shoot his load and what kept him on the torturous edge.

Jensen had never seen anything hotter than the sight before him. With his head back and his throat bared, Jared writhed, obviously desperately trying not to thrust too hard. Jensen slid his tongue along the length and back again, sucking harder until all Jared's resistance fell apart and, with soft gasps the man began pushing up.

A hand slipped into his hair, tugging frantically in warning, but Jensen merely grazed his teeth over the tip and Jared was coming with a gasped, "Jen!"

Swallowing it all, Jensen swirled his tongue over the man's cock once again, and then pulled back with a soft, slick pop, smirking at his friend. Jared looked spent, utterly debauched and positively edible as Jensen attacked his lips, sharing the slightly lemony taste with the man.

Then Jared's hands came up to gently cup his cheeks, softening the kiss into something far more precious. When Jared pulled back, it was Jensen who had lost control. He stared at the younger man with wide, glazed eyes, reaching up to brush over Jared's lips with his thumb.

Jared smiled tenderly and reached between them, his hand fumbling until Jensen's pants were out the way. The second his fingers closed around Jensen's length, the man was coming with a shout, clutching at Jared's shoulders as he rode it out.

Sagging down beside the kid, Jensen closed his eyes, trying to regain his center of balance. There was a soft shuffling and then Jared's warm, comforting weight was curling around his chest. As the younger man's arm slid across him, Jensen began carding his fingers through Jared's hair, brushing the bits of grass out.

When Jared raised his head again, Jensen let out a soft snort of laughter. In response to the kid's questioning gaze, he shook his head at how ridiculous they were. "You got dirt on your face," he whispered, gently swiping it away.

Jared's face broke into a breathtaking grin, and Jensen was left dumbstruck as his eyes raked over the perfectly sculpted features, all illuminated by the vibrant life within the man. "You're gorgeous, Jay..."

A pink tinge blossomed on the kid's cheeks as he ducked his head and muttered, "Ass."

Feigning offence, Jensen whined, "*Me?* Why me? I was just being nice, but *nooo*, someone thinks I'm an ass."

"Then quit treating me like a girl," Jared grumbled.

Jensen hefted the man closer and shook his head. "I'm not treating you like a girl, Jare. I *know*, despite the numerous factors that point to you being a chick, you are *actually* a guy. I'm allowed to tell you how hot you are every now and then."

There were a few moments of silence, during which Jared's fingers traced the groove of the older man's collarbone. When Jared replied, his voice was soft and slightly uncertain. "Sorry... I'm just... this is different, you know?"

Jensen did know, but he wanted to hear anyway. "Different how?"

Huffing a laugh, Jared shook his head, "Just... well, usually I'm the one flattering people and stuff."

"I wasn't flattering you. When people flatter you, it means they're trying to get something from you. I'm just... stating the obvious."

"You just want in my pants."

Chuckling softly, Jensen buried his nose in the kid's hair, "Nah, that's not all I want."

To that, there was no response, but Jared did inch that tiny bit closer, nuzzling his nose against Jensen's neck. With a ridiculously sappy smile on his lips, Jensen inhaled deeply and murmured, "I love you... Fuck... I love you..."

A kiss was pressed to his neck, and he shivered slightly, his arms tightening around the man.



When Jensen woke a few hours later, the spot in his arms was empty. Feeling dejected and lonely, he slowly got to his feet, determined to find his lover.

And he did, paddling leisurely against the current on his back. Jared's eyes were closed, his lips pulled into a small smile, and his body naked except for his shrunken pair of boxers.

Silently sliding into the water, Jensen waded towards the man, trying to keep his movements to minimum, not wanting to disturb the serenity. Jared startled slightly as Jensen slid his hand beneath the kid's hair, but then the smile widened and fluttering eyelids opened to reveal stunning hazel eyes.

"Hey," Jensen murmured, pressing closer, his other hand sliding beneath Jared's knees, cradling the man to his chest.

Unable to stand even the minuscule distance between them, Jensen ducked down, sealing their lips together.

He can't remember when he last felt this deliriously happy. In fact, he can't remember ever feeling like this at all. Looking back at all the sappy, pathetic love stories Danneel made them watch, Jensen suddenly *gets* it. This is how it feels to be in love with the person you want to spend every minute of the rest of your life with. This is it.



Day 83:

Jared had been gone all day and his only explanation was a tiny, tugging smile. And, okay, maybe Jensen was sulking – just a little.

He grumbled as he dutifully washed his pants in the river. They had learned early, the necessity of keeping things clean. They had no other clothing and it was nice to cling to some decency –although Jensen sure wouldn't mind having a naked Jared wandering around the whole time. He smirked to himself, wondering whether he could get away with sabotaging the man's pants.

But before he could do anything, Jared leapt out from behind a nearby bush, grinning like a lunatic.

Ignoring his itching desire to kiss the living daylights out of the kid, Jensen scowled, "Where have you been?"

Jared wagged his eyebrows. “Out.”

“Out *where*?”

“Just out.”

“Fine, don’t tell me then.” With his shoulders stiff, the older man turned back to the washing.

As Jared’s muscled arms slid around him, Jensen bit down on his lip to stop the instinctual urge to lean back. But when Jared blew out softly against his ear, he couldn’t help the shiver.

“I got a present for you,” the kid murmured huskily.

“Really?” Jensen twisted in the man’s arms, putting them nose to nose. “What is it?”

Jared’s lips brushed delicately over his nose and a cool something was pressed into his palm. Jensen glanced down at the white, bleached bone, breaking out into a smile when he realized what it was. One side of the bone was sharpened to a fine edge, and there was a wobbly ‘J’ scratched into the handle.

“Just thought you might need something better to use, and maybe now you won’t try to hack your fingers off every time you want some fish.”

And it was irrational how delighted Jensen was with such a small gift, but he knew how much work Jared must have put into it, and it was really sharp. He lunged at the man, sending them tumbling to the ground in a heap. After mauling the man for several long minutes, he finally pulled back to allow them some air.

He grinned down at the kid, wiping sheepishly at his raw lips. “Thank you.”

A faint blush tinged Jared’s cheeks, and his eyes darted to the side, “No biggie.” He shrugged nonchalantly.

And, sure, it was only a sharpened bone, but the fact that Jared had cared enough to go through all this trouble made Jensen’s insides feel warm and cozy.

Before he could even begin to process his thoughts, he was pulling back and tugging the ring from his finger. “I’ve got something for you too, Jared...” he whispered softly.

Jared’s eyes widened as he took the kid’s hand in his, carefully sliding the metal band on. “Jensen... dude, you can’t give me this... You never take this off unless you’re filming. I know how much it means to you.”

Also slightly stunned, Jensen could only smile. “Guess there’s a first time for everything, huh?”

“But... dude... it was belonged to your granddad. I can’t... You never even... for Danneel...”

Jensen curled the younger man's hand into a fist and pressed it to Jared's chest. "You can, Jay. I want you to have this. I *need* you to have this."

The grin that formed was devastatingly gorgeous; a smile that could stop soldiers in their tracks, Jensen was sure. Dimples, digging in, eyes shining with warmth, and his hair sticking up ridiculously at the back, Jared examined the ring, tilting his hand this way and that, causing it to glint in the sunlight.

The sight of *his* ring on *Jared's* finger had a jolt of heat racing through Jensen, and he realized that this was basically a proposal, only without the words. They didn't need words to convey their feelings.

He ducked his head and looked away, flushing. "Anyway, how about we try this out – you seriously need a shave, man." There was no way of telling how it was going to turn out – a sharpened bone was definitely not a razor, but Jensen really wanted to see *all* of Jared again.



When he had the man seated before him in the shallow water, Jensen shifted on his rock and dipped his fingers into the coconut shell of animal grease. It was kind of disgusting – but they kept it for starting rushed fires, and this had to be better than tearing through Jared's skin.

He still chuckled at the wrinkled nose and disgusted expression on his lover's face as the stuff was smeared on. "Just relax, you big baby."

A huff escaped the younger man and he grumbled, "Just you wait your turn, Ackles. I will have my revenge!"

Then, silencing Jared with a firm hand gripping his jaw, he tilted the kid's head up, exposing the vulnerable line of Jared's neck. After halting for a second to relish the sight, Jensen swallowed thickly and set the bone against Jared's skin, pulling some stubs of beard taut and then carefully cutting through it.

It was slow work, having to be constantly careful and alert, but as Jared's gorgeously tanned skin came into view, Jensen couldn't help pausing occasionally to pepper his lover with kisses.

His dick was rock hard by the time he finished and, after securely placing the knife on a nearby rock, Jensen darted forwards, hands sliding over Jared's face, cupping his cheeks and dragging him into a deep kiss. The motion sends them topping backwards into the shallow water, and Jared laughs breathlessly as he yanks the older man on top of him.

Tongue darting out to taste Jared's skin, Jensen pulled away abruptly, making a face at the foul taste. At Jared's bewildered expression, Jensen grunted out around the tongue he was busy cleaning against his shirtsleeve, "Animal fat..."

"Aww, you poor baby," Jared got out, guffawing with laughter.

Still spitting, Jensen reached for the coconut shell and shoved it in Jared's direction, "Your turn, asshole."



Around the 90th day:

Things continued on the same note: life only getting better with every passing day. They constructed a new shelter, a better one that had a sheet of tree bark as a door and a comfortable bedded area as their bed.

At night, they explored each other's body, fingers roaming bared skin and lips moving smoothly together. Jensen hadn't known anyone *could* be as responsive as Jared was. The things he wanted to do; no, the things he *got* to do to that body... damn.

And the best part was when they lay together afterwards, Jared soft and sleepy in his arms: there wasn't anything better.

They had grown so efficient at starting up fires that they could get one burning strongly in under a minute, and they had worked out that, strategically, the best place to start a fire that would be visible from the ocean was atop a small hill near the edge of the southern side of the island. It was right near their new shelter and one of the streams ran straight past it.

Jared also had a pet now: a tiny hare that had been too small to be considered food and too weak to fend for itself after being caught in their snare. Jensen hadn't been able to say no to the wide puppy eyes that were turned upon him and so, they had a small area near their home which they'd blocked off with logs.

And, they had bowls, water gourds and spoons, all made from either coconut shell or carved wood (courtesy of Jared's woodworks), and Jensen had made them a blanket-like woven web of palm leaves, which kept them both warm and dry – in the case of leakage in their shelter (which was rare thanks to their waterproofing).

They were happy, that was the underlying fact. Their bodies were tanned and toned from the long hours strenuously searching for food in the sunlight, and neither had ever felt healthier. Indeed, each and every time Jensen laid eyes on his lover, his heart stuttered in his chest, his mind still not quite piecing together that the Greek god belonged to him.



Day 101:

The inevitable day ultimately came.

Jensen was shaken awake by his lover and dragged up their hill. There, on the horizon, was a tiny brown dot.

It was Jensen who lit the long-preserved bundle of kindle. It was Jensen who watched the smoke rising up from the green leaves he'd piled on. It was Jensen who could do nothing when Jared disappeared into the undergrowth without a word.

But Jared returned before the small, wooden vessel could land, and after climbing down the ladder they'd made with vines, they stood silently side by side on the beach, watching the ocean.

The rickety fishing boat was steered by an equally elderly man, with whom they could fortunately communicate in broken English. The boat could never withstand the weight of all three of them, so, after making sure the man knew to contact the authorities as soon as he got back to his mainland, they helped him push off.

Their time on the island was nearly over.



Day 103:

“Jay...” Jensen calls softly, parting the bushes. “Where are you, man?”

After searching all their familiar haunts, Jensen headed up the cliff, his eyes peering every which way. When he surmounted the top, he let out a soft breath of air at the sight of Jared’s muscled back and bowed head.

Quietly shifting to stand behind his lover, Jensen slipped his fingers through his Jared’s hair. “Hey, man.”

Not getting up, Jared just leaned back against the older man’s leg, his gaze still fixed out at the ocean.

“What’s the matter, babe?” Jensen asked softly, dropping his hands down to massage the man’s shoulders. “You feeling okay?”

Jared shook his head and murmured, “It’s just... I don’t know...”

Lowering down behind the kid, Jensen wrapped his limbs around Jared’s body, pulling him so the man’s back was pressed flush against his chest. With his nose buried in the soft hair at the nape of Jared’s neck, Jensen whispered back, “I love you.”

The younger man turned his head for a kiss, his nose nudging against Jensen’s cheek as his eyes fluttering closed and a small smile formed on his lips. “You too, Jen.”

A soft breeze ruffled through their hair, blowing Jared’s long strands back into Jensen’s face, making the man huff softly.

With his chin resting on his best friend’s shoulder, Jensen stared out at the glistening horizon, wondering what was lying in store for them when they got back to their previous lives. Would they even be able to fall into those roles again? Be those people? He wasn’t sure. Clutching Jared a tiny inch closer, Jensen just concentrated on breathing in the soft scent that was his lover. In and out, until Jensen nearly dozed off with relaxation. He didn’t really care if they didn’t fit in with all the other actors all he cared about was this – having Jared with him. Having someone to lean on, someone he didn’t have to pretend with, someone he could show his weaknesses to, someone he could protect and love without always having to be the

strong one. It felt good to share burdens; it felt good to not be alone. It felt *right*. In every way imaginable.



That night, when they made love, it was slow and tender, almost bittersweet in the way Jared bit back his cries and clung to him, barely an inch of space between them.

It felt like goodbye. But goodbye was the last thing Jensen wanted.

In every touch and caress, he desperately tried to convey how much he needed Jared, how much he loved him, that all he wanted was to wake up and go to sleep beside him, that all he wanted was Jared. But Jared's lips, pressing frantically against his, distracting him from his thoughts, stifled his words.

And after, Jared curled in, tucked safely in Jensen's arms, and promptly fell sound asleep, his head falling limp against the older man's shoulder. It brought a smile to Jensen's lips, and he softly brushed his lips over his lover's cheek and murmured, "Never gonna let you go, Jare... Never gonna give this up."



Day 104:

They woke to a great whirring sound. For a few seconds, it terrified them, causing them to pale in fright as they tried to imagine which of the various creatures on the island it could possibly be. But then, as the cautiously stepped outside of their shelter and stared up at the pale morning sky broken by a great chunk of machinery, they realized it was a helicopter.

They were about to be rescued



A flurry of motion.

Everyone shouting. Questions. Hugs. Tugging every which way. Jensen lost sight of Jared and he panicked. A pinprick later and his world fell dim.



2 days after rescue:

He blinked slowly; wincing at his brain was struck by what felt like a relentless hammer pounding down. It was too bright, and he rolled over, grumbling a curse and muttering for Jared to shut the bloody light out.

But there was no responding chuckle, no large hands soothing him back to sleep, no...

"Jared!" Jensen jolted upright suddenly; his eyes wide and panicked as they darted around the room.

There was a soft gasp from beside him and he jumped, eyes falling on a slender woman.

“D...Danneel?” Jensen croaked out, throat shredded and torn.

His fiancé’s eyes filled up, her hands reaching out for him, fingers stroking over his face. Her lips drew close – pressing over his before he could react. “Jensen... Jensen... Jensen...” she murmured against his skin.

“Dan...” he began.

“Gosh, I’ve missed you so much, baby. But I never gave up! Knew you’d come back to me. Knew you’d come back to be the father to our son.”

Jensen’s mouth fell open, all other words forgotten. “Son?”

Her hand closed around his, pressing it to her rounded stomach. “I’m four months along.” She grinned happily, tears glistening in her eyes, “Isn’t that great?”

His world began to spin around him. All his promises to Jared and whispered words of forever, everything, began to echo in his head; Danneel’s words following him down into unconsciousness.



Day 4 after rescue:

Jensen could barely get a word in around his mom’s babbling. He’d practically been sitting in silence for the past two hours while she fussed around him. Then she asked him whether he wanted a beach wedding or a traditional church one, and he could only gape at her.

“Wedding?”

She gave him a look as if he was extremely slow, and nodded, “Yes, you and Danneel. My grandson will *not* be born a bastard.”

“Momma... I...”

With one more glance, she silenced him, jumping onto the topic of which caterers were the best to arrange the food.

Jensen could only stare in silence as his life was torn from his control.

The worst part was that he hadn’t seen Jared yet, having only received reports on his medical status – which was much the same as his own.



Day 8:

Jensen finally managed to convince the doctors that he'd heal faster if he got to see Jared, so he was set in a wheelchair and carted down the corridors.

He had no clue what he was going to say or do. He didn't even know if Jared had heard the news yet. He just needed to see his best friend.

As he was pushed over the threshold and into the ward, he swore inwardly when he saw that Jared wasn't alone. Jared's mom smiled up at him, but when Jared's head remained bowed, Jensen knew Jared had heard.

He swallowed thickly and wheeled himself up closer, reaching for his friend's hand, but stopping as Jared tensed up.

“Jared?”

Slowly, the kid's head rose, his eyes, when they met Jensen's, were blank and empty, devoid of all life. “Congratulations, man. You're going to be a father, that's great!” His voice was cheerful and light, but hollow in a way that tore Jensen to shreds. Jensen didn't know how to fix this. He didn't know what to do. He didn't know.

Jared tried again, sounding slightly more convincing, but no less empty, “Seriously, dude. I'm happy for you. You've always wanted a proper family, kids... You'll be a great father.”

“Thanks, Jay...” Jensen murmured quietly, gaze fixed on the edge of the bed, not wanting to see the broken pieces he'd reduced his friend to.

He'd done what he'd promised not to do. And it angered him because he had no way of controlling this. This wasn't his fault and he hated Jared for making him feel like it was.



Day 20:

The bone-knife had been returned to him by one of the doctors who said it had been in his pocket when he'd been brought in. The etched 'J' was still there, and he traced his finger over it, smiling painfully at the memory it drew up.

“...and then the invitations will be gold with silver font and... *Jensen*, are you even listening to me?”

“Wuh?” Jensen snapped his head up from where he was staring for the past several minutes and glanced over at Danneel. “Oh, uhm, yeah. I was listening. Gold and silver, right. Go on.”

He'd had no idea weddings could be this thoroughly planned. He thought people just turned up in smart clothes, said vows, kissed and that was it. This was something else.

As she returned to her monologue, Jensen raised the knife to his lips, pressing a soft kiss to the side before tucking it safely in his side pocket.

He missed Jared like a stolen limb.



Day 30:

“Jared? Let me in, man!” Jensen yelled at the wooden door.

When no reply came, Jensen pulled out his own set of keys and jostled the door open, stepping cautiously into the house.

He’d been staying with Danneel since he was released from hospital, so this was the first time he’d stepped inside his and Jared’s house. And the overwhelming, rush of relief he felt as he sagged against the door was not what he needed right now.

“Jared, I know you’re in here, man. I saw your car out front.”

He jumped when a blonde man appeared in the corridor. “Chad, what are you doing here?”

“I could ask you the same thing, Ackles,” Chad growled. Then Jared’s form appeared behind him, hand falling firmly on Chad’s shoulder.

“It’s okay, Chad. Just... just give us a moment, please?”

“Sure, man...” With a final glare at Jensen, Chad vanished down the corridor.

“Hey...” Jensen croaked.

Jared’s throat bobbed with a swallow. “Hey, Jen.”

“Uhm...” I came to see.... Uh... How’re you doing?”

“Good...” But it was clear he was anything but. Dark shadows clung beneath his eyes, a weariness far surpassing his age was hanging on him, and he looked like a single puff of wind could blow him away.

“Jared... I...” he started, but he cut off, unsure of how to explain to the man just how badly he wished things were different.

A weak smile formed on Jared’s lips, wobbling slightly as he spoke. “It’s okay, Jensen... Really... There was no way you could have known. It’s not your fault...”

Letting out a breathe he hadn’t know he was holding, Jensen reached out for the man, flinching when the kid stepped back and away – out of his grasp.

Jared’s eyes shone with apology as he murmured, “Sorry... I just... give me some time... I can’t...” He cleared his throat, a plastic smile forming on his lips, “So how’s Danni doing? Only four months left, huh? When’s the... uh... the wedding?”

And just like that, any joy left Jensen’s chest, leaving him bereft and empty as he stared at the man, his best friend, and had no clue how to fix them or even if they *would* ever be fixed. How did they go back to just being friends? Was it possible?

Jensen doubted whether he would ever be able to put his need for Jared away. His chest burned at the very thought, and he blurted, “I still love you.”

A sad, helpless expression took hold of the younger man’s face as he nodded, voice hoarse and cracking, “Love you too... but... we’re not on the island anymore, Jen...”

At this, Jensen could no longer hold himself back and Jared seemed too exhausted to stop him as he stepped forwards, hands sliding behind the man, dragging him against Jensen’s chest.

In response to Jared’s muffled protest against his shoulder, Jensen’s arms tightened, locking the kid against him as he desperately *breathed*.

When the struggling ceased, Jensen shuffled them towards Jared’s bedroom, kicking the door open behind him and manhandling the younger man down on the bed. Before Jared could begin escaping again, Jensen fell beside him, arm encircling his body and drawing him close. Once he had the duvet over them, safety within the cocoon, Jared finally fell limp.

For the first time since they got back, Jensen truly noticed and appreciated the comfort of an actual bed. There were no leaves or twigs poking at his skin, there was only warmth and soft cotton. With his nose buried in soft hair, his arms full of beautiful man, and his legs entangled with a pair of lengthy ones, Jensen felt like he was finally home.

When a soft choking sound broke the silence, Jensen jerked, his eyes snapping open and seeking his lover’s face. His heart crumbled as he caught the glint of tears seconds before Jared turned, rolling over to hide from him.

“Jay...” he murmured, shifting closer, spooning up behind the man and drawing him back into his arms.

The younger man’s body shuddered and Jared’s hand grasped Jensen’s tightly, squeezing it to his chest. As Jensen could do was cling back just as tightly, his own hot tears falling silently down his cheeks.

When he finally fell asleep, his dreams were of sunshine and ocean, chestnut hair and smiles. On the horizon was a dark thundercloud, slowly approaching.



Day 31:

He woke up with a happy stretch, his hands reaching out for warm body and skin, but, finding none, he snapped awake.

The spot beside him was empty.

When he checked his phone the only message was from his fiancé – god, his *fiancé* – wondering where he was.

There was an unfamiliar weight on his finger and, glancing down, he realized with a wave of anguish, that it was his grandfather's ring, *Jared's*.

He closed his hand into a fist and told himself, yet again, that he had no choice. This wasn't his fault.



Day 51:

Danneel was small and tiny beside him, her belly a more prominent bulge, but only making her seem even more fragile.

Jensen was on his side, watching her chest rise and fall, watching the one he was about to marry.

It felt wrong. Just as it had felt every single night he'd spent in Danneel's bed. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. He belonged elsewhere, he knew exactly where he belonged, but he couldn't be there. There was nothing he wanted more, but he still couldn't have it. This was his life now. This is what his life would be like – forever.

The thought had a wave of bitterness passing through him, leaving a foul taste in his mouth. To never be able to hold Jared like he wanted; to always have to keep a distance; to never taste those lips or feel those hands on his skin; to never be able to lean into those strong arms; to never be able to clutch close and protect; to never... to never have Jared again.

Jensen curled in on himself, his stomach clenching so painfully he nearly cried out aloud. He told himself it would get better; he'd have a son; he'd have Danni; Jared would find someone else to love... Prickling tears filled his eyes, but he just buried his face in the pillow, stifling himself as much as possible.

This was his life now.

“God... Jay,” he choked out quietly, apologizing to the man for breaking both their hearts.



Day 52:

“We are gathered here today...”

Such cliché words, Jensen nearly felt like laughing. But he knew that was only because of the sleepless night he'd had, Jared's image haunting him through the hours.

Exhaustion always made him hysterical.

Danneel looked absolutely gorgeous, her skin glowing in the sunlight. Jensen had to drop his gaze, the image only reminding him of another being who glowed just like that but needed no make-up to achieve it.

His thoughts were not fair to Danneel, but he couldn't help it. He was up here, Josh behind him, his family before him, tons of people watching, but the only one he needed was somewhere else. Jensen hadn't been cruel enough to ask Jared to come.

“... and in times of strife, to be able to take comfort from each other, be strong for each other...”

Jared was always there for him, whether the kid knew it or not. Whenever Jensen had felt tired or upset or just plain weird, he used to seek his friend out, and just by being in the presence of the man, seeing his life, Jensen would always feel better. He used to joke about bottling 'Jaredness' and selling it as the cure for anything.

He wondered whether he'd be able to see Jared whenever he felt like it, or if, with their agents pushing stuff at them, their schedules would be 'too busy' for each other. Would they just drift apart, never visiting or even calling? Would his son grow up never having the chance to know Jared?

He suddenly regretted the toast he'd forced down his throat this morning, and he swallowed the bile down with a grimace. Then he forced a smile at Danneel, zoning back in to the service.

“A love like no other – a thing of beauty, something rare and precious, deserving to be cherished and protected and fought for. That is what you have, what you will have for the rest of your lives if you treasure it above all else...”

There was movement from the side, and Jensen glanced over to see Jared, gorgeous despite his evident exhaustion, even more so thanks to his fitted suit, being jostled to the front by Josh with a rushed whisper of, 'He needs you here.'

All the breath was stolen from Jensen's chest, as he turned fully towards his friend, barely able to form words as he stared up at him.

Jared's cheeks were slightly pink, making him seem even younger, and Jensen's hand reached to brush the bangs from the man's forehead before he realised what he was doing and snatched it back. “You... you came...?” he stammered.

With a sincere smile that almost hid his pain, Jared nodded, “Couldn't let my best friend get married without me.”

“Jay...” Jensen breathed softly, reaching out to squeeze Jared's tense shoulder. He shook him slightly, emphasizing just how much he meant his words. “Thank you.”

He opened his mouth to say more, but a throat being cleared behind him dragged him back down to earth and he turned guiltily back to his bride.

As the priest resumed his monologue, Jensen couldn't help fidgeting. He could feel Jared behind him; could smell his unique scent in the air; could nearly hear the man's breathing disrupting the space between them.

Sweat beaded on his forehead as he forced himself not to look back; not to let his eyes meet Jared's lest it cause him to crumble and toss all his responsibilities aside.

He jumped when his name was said, and caught the last bit of the sentence, "...take Danneel Harris as your lawfully married wife?"

Acutely aware of all the eyes on him, Jensen tried to swallow the golf ball that seemed to have materialized in his throat.

He could only ignore the voice in his chest screaming *not* to do it as he uttered a word in the affirmative,

There, he had done it. If only he didn't feel like a part of him, the best part, had withered up and died.

"And do you, Danneel Harris, take Jensen Ackles as your lawfully married husband?"

There was a long pause. Almost as long as his. But when she spoke, her response raised gasps from the audience. "No. No, I don't."

All eyes were on her, but her glistening one's were only on him. She stepped forwards, taking his hand into hers. "Jensen. I love you. And I hate myself for loving you so much. Because it means I can't allow myself to have you, not when you aren't happy. I know you, and those months you were missing were some of the worst I've ever lived through, but since you've been back it's been even worse.

"You haven't been happy; you've been empty in a way I've never seen, as if you left yourself back there, on the island."

She gave him a watery smile, "But I thought it would be okay, that after the wedding you would get better, get over whatever it was... I only realised just now what exactly it was you left behind."

Heat bloomed on his cheeks and he took a hesitant step forwards, "Danneel..."

With a squeeze to his hand, she pulled back, wiping at her eyes with a chuckle, and patting her belly, "We'll get joint custody of him, I don't want you out of my life. I don't want Jared out of my life either. Our kid will grow up with three parents, maybe four if I can find a man to make an honest woman out of me – seeing as though you failed."

"I... Dan..." Darting forwards, he pulled her into his arms, squeezing her tightly. A choked off sob left his throat as he got out softly, "Thank you. God, Danni... You're amazing... I'm so sorry... so sorry..."

She shook her head, clinging back just as tightly. "Just don't abandon me. You know I suck with children."

"Danni..."

“Go to him,” she whispered against his cheek, “He’s just as empty as you.”

And then he was running, covering the short distance within no time, tackling Jared so hard they spun around a few times before stabling themselves. Jensen’s face was buried in the dip of Jared’s neck, he knew he was crying, but he could do nothing to stop the tears. His fingers gripped at the younger man’s back, pressing in against muscles, reassuring himself that Jared was real. Soft gasping from beside his ear told him he wasn’t alone in his overwhelming emotion.

Words escaped his mind and he could only mumble soft nothings against his lover’s skin, but his meaning was clear: never again.

When they finally released each other, it was to find the audience being shooed out. Jensen’s mom shifted nervously beside Josh and his dad, but when they saw the wide grin on Jensen’s lips they softened visibly.

Reaching behind him for Jared, Jensen pulled him close, drawing as much strength as he gave. “Well...” he cleared his throat.

“*Well*, indeed,” his dad murmured, but the corners of his lips were tugging up, and Jensen breathed out a sigh of relief.



you can leave the island but you can't leave my love
and you can't take back what you gave away
you can leave the island but you can't leave my heart
'cause this memory remains

of the moonlit nights
when the stars were high
we could see Savannah shine across the waves
we could dance along the shore
and take our time for more
and all along I know our hearts will say

you can leave the island but you can't leave my love
and you can't take back what you gave away
you can leave the island but you can't leave my heart
'cause the memory remains

and I loved you
from the moment that we met I'm thinkin' of you
and I never will forget...
how the feelin' came a reelin',
so easy to be ... so free

on a moonlit night
when the stars are high
we can see Savannah shine across the waves

now I know you must move on...
but I'll never be alone
as long as this memory remains

and I've loved you
from the moment that we met I'm thinkin' of you
and I never will forget...
how the feelin' came a reelin',
so easy to be... so free

you can leave the island but you can't leave my love
and you can't take back what you gave away
you can leave the island but you can't leave my heart
'cause the memory remains...
this feelin' rarely ever fades...
and how I wish,
how I wish, how I wish you'd stay