

## It's just a phone call:



Jared gets kidnapped and Jensen blames himself: *His eyes hurt when he opens them, but through his eyelashes he can make out the strange faces surrounding him. Unable to stop himself, he begins shaking, tremors of fear racing through him, "No... please... no...." he begs softly, trying to curl away from them and flinching when they keep touching him.*

24,000 words, NC-17, hurt/comfort, non-con, violence, hurt!Jared, bottom!Jared

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The flat opposite Jared's house has been sold. The new company is demolishing it, which is a relief, as the grey concrete was absolutely hideous. The downside is that this means constant noise early in the morning, which gives him a headache and makes him tired.

He doesn't like being tired. It's more Jensen's deal than his, Jensen and his coffee addiction. Jared shouldn't get tired. He eats more candy than a bunch of school kids put together, it's just not right that he should walk around like a dazed zombie.

But if he were honest with himself, Jared would admit that it's not the early morning noise that has him on edge and sleep deprived.

"Jeeennn," he whines, "Come over tonight, please?" he even tries out the puppy eyes.

No luck.

“Sorry, Jay. Danneel’s in town. You know how upset she gets about the long-distance.”

“Yeah,” Jared tries not to let on how crestfallen he’s feeling, “Okay.”

“What is it, anyway? It’s not like you haven’t seen me seventeen hours a day, this whole week and every week before that.”

“No, it’s nothing, just... anyway...” he quickly changes the subject, “So, when’s Danny getting in?”

Jensen frowns slightly, “I’m not sure, she sounded a bit pissed at me on the phone this morning.”

“Why, what’d you do?”

“Nothing, man,” Jensen emphasizes that with a big shrug, “I was just telling her about the stupid prank you idiots played on me yesterday.”

Jared grins, “Shit, but that was a good one.”

He’d managed to convince Sara, the lady from costume wardrobe who has a major soft spot for him and his candy, to stitch Dean’s jeans so that they were tighter.

“Yeah, yeah,” Jensen clears his throat, his embarrassment evident behind his grin.

“Jared. Jared!” Jared imitates Jensen’s voice, upping it a few notches, “Jared, I’m fat! Jared, oh god. It’s your fault, you idiot. You and your stupid candy!”

Jensen’s face quickly turns an astonishing pink and he growls at his friend, “Shut up! I did not say that! And I don’t sound like that!”

Jensen had spent the rest of the previous morning hiding behind Jared, mentally deciding which personal trainer to hire. Obviously Jared had had a complete ball.

Proudly peeling back his sleeve, he reveals a considerable bruise that he waves before Jensen, “I still can’t believe you punched me.”

Looking at the purpling skin guiltily, Jensen shrugs, “Well, you’re an asshole. I can’t believe I fell for it. Anyway, so I was telling Danneel about that and then she suddenly got angry at me, said goodbye and slammed the phone down.”

“Huh, well, maybe she’s just stressed. Or missing you - yeah, that’s probably it. She wishes she was here for the awesome prank of the year.”

Feeling slightly better, Jensen grins, “Yeah, maybe.”

“You want me to come to the airport with you?”

“Nah, I think Dan wants to have some alone time, you know.”

Jared ducks his head, “Okay, sure. See you on Monday.”

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He calls up Chad, only to find that the blonde is up in LA filming some comedy, romance flick and ‘I’m afraid Mr. Murray isn’t available right now. Can I take a message?’

Since when did Chad get an assistant?

Next he tries Chris and Steve, but no can do. They’re undercover on some mission or something like that. Jared still doesn’t really know what they do, other than that they work for the government and have to travel a lot.

The superman guys are off too, both at some promotion thing.

So Jared has two choices. One – he can head home and be freaked out of his mind. Or two – he can go out to some bar on his own and drink himself into a stupor.

There’s no competition really.

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“Yesss... tha’s, tha’s what ‘m sayin’... You’re tha’nly one tha’ gets me... Robby...”

“It’s Ben, actually.”

“Tha’s what a said. But noooo, he didn’ listen... a like you, Davey...”

“My name’s Ben.”

“I know, ‘m not stuuuupid. More... more, pleesh, Jimmy.”

“I think you’ve had more ‘n enough, buddy. There anyone I can call for you?”

“Nah...” Jared squints at the glass, turning it upside down and then round again, delighted at it. Then he pouts and turns watery eyes up at the bartender, “‘m all alone. Why ‘m I alone?”

“I don’t know, man. But there has to be someone, we’re long past closing time.”

“No, no one loves me, Matty... no one... ‘m all alone. ‘m gonna die alone... I’m...” tears begin trickling from his wide eyes as he stares down at the counter, his glass forgotten. His world begins to sway.

The bartender comes round just in time to keep Jared’s head from bashing into the ground. With a heavy sigh, he hoists Jared up onto a nearby couch and begins searching through the younger man’s pockets, eventually emerging victorious with a cell phone.

He presses down speed dial one and a sleepy voice answers, “‘m ello?”

“Hi, are you a friend of Jay’s? Tall guy, brown hair, eyes that let him get away with anything?”

The voice hitches, instantly sounding more alert, “Yeah, what’s happened? Who’re you? Is he okay?”

He can hear fumbling and he smiles, wondering why the hell Jared thinks he’s not loved.

“He’s fine. Drunk off his ass, but fine. I wasn’t sure who to call...”

The man sounds relieved, “No, that’s okay, where are you? I’ll come get him now.”

In the background Ben can hear a woman’s voice, ‘Babe, what’s going on?’

‘Just Jared, babe. I’ll be back soon.’

There’s a muffled argument and then the voice comes back on, albeit wearier, “Where are you?”

“Corner of Jackson and Oak.”

“‘Kay, I’ll be there soon.” There’s a bit of a pause, then, “He’s okay, right? I mean, he hasn’t...”

“Your boy’s okay, just had a few too many.”

A puff of breath is released, “Swear to god, I’m gonna kill him. I’m Jensen, by the way.”

Laughing slightly, he replies, “Despite the range of names your buddy has called me this evening, my name’s Ben.”

“Yeah, that sounds like him. I’ll see you soon, Ben.”

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“You know, I didn’t take him for the crying type when he came in,” Ben murmurs as he helps Jensen carry the unconscious form to his car.

“What? Jared? He cried? Really?” Jensen frowns down at his friend. “What was he crying about?”

Feeling like he has bartender-patient policies, Ben just shrugs, “Oh, this and that. Wasn’t making much sense at the end.”

“Oh... well, how much does he owe you?” Jensen pulls out his wallet and pays Jared’s tab, his eyes constantly wandering back to the tear-streaked face of his drunken co-star. Then he sticks out his hand, “Thank you so much, Ben. I really appreciate it and I’m sure Jared does too.”

“No problem.” Then, as an afterthought, Ben adds, “You’ve got someone special here. You take care of him, you hear?”

Grinning slightly at how Jared manages to get everyone, even a bartender, to fall for him, Jensen replies, “Will do.”

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“...en?” Jared slurs, his hands reaching out for his friend.

“Yeah, Jay. ‘m here. What were you thinking, you giant goof? Now Dan’s pissed at me.” His tone is harsher than he intended, but it’s too late.

Jared sniffs, his eyes turning watery, “‘m sorry, Jen. ‘m sorry. ‘m an idiot. A giant goof. ‘m sorry. I just...” he turns to stare out the window, “I just didn’ wan’ to go home... ‘nd...” he sounds so lost and heartbroken that Jensen pulls over at the side of the road.

“Hey, Jay... Jay, look at me... look at me.” Slowly, Jared turns glistening eyes towards him, eyes so full of misery that he has to yank his friend into his arms, seatbelts be damned. Running his hands down Jared’s quivering back, Jensen presses him closer as the younger man begins clinging back, “Shhh, it’s okay, Jay. It’s okay.”

This is definitely new. He’s seen Jared drunk thousands of times. But never, not once, did he turn into a wreck like this. Drunk Jared equals happy-to-the-point-of-throttling-him Jared, nothing like this.

“Jay, what’s the matter? Did something happen?”

Jared just chokes on a sob and tries to bury himself in Jensen’s arms. And while Jensen can’t say he minds being Jared’s ‘protector’, there has to be a reason. “Jay, come on, talk to me.”

He lets out a curse when his phone begins ringing shrilly and Jared pulls back like he's been stung.

"Danny... hey."

He winces, "Honey, I know. I'm really sorry, I'll be there as soon as I can, just let me drop Jay off, okay?"

With a sigh, he turns back to his friend, who's already retreated into himself and is staring out the window.

"Let's get you home, 'kay?"

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Jensen peels the clothes off his co-star's lean body. It doesn't even feel weird. Just... comfortable, Jared resting a hand on his shoulder to steady himself as he steps out of his pants, Jared ducking his head against Jensen's chest when he leans forward to pull off his shoes, Jared smiling lopsidedly up at him when he tucks him in and smacks an exaggerated kiss to his forehead.

"Do I get a bedtime story now?" Jared's wide-eyed innocence asks.

He can't help running his fingers through the golden-brown locks, brushing them out of his friend's face. "I'll see you on Monday, 'kay? No more drinking at weird bars alone."

"'kay."

He doesn't notice how Jared's eyes dart towards the wide, curtainless window beside the bed.

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"Danny, I just don't get why you're making such a big deal about this. The kid was drunk, what was I supposed to do? Let him drive himself into a wall?"

"No," she presses a hand to the bridge of her nose, "Jensen, that's not what I'm talking about."

"Then what? Please, Dan, because right now I have no idea what we're arguing about."

Her voice rises up into a yell, "We're talking about you and Jared! You and that stupid, overgrown kid!"

That hits a nerve. "What the hell, Dan? Don't you dare talk about him like that!"

“You see, that’s exactly what I mean!”

“What? You don’t like the fact that I don’t let people talk shit about my friends? Well, sorry, Dan, but I don’t go and badmouth your friends, do I?”

She takes a deep, calming breath, “Jensen. What I mean is that, don’t you think you spend a bit too much time with him?”

Jensen squints at her, wondering if all women are like this, “Uhm... Danny. He’s my co-star. And he’s my best friend. Of course we spend a lot of time together, it comes with the job description.”

“I know, but...” she sighs, “you know what? Never mind. Forget I said anything.” She climbs out the bed and heads for the bathroom, but he follows her.

“No, Dan. I want to know why you hate Jared so much. What the hell did he do to you? And why’re you always so rude to him when he’s around?”

“I don’t. He... I’m not... It’s just...” she heads over to him, her small hands sliding up his bare chest, “I guess I just miss you. And now we finally have a weekend together and you go off to him again.”

“Dan, he was drunk.” Jensen lets out a puff of air, “Okay, how’s this, this weekend will just be us. You and me, what d’ you say?”

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Jared wakes up with a massive hangover, only made worse when he tries to get out of bed and ends up getting tangled in his sheets and crashing to the ground. Sporting a new bruise on his cheek, courtesy of the sole of his shoe – since when did they make them so brick hard? – Jared stumbles towards the bathroom, where he splashes his face and downs what must be at least four liters.

When he looks up at the mirror, he barely recognizes himself. Red eyed, pale, pillow-creased skin (besides the quickly forming bruise and dark patches beneath his eyes), even his boxers are crumpled. He feels disgusting and smells of stale alcohol, what could be better to add to a pounding headache?

He heads outside to try to drown himself in the pool, and is already submerged by the time he remembers an important fact that, in his daze, he’d overlooked: they’re working on the building opposite. The building, that used to be an office block so it never really bothered him, is now crawling with builders, or demolishers or whatever you call them.

And Jared’s only in his boxers. His boxers that hug his hips snugly even when they’re dry.

He's not a bashful person. Not normally. But with everything that's been happening the past couple of days...

Doing his best to ignore the calls from above, Jared gets out, fruitlessly trying to keep his boxers from slipping down too low, and heads inside, not relaxing until he's got the door shut firmly behind him.

He feels like a wuss. No, he corrects himself in his head, he is a wuss. But he can't help it. He's on edge. Freaking the fuck out. And he's sure it's all in his head. He hopes like hell that it's all in his head.

If it isn't...

Jared shudders and steps into a blasting hot shower that makes him feel a thousand times better.

Munching on some plain toast, he sits down to try decide what to do for the rest of the day. Usually he'd just call Jensen, no question, but today, today Danneel's there and Jared already feels awful for spoiling some of their time together.

He dresses quickly, pulling on his favorite black shirt and cargo pants, and heads out the door, pointedly avoiding looking at the building.

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The beach is dotted with brightly colored umbrellas but isn't as crowded as it sometimes gets. Jensen stares out at the crystal blue water before turning back to Danneel. She's clad only in a skimpy bikini and sunglasses.

"Come on, you wanna try the water?"

Jensen really wants to just run and dive, but this is 'his and Danneel's' weekend.

"No, I'm just going to work on my tan," she replies, adjusting the bikini strap slightly.

His eyes turn back to the clear blue and he really, really wants to swim.

"kay, I'm just going to dip in quickly, I'll be back soon."

"Mmmhmmmm."

Okay, he'll admit it, he's bored out of his mind. What's the point of coming to the beach if not to swim?

As he's nearing the water, two guys crash into him, apologize, and continue fooling around. As he watches them splash and tease one another, Jensen feels kind of empty, like something's missing.

While wading in, he continues watching them, grinning slightly at their games. They can't be much younger than him, in fact, one of them sort of looks like Jared, with his floppy hair and height. When the 'Jared look-alike' tackles his buddy and they go tumbling into a laughing heap, Jensen grins as he realizes that could easily be him and Jay.

Glancing back at Danneel, Jensen lets out a soft sigh and ducks under the water. He emerges, shaking the water out of his eyes, and glances back at the pair... only to find them in a hectic making out session on the sand. The one with floppy hair is sliding his hands up and down the other's sides, bringing his fingers up to trail over the man's jaw line. Their chests are pressed tightly together, and the man at the bottom has his leg hooked around the longish-haired one, heel pressing against his ass.

Jensen swallows and looks away, a blush tingeing his cheeks. Okay, so it turns out they're not as similar to Jared and him as he thought.

He clears his throat and heads back to sentence himself to a few more freckles.

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They've just had an awesome day, really, really awesome. Jensen stares blankly at the flickering candle before him. The air is thick with perfume and the scents of expensive wines. Danneel looks absolutely perfect, her skin glowing and her earrings shining brightly as she picks at her salad.

Jensen shifts uncomfortably as he glances around at the other tables, where couples stare helplessly into each other's eyes. If Jared were here, he'd be mimicking them and falling off his chair laughing. Jensen grins slightly at the image of his friend faceplanting in a bowl of beef consommé.

"So, how's the filming going?"

He glances up to meet Danneel's expectant eyes and clears his throat, "Well, I mean, good. Real good. We're really getting this season, I mean, you should see Jay, his acting has improved so much, you wouldn't believe."

"Oh," her voice sounds strained, "that's good. So, this really is the last season, huh?"

Suddenly feeling ill, Jensen puts down his spoon, "Uhm... yeah... I mean, Eric isn't sure... but..."

"So, what does Jared have planned for when it's all over?"

Jensen bites his lip. He doesn't really want to talk about this. He doesn't even want to think about it, "I don't know."

"I mean, surely he's got something lined up back in L.A.?"

"Maybe... I don't know."

They sit in silence for a few minutes, and Jensen stares down at the swimming bowl of mush, unable to imagine a life without seeing Jared everyday. His stomach clenches painfully.

"I mean, maybe when the time comes, you and me..." Danneel trails off, her eyes hopeful.

"You and me, what?"

She traces her fingers along the slender wine glass, "I mean... don't you think it's time we took things to the next level?"

Jensen frowns in confusion. When it hits him, he chokes on his sip of water.

When he sees Danneel's glare, he immediately sobers up, "Really? Is that really what you want, Danny?"

"Maybe..."

He swallows heavily, trying to imagine having her around him everyday. Then the image of a white picket fence swims into view accompanied by dinners like this every night for the rest of his life and he chokes again. He doesn't think he's ready for that.

"Well, uhm... let's not rush into things," he murmurs, downing his glass.

"Jensen, we've been dating on-off for the past four years. How is that rushing into things?"

Jensen shakes his head, wondering if it really has been that long. Then he realizes that he's known Jared for about three years. It's a wonder his hair isn't already grey.

He remembers that Danneel's waiting for an answer, "I..." he's saved by the ringing of his cell phone.

"You brought that with you on a date?" Danneel sounds scandalized.

"Well, for emergencies," he shrugs apologetically and pulls it out. 'Jare' flashes on the screen. "It's Jared," he smiles slightly as he slides his finger to answer it.

“Jensen Ackles. If you dare answer that phone call I am out of here. Out of here, do you understand that?”

“But Dan...”

“No, no! I am sick and tired of always coming second to you. I’m sick of having three people in our relationship. I am sick of it!”

“What are you talking about, Danny? There aren’t three people in our relationship. And honey, what if it’s an emergency.”

Danneel scoffs, “Honestly, Jensen, it’s just a phone call. I seriously doubt that Jared would call you and not the cops if anything were wrong. Now put that damn phone away!”

Clenching his jaw tightly, he switches the phone off and slides it into his pocket.

They sit in uncomfortable silence until a waiter comes to take their orders for main meal.

“What’re you having, Dan?” his voice sounds hollow and indifferent.

“I was thinking about the chanterelle mushrooms with fennel and onion risotto.”

Jensen has no idea what that is, but okay, “I’ll just have a steak, medium rare, with veggies on the side. Thank you.”

When the waiter walks off, Danneel stares at him, “I can’t believe you just ordered a steak.”

“What? There’s something wrong with that too?” he snaps back, tired of the constant judging.

She sighs and calls for more wine. Jensen has no idea what the name of the wine is, but he does know that it costs more than it costs to feed Jared for a week. It’s weird that he should know that.

Very weird. He scowls at his napkin, neatly folded on his lap.

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As he’s stepping out of the bathroom, he remembers Jared’s phone call and reaches for his trousers.

“Baby, come to bed,” Danneel calls from the pillows.

“Hold on, let me just phone Jay, I’ll be a sec.”

She intercepts him on his way out and tugs the phone from his fingers just as it switches on, “No, he can wait. Now, come to bed.”

His protests are muffled by Danneel’s lips and then replaced by soft moans as she slinks down his body to peel off the towel.

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He’s woken by the sharp ringing of his phone.

It takes him a few moments to locate it and leave the bedroom, “Hello?”

“Hi, is that Mr. Ackles?”

“Yes, who’s speaking?”

“Hi, sorry to bother you, I’m Lucy Lans, I live next door to Jared.”

“Yes?” Jensen’s not entirely sure where this is going, he peers out the window and realizes it must be around midday.

“Well, you remember when you two came over when Jared’s dog was missing?”

“Oh, yes.”

“You left me your numbers to call if I ever needed anything.”

“Is everything okay?” Jensen frowns at the phone, still wondering what on earth is going on.

“Yes, it’s just, the dogs have been barking non-stop since last night and I’ve tried to phone Jared, but that dear boy’s not answering his phone. See, I wouldn’t have minded, it’s just my niece is here and she’s having a baby soon. The noise is bothering her.”

Jensen’s heart begins beating rapidly, “He’s not answering his phone?”

“No, I’ve been trying all morning.”

“Okay, I’ll... I’ll be there soon.”

He quickly heads back to the bedroom, fumbling for his clothes.

“Babe, what’s going on?” Danneel’s getting dressed beside him.

“Jay... Jared... he’s...” Jensen can’t even form coherent sentences he’s in such a rush.

“No, Jen. What did we talk about yesterday? What happened to ‘our weekend’?”

She catches his arm as he’s about to leave the room, but he surprises them both by spinning around and growling, “Jared’s not answering his phone. So you’d better damn well let go of me.”

Backing off slowly, she stares at him, “You’re so freaked out just because he’s not answering his phone?”

“His dogs…” Jensen shakes his head and jerks back into action, grabbing the keys from the table as he passes.

He grinds his teeth when she slides into the passenger seat beside him, but he guns the car into motion and pulls out of the driveway.

When they step out of the car, Sadie and Harley’s howls hit their ears, upping Jensen’s panic a notch. He’s never heard them so anxious.

He unlocks the door using his own key, ignoring Danneel’s huff and stepping inside. The dogs race up to him, nearly bowling him over in their relief at seeing him and slowly their howls turn into whines.

“Hey, kids,” Jensen kneels before them, rubbing behind their ears, “What’s the matter, hey? Where’s your daddy?”

Danneel snorts behind him, but he ignores her entirely as he gets to his feet and begins moving through the rooms.

When he passes through the kitchen, he sees the first signs and his breath catches. Shattered glass crunches beneath his shoes, chairs lie knocked over, the coffee maker’s tipped over in a puddle of brown liquid, the armchair is upturned and slightly ripped, but worst of all, there’s a pool of red staining the carpet before the TV.

Danneel gasps as she sees it, her hand moving to cover her mouth.

“Jared!” he yells, only to be met with silence.

He begins running through the rest of the rooms, stopping before Jared’s bedroom door where, carved into the wood, is written: ‘Come out and play’.

Pushing it open, he finds the room empty, the sheets rumped and torn, the window shattered and the beside-cabinet upturned.

“God…” Jensen digs his cell phone out and dials 911, quickly giving Jared’s address. That’s when he notices the voicemail from last night.

Last night when Jared had tried to call him. With his heart in his throat, he presses to listen to it.

“Jen?” Jared’s voice quivers. The scared tone makes Jensen chest close up, “Jen... there’s... shit, it sounds so stupid. But...” his voice drops to a whisper, “I think someone’s following me. I’ve... I’ve seen...” Jared falls silent, then he whispers again, this time more urgently, “Jen, I think there’s... there’s somebody in the house. I can’t find the dogs anywhere, please, call the cops, I-” there’s a pained cry and the line goes dead.

Jensen falls to his knees, staring down at the phone, his chest feeling like it’s being stabbed over and over again.

“What is it, Jen? Baby?”

Danneel’s hands run down the back of his neck and he flinches, getting to his feet, “Don’t touch me.”

As he walks past her, he presses the cell phone to her hands before wandering over to the kitchen again, staring down at the pool of blood with bile in his throat.

Jared had tried to call him. Jared had needed him. Jared would probably be here if Jensen had called the cops like the voicemail asked. Jared would be safe. Jared would be ali-

Furiously shaking the thought from his head, Jensen heads outside to wait for the cops to arrive.

They’re arriving seventeen hours later than they could have, had Jensen only answered his phone.

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“Mr. Ackles, I’m Detective Wayne. I’m in charge of this case.”

He doesn’t raise his head from his hands.

“So, what time did Jared call you?”

“Can’t you check the time on the phone?” he mutters through his fingers.

“Mr. Ackles, you understand that we need your full cooperation?”

Jensen sits up, “Sorry, Detective. It was about seven. We were having dinner.”

“And the reason you didn’t answer your phone was...?”

He wants so badly to blame this all on Danneel, but he knows he's to blame, "Because I'm a shitty, good for nothing friend."

"That's not true," Danneel pipes up.

But that only makes him angrier, "Course it is! He's always there for me, no matter what! When my car breaks down, when I need a place to stay, when I'm so fucking pissed at the world that I can't see straight, when everything goes wrong for me, he's always there for me! And the one time that he actually needs me, the one time he asks me for help... the... the one time..." Jensen's got tears running down his cheeks but he doesn't even notice, "I'm too fucking busy to pick up the goddamn phone."

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Twenty hours earlier

Jared's been avoiding the house all day, but he knows he has to go back now. His chest feels like a cold hand's encircling it just at the thought. But he knows he's just being a chicken. Jensen would probably just laugh at him.

As he gets out of the car, he can't help but glance up at the building, at the gaping holes where windows once were, at the billowing canvasses of plastic, at the emptiness.

When he drops his gaze, he could've sworn he'd seen a shape pass at one of the spaces on the top floor, but he's been having that a lot lately.

A shiver races through him and he curses his own thoughts yet again. Wrapping his arms around himself, he wishes more than anything that Jensen were here to tell him just how much of an idiot he is for being paranoid.

Maybe he should see a shrink. That'd have Jensen in hysterics.

If it made him stop imagining things, it'd be worth it.

He slips inside and shuts the door firmly behind him, feeling embarrassingly freaked.

"I'm imagining things, aren't I, Sadie?" his dog nudges him with a soft whine and he feels guilty for making the dogs nervous.

After feeding them and checking their water, he heads back inside and flops down in front of the TV, trying to concentrate enough to watch some daytime television. But his lack of sleep and the remains of his previous night out, catch up with him, and he slips sideways on the couch.

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He wakes up just before six with his skin crawling like someone's watching him. Again he feels stupid.

Wondering whether it's just because he isn't doing as much exercise as normal, he pulls on his running shoes and leashes up the dogs.

The steady thumping of his feet on the pavement clears his head, taking him to a relaxed state of mind, enough so that he's nearly forgotten why he was so freaked out.

As it begins to get darker, he's reminded that he's in Vancouver and it gets dark earlier than he's used to. He speeds up, something telling him that he has to get home as soon as possible. He hears footsteps behind him and the dogs begin barking and tugging at their leashes, but when he spins around there's only an empty road behind him.

He's gasping for breath by the time his house comes into view, but he maintains his sprint, only stopping to fumble for his keys and tumble inside, shutting the door with shaky laughter behind him, so sure that the footsteps had followed all the way here.

He lets the dogs outside to drink water and leans his hands on his knees until his breathing's steadied. Then he peels off his sweaty shirt.

That's when he hears it. The breathing. Hoarse like someone's been running, he glances outside, seeing both dogs by their bowls. The breathing gets louder. Gets closer.

When he feels a soft puff of air on his skin, he leaps around, fists ready. But there's no one there. Utterly freaking out, he turns back outside to call the dogs in, but they're nowhere in sight.

It's the last thing he wants to do, with it now being extremely dark, but despite this, he steps outside, calling for his pups softly.

The door slams behind him, making him jump, but yet again, there's no one there. He glances up at the building, breath catching as his eyes latch onto a dark shape. He could swear it's a man, but he can't be entirely sure. The wind blows and something brushes against his hand, it's just a branch. But when Jared looks back up at the building, the dark shape is gone.

He quickly heads inside, but turns around to give the garden another glance. Out of the corner of his eye, he's ninety-percent sure that he sees a man stepping into the shadows, his eyes catching in the light slightly.

That's enough spook for him, he shuts the door firmly behind him and searches for his phone, quickly pressing speed dial.

"Jen?" He glances around as another cool breeze runs along his neck, mentally cursing when he realizes that he's reached voicemail. Jensen's with Danneel tonight, he'd

forgotten about that, but he continues anyway, “Jen... there’s... shit, it sounds so stupid. But...” he hears a scraping at the door and quickly moves towards his bedroom, “I think someone’s following me. I’ve... I’ve seen...” he falls silent when he hears the door he’d just closed squeaking as it swings open, “Jen, I think there’s... there’s somebody in the house.” He hears footsteps and speaks more urgently, “I can’t find the dogs anywhere, please, call the cops, I-” something hits him over the head and he’s sent stumbling to the ground, the cell phone cracking as it hits the tiled floor.

The edges of his vision blur, but he makes out a dark form leaning over him. Quickly scrambling to his feet, trying not to sway, Jared shoves the man backwards with all his strength and leaps for his bedroom door, swinging it shut. The man grunts when he catches the door, trying to push it open, managing to slip his arm around the door, but Jared twists it and feels a tiny bit of satisfaction when the man yelps and yanks his hand away, which allows Jared to firmly lock the door.

He’s stuck now, his phone in the passage outside. Raising a hand to his head, he winces when his fingers brush over the cut and he feels the warm blood trickling through his hair. The banging on his door stops, being replaced with a soft scraping that sends shivers up his spine, like nails on a blackboard. Then even that sound disappears and he’s left, sitting against his door with absolutely no idea what to do. He can only hope that Jensen’s gotten the message and that help is coming.

A soft tapping from the side has his head jerking around to the window, where the man grins. His mouth is visible from beneath the black mask, cold eyes peering in as the man waves a gloved hand and raises a knife in his other.

Jared stumbles to his feet, unlocking the door as the window is smashed in. The man leaps after him, barely a step behind as he races down the corridor, crashing into furniture as he heads for the kitchen where he grabs for some kind of weapon.

The man is strong, the same height as Jared, if not more, but he’s much broader, arms build like a machine. Or at least, that’s what it feels like to Jared when one presses beneath his neck, slamming him into the wall and scattering everything in his way. The blow to his head makes his vision dim further, but Jared tries desperately to stay alert, to fight back.

Kicking the man in the balls and ducking beneath his arm, Jared staggers around towards his living room, throwing his armchair over in the direction of the approaching attacker. But just as Jared reaches for the door, a blow comes from behind him. One that knocks him to the ground and makes him realize that there’s more than one attacker.

As something sharp pierces his arm, the last thought that crosses through his mind is, I hope Jen isn’t pissed at me, and then it all goes dark.

\*

Present day

Jensen's never felt more helpless. Never felt so utterly lost and alone.

Jared's missing. Jared's missing. Jared's missing.

The thought keeps repeating in his head, accompanied with Danneel's voice, 'It's just a phone call.'

One phone call, one stupid phone call that he could have answered with the press of one button and could've been the difference between life and death for Jared. Jared, the best friend he's ever had, gone.

The cops found traces of tranquilizer in the dogs (which are staying with Lucy Lans for the meantime), which is why they weren't there to defend Jared, and they say that this means it wasn't a random abduction. They're expecting a ransom demand soon and have rigged Jensen's phones in case. They are also preparing to sweep the area, though they think it's unlikely that anyone would go to such an effort to kidnap Jared and then just dump him somewhere. Jensen can only take that as a good thing.

"And were there any signs? I mean, did he say anything to you before the voicemail?"

Jensen begins to shake his head, but then he hesitates. Jared had wanted him to come over; Jared hadn't wanted to be in the house alone. Jared had been scared. Jared had been exhausted all week and even had the shadowed eyes to prove it. "He..." Jensen looks up at the detective, "he was scared. I..." he closes his eyes, wondering how he could have been so fucking stupid. "The kid was terrified to go home. He hasn't been sleeping and has been jumpy at work. I just... I just..." he couldn't be a worse friend if he tried, "I just had other things more imp-... I just had other things on my mind."

The detective nods, "Okay, and do you have any idea how long it's been since they started renovating the place opposite?"

Jensen shakes his head, "about two weeks, maybe? Why, do you think it might be connected?"

He nods, "It's the best lead we have so far." He turns to leave, but pauses at the door, "And Mr. Ackles, we're going to do everything we can to find your friend."

Swallowing thickly, Jensen can't even bring himself to answer. Instead he just nods and turns to stare out the window, up at the crumbling building.

He's let Jared down. He can't think of anything worse.

\*

“Jenny?” Chad laughs into the phone, “Why the fuck are you callin’ me? And make it quick, I gotta be back on set in five.”

Jensen flinches at the happiness in the blonde’s voice, the words catching in his throat, “J... Jared... he... he...”

Chad’s voice goes still, “What the hell? Is Jare okay? Ackles,” Chad raises his voice, “Is Jared okay?”

“N... no... Chad... he’s... he’s missing... he... someone... someone’s got Jay.” His voice drops to a whisper, “Chad, someone took Jay.”

“Okay. Okay,” Chad breathes out shakily, “I’ll be there in a few hours, what the fuck happened?”

Jensen hears Chad yelling at someone, a panicked tone to his voice, “Get me a plane ticket to Vancouver, right the fuck now.... No, I don’t care if we’re in the middle of filming, get me that fucking ticket right now! I don’t give a fuck how much it costs, you understand me?”

Then Chad returns to the phone, “What the hell happened, Jensen?”

“I... his place... his place is wrecked. Blood... blood on the floor.”

Chad chokes, “Blood! Oh, God, fuck. I’ll be there soon.”

Then he hangs up and Jensen’s left to stare blankly down at his phone, tears trickling down his cheeks.

“Steve?”

“Hey, Jen. What’s up, man?”

“Jared’s... he’s been taken...”

“What the...?”

After being filled in, Steve’s worried voice murmurs, “Shit, Jen. I’ll try get there as soon as I can.”

“Can... can you tell Chris?”

Steve swears softly, “Jen, he’s gone undercover. He’s managed to infiltrate- I’ll try get hold of him, but he might only be safe to contact in a couple of days.”

“Oh... okay, thanks, Steve.”

Jared's parents have already been contacted; they're also on their way. All that Jensen's left to do is wait. Wait and allow the cops to do their jobs.

\*

His head throbs painfully and his whole body's aching in a numb, stabbing sort of way. When he manages to blink his eyes open, he finds himself staring at a cement wall. I'm never drinking again, he swears silently to himself, sure that he's hallucinating and has simply fallen asleep on the floor of his house or something.

Then he tries to take a step forward and pain shoots through his shoulders, his body swaying backwards and forwards, with his toes barely scraping the ground. “Crap...” he murmurs, peering up at the metal chains stringing him to the ceiling. “This shit's not fucking real.”

Lifting up onto his tiptoes, he jerks the cuffs down sharply, only to regret it instantly when this doubles his pain and proves pointless.

Still certain he's dreaming or drunk off his ass, Jared begins chuckling, already looking forward to telling Jensen about it. Jensen... Jared remembers that he's not allowed to call his friend this weekend 'cause Danneel's in town. Then he remembers that he broke the rule and called him yesterday. Why did I call him yesterday? He scowls at the wall, hoping for answers.

There was... realization comes to him and he's suddenly not so sure he's dreaming. There was somebody following me.

His breathing begins to quicken as his eyes dart around the room, desperately searching for some way out of this mess. Rusty pipes and grey walls, honestly, couldn't they have come up with someplace more original? he muses silently in an attempt to keep calm as his eyes eventually fall upon a solid metal door.

He lists the facts in his head; it's just something he's always done, even as a kid.

One, he's chained to the ceiling

Two, he's in a basement

Three, the perpetrator (and, yes, he does watch CSI, thank you very much) has been following him for about a week, so it's not a random capture

Four, there's more than one

Five, he was hit over the head and can feel matted blood in his hair

Six, he left Jensen a message so there's the possibility of him charging in as the knight in shining armour. Yeah, Jared can so picture him in tights

Seven, he's feeling kind of doped up and vaguely he can remember being pricked in the arm. It's likely that he's been drugged

Eight, he would die for some water right now

Nine, he's only wearing his running shorts, which are really short thanks to Sandy, who picked them because she said she liked how his legs looked in them. And they're comfy, so he kept them even after their break-up

Ten, he's really scared fucking shitless and really wishes someone like Jensen or Chad were here to tell him he's an idiot, but because there isn't, he's going to try suck it up and be a man.

That's about where he's at when he hears the thudding from behind the door and keys scraping. He momentarily forgets to breathe, his eyes glued on the turning doorknob.

\*

“Jen... baby...” It's Danneel again.

Jensen's clenches his teeth together. He really does not want to see her right now.

“What?”

“Don't you think you should eat something?” she offers him a packet that looks very much like a burger.

He laughs hoarsely and without humor, “Danneel, please just leave me alone.”

All day, he's been talking. Talking to detectives, search and rescue teams, people from the Mounted Branch and Dog Section, even someone from the Air Support Unit, and frankly, he's sick of it. He's had to sit back while the police contacted hospitals, prisons, airports, train stations, and a million other places to put them on the lookout for Jared. He feels so fucking useless.

Jensen has a photograph of his friend clenched in his hand. He keeps staring at it, at the innocence, the youth, the goddamn goofiness. His thumb traces over the smile and a wave of warmth hits him.

“Jensen... I really think you should eat something.”

He'd forgotten that she was here. Glancing up, he meets her eyes, “Danneel. I know you're trying to help and I appreciate that. I really do. But... can you... can you please just leave me alone. He's my best friend, Dan. My best friend and he's gone. Okay, so please just leave me the fuck alone.”

She stares at me for a few moments before turning around and heading out the door without another word, taking the burger with her.

Letting out a sigh, Jensen picks up a pen and begins filling in the forms left by the detective.

\*

The door grates on the ground as it swings open. A man steps inside, his face uncovered. Knowing exactly what this means about the plans for him, Jared bites his lip to control his fear and focuses on memorizing the details. The man is by no means ugly, yet his face is all sharp edges, cold and unnerving with sleek black hair to match. Piercing blue eyes remain fixed on Jared as the man approaches.

“What the fuck do you want from me?” He pulls his body as far away from the man as his bounds will allow, glaring furiously.

The man stops. Grins.

“Feisty. Mmmm, I like.”

A cold fist clenches in Jared’s chest as the man’s eyes slide languidly downwards, lingering on Jared’s bare chest and legs before returning.

More footsteps sound from behind the door and a few seconds later it opens to reveal another man, a bit shorter than the other, with a scar across his cheek. “He’s perfect, don’t you think?” he asks.

The man doesn’t reply, but begins to walk around Jared, surveying him like he’s on sale. Jared tries to kick out at him, but he just chuckles lowly and keeps just out of reach.

The shorter man continues, “Excellent physical condition, perfect body, extremely good looking. What more could you need?”

Jared does a double take, staring at the men, “What the fuck?”

They ignore him.

“You chose well,” the taller man says. “He’ll be worth the trouble you took to get him.”

“How long do we have to get him ready?”

“Seven days. Make them count.” The man leaves the room.

\*

Chad arrives with a squeal of tires and the slamming of his door, immediately followed by him storming up to Jensen. “What the hell happened to him?”

Jensen swallows to try ease his parched throat and begins to fill him in, voice wavering slightly when he tells about the missed phone call.

By the time he's finished, he can barely bring himself to look up, but when he does, he's met only with a pale face and fearful eyes. "So..." Chad begins quietly, "they... they've had him for... over twenty-four hours?"

Jensen drops his eyes to the floor and nods.

"What're the cops saying?"

"Well, they've got search parties out and they're searching all possible locations, but right now they've got nothing."

"What?" Chad looks murderous.

"There hasn't been a ransom call or any word from the kidnappers. Right now, we have no idea who they are, where they are or even what the hell they want."

"Besides Jay..." Chad murmurs, turning to stare out the window. "He called me on Friday, you know... wanted to know whether I was up for a night out? But... obviously I was filming, so I couldn't..." Chad glances back at Jensen, "You say he was jumpy the whole week?"

"Yeah, whenever someone brushed against him, he seemed to tense up, but... I just thought it was the stress. I mean, we've all been really busy and I just..." his breath catches and he turns away to hide the moisture in his eyes, "I didn't notice that my best friend was scared fucking shitless. And now... and now he's gone..."

A firm hand squeezes his shoulder, "Jensen, none of this is your fault."

He shrugs away from the hands, "Chad! He called me! He called me as it was happening, while they were there! I could have stopped them from taking him! I could have called the cops and those bastards would've been caught. But, I was too fucking busy for my best friend!" It doesn't matter how many times he says it, it still hurts just as much.

There're tears streaming down his cheeks as he spins around, shoulders shaking, to face the wall. In one furious movement, he slams his fist into the solid brick and allows the physical pain to take over.

"Shit," Chad mutters, moving forward to catch Jensen as he sinks to the floor. "You're a fucking moron, you know that?"

Jensen just blinks at him and then down at his bleeding hand. His hand agrees with Chad.

After quickly checking Jensen's knuckles for breaks (and finding none), Chad tucks the hand against Jensen's chest and sits down opposite him on the floor. His voice is quiet, so different from the usual drunk-off-his-ass-and-laughing Chad that Jensen's accustomed to, "Jensen. Jared loves you."

Jensen flinches. But Chad continues, “I’m not saying it so you can feel guilty, I’m saying it because it’s true. Do you think he’d ever blame you for this?”

Slowly, Jensen shakes his head.

“There you go, now do you think you could cut your emo crap? Just until we manage to get our boy back?”

Yup, that’s the old Chad back. Jensen smiles despite himself and allows Chad to hoist him up.

“I swear, you’re like one of those teen goth dudes, ‘ooh, everything’s my fault... let me go slit my wrists, nnnhnhna’. Can’t see why Jay hangs out with you.”

Jensen suddenly regrets all those times he bitched about Chad to Jared, as he can now see just why Jared loves Chad. It’s strange, seeing as though Chad and him are strictly friends-through-Jared and not by choice, but he sees kinship in Chad. Here’s somebody else who loves the kid as much as he does, somebody else who’d rather die than have Jared hurt.

Jensen chuckles softly before murmuring, “Thanks, Chad.”

Chad shrugs awkwardly, “Yeah, yeah, I know. I’m awesome.”

\*

They’ve tied a cloth over his eyes, gagged him and moved him into a car of some sort, one with a sliding door. Jared has no idea where he’s going, water is pretty much the only thing on his mind, and he knows he’s really dehydrated.

When they removed the chains from his wrists, he had planned to launch his attack, knock them out and escape, but that had never happened. He couldn’t get his limbs to obey him, simply crumpling to the ground in a great pile of numbness while they blindfolded him and tied his hands behind his back. He’s never felt more useless.

It’s after they’ve been driving for about five minutes as far as he can tell, that the flexing of his muscles begins to have some result. Then it’s agony of all agonies, tiny knives stabbing into him and shooting through his veins, making him groan behind the gag.

It’s like pins and needles have been replaced with knives and daggers. Burning, red-hot knives and daggers.

It could be worse, he reassures himself bravely. They could have taken Jensen instead. Just that thought makes him feel damn lucky that it is him who’s been taken. He shudders at the thought of these men having Jensen. He’d rather die.

\*

They've removed his gag, but the blindfold is still tightly in place. Jared can hear soft feet padding behind him, letting him know he's not alone. He twists his head towards it and yells, "What the hell do you want from me?"

There's quiet laughter that seems to echo around him and then cold hands begin sliding over his chest. He flinches, desperately trying to pull away. There's a sharp snap and pain erupts from across his shoulders, making him cry out in surprise. Warmth begins trickling down his back and the fingers run through it, smearing his blood around.

"So pretty..."

He twists angrily, trying to pull free from the binds, "Don't touch me," he hisses, spitting in the direction he thinks the man is.

Another snap results in pain erupting from his cheek and blood trickling down to curve along his lips. Something warm follows the line of his mouth and in disgust, he realizes it's someone's tongue lapping at the blood.

"Get the fuck away from me, you freak!" Jared jerks his head away, but a hand fists painfully in his hair and holds him in place as the man forces his tongue into Jared mouth. Obviously, Jared bites down as hard as he can, making the man jerk away with a curse.

"Oh, you'll pay for that, you little bitch!" the man hisses, quickly followed by a series of slashes to his back, chest and sides. Jared clenches his jaw to keep from yelling out again. He doesn't want to give the man the satisfaction.

"Let's try that again, shall we?" The man growls, fingers gripping at Jared's face painfully and forcing his lips apart. Before the man's lips come in contact, the man hisses in Jared's ear, "If you bite me again, I'll show you real pain."

Jared doesn't care what they do to him; he's not going to give in. When the man's foul tongue is pressed into his mouth, he bites down again, this time tasting the man's blood and feeling satisfaction at the sharp cry. He spits the blood out in the man's direction, "I said, get the fuck away from me."

The man snarls from the side, "You're going to regret that."

Something solid and cold, probably metal, smashes into Jared's side, making him cry out despite himself. Winded and gasping, Jared doesn't have time to recover before another blow lands on his shoulder, jerking it against the metal chains. Then the weapon's back to the whip, lashing out over his back, flaying his skin until the pain merges into one and he's not sure where it hurts any longer.

"Is that... all you got?" he manages to get out through gritted teeth.

“Oh, baby, we’ve barely even started.”

\*

Jensen stands silently beside Chad as they watch as the Padalecki’s get out of their rental car and make their way towards them. Megan takes one look at Jensen and runs up to him, throwing her arms around him and burying her tear-streaked face in his shoulder. Hoisting her up, he squeezes her tightly, burying his nose in her silky hair and breathing in a scent so similar to her brother.

Shannon hugs Chad and squeezes Jensen’s arm, while Jerry just nods at them, “Hey, boys.”

“Jensen, what happened?”

Not wanting to talk, Jensen just nods them towards a waiting detective. Chad goes with them, but Meg refuses to be let out of his arms.

Once the others have gone, Jensen wanders around the side, sitting down heavily on the ground with his back to the wall. Meg just keeps hugging him tightly. “Where is he, Jen?”

He peers down at her, feeling his chest ache as he takes in the likenesses between her and his best friend, “I don’t know, Meg.”

‘But... but we’ll get him back, right?’

Staring into nothingness, feeling his eyes welling up slightly, he murmurs softly, “I don’t know, Meg... I don’t know...”

With a soft sob, she buries her face in his shoulder and as he holds her tightly, it’s all he can do to keep from crying himself.

\*

Screaming. That’s the only thing he can hear. He doesn’t even realize that it’s his voice until a foul smelling rag is shoved past his lips and tied firmly in place.

Then the screams are only in his head.

He just wants it all to be over. He wants the fire eating at him to cease. He doesn’t want to feel anymore. He doesn’t know how long it’s been. Days, weeks... it could even be months.

The jolts shoot through him, pausing only when the man asks him whether he’s had enough yet. Each time, he forces himself to be strong and grits out, “Fuck you.”

Pain is all he can remember, his bones aching and skin burning. He doesn't know how much longer he can take it.

Then the electrocution stops and he's left sobbing and gasping into the gag. He hangs limply, his shoulder's twisted towards the ceiling and his toes clenching where they graze over the cement floor.

The chains suddenly give way and he crashes to the ground, crying out as his knees are forced to take his weight. Rough hands yank him to his feet and he's dragged to the side, where he's shoved forwards, doused in icy water. Letting out a sob of relief, he begins drinking through the gag, the water stinging his parched lips and trickling down his chin. When he's gulped down enough, he tries to pull away, but the hand holds him down. He begins struggling, his lungs screaming for oxygen.

Unable to stop himself, he sucks in reflexively, water seeping down into his windpipe and making him choke and splutter, but that only causes more water to enter. Panicking, he desperately tries to hit out at the man, but he feels so dizzy. Just as he feels his consciousness beginning to slip away, he's yanked back.

"You ready to be a good, little boy?"

He doesn't answer, too busy coughing and gulping air. Before he knows it, he's back in the water. Before he knows it, the screams are back.

\*

A few days later

"So, how's it going?"

Jared doesn't even twitch; he knows better than to reply.

"I thought so." The man comes closer, his hands sliding along Jared's chest, pressing down on the cuts and bruises. Jared barely flinches.

"Now, are you going to behave today?"

With what little strength he has, Jared shakes his head minutely. The man backhands him, "Stupid boy! Do you want to die?"

Jared doesn't reply and gets a punch to his already aching jaw in return. The man lets out an angry sigh. "Okay, fine. You want it like that, you're sure as hell gonna get it. We've been easy on you so far, no more fun and games."

Letting out a hoarse chuckle, Jared spits out a mouthful of blood, "Fuck you."

There's soft laughter, followed by hands yanking at his shorts. He goes cold when he realizes what's about to happen. "No," he cries out, trying to struggle again.

The man laughs cruelly, "Too late for that now."

The sound of the man unbuckling his belt has Jared's skin crawling and his body twisting desperately away. Rough hands grip at his bruised sides and he feels something hot and hard pressing against his lower back. He lets out a soft cry and begs softly, "Please, no... no... no..."

"Bet no one's ever take you like this, huh?" the man growls into his ear, hands roaming Jared's body, "Bet no one's ever fucked you so deep you taste them in your mouth."

"Please... no..." Jared pleads desperately.

"Such a pretty ass too, can't wait to shove my dick in there. It'll be so tight and hot." The man bites hard over a cut on Jared's shoulder, making it bleed again. "I'm gonna fuck you so hard, you'll be begging me to stop. I'm gonna tear you apart and bury myself inside of you. Make you take me even when you can't take me no longer. Would you like that?"

"No... please, no..."

"I knew I'd have you begging eventually, just should've guessed pain wouldn't do it."

The man's fingers run down to squeeze at Jared's ass and his index finger is shoved roughly into Jared's entrance, making him cry out in pain.

"I was right," the man bites Jared's neck, "hot and tight, just how I like them."

Then the finger is gone and something much thicker is being shoved inside. Crying behind the blindfold, Jared desperately tries to pull away from the pain, but the rough hands grip at his sides and yank him backwards, impaling him. Something tears inside of him, the pain so intense he nearly blacks out. The man grunts as he pulls out, thrusting powerfully back in. Jared feels like his insides are on fire. He's being torn apart and the man's just forcing his legs wider and plunging in deeper.

"So... fucking... tight..." the man pants, jerking Jared back harder, shoving faster, each thrust yanking downwards on his bound wrists. The pressure on his already dislocated shoulders makes him cry out even more, but it's mainly tears of shame that soak the dirty cloth.

The man's hands roam Jared's chest, pinching and rubbing over his muscles, then they slide down to Jared's limp cock, tugging at it painfully. A cry escapes Jared's lips and that's all it takes for the man to drive in erratically, coming with a painful bite to Jared's collar.

When he pulls out carelessly, Jared feels the disgusting liquid dripping from his torn hole, no doubt mingling with his blood. Sobbing in humiliation, Jared hangs limply from the ceiling.

There's laughter from the heavily breathing man.

“And so, it seems even the greatest of fighters can be broken.”

Jared couldn't stop the tears if he tried.

\*

The lips press against his, demanding entrance. He doesn't raise his head; he doesn't attempt to pull away; he doesn't even flinch when the tongue thrusts deeply into him mouth. He doesn't care anymore.

Unsurprisingly, the whipping hasn't eased up, nor have the electrocutions or the dunkings. All that's changed is that he now gets raped at his captivators' whim. He knows it's not just one man, he knows by the variations in length and thickness, he feels ill just at the fact that he knows the difference.

His skin crawls in disgust whenever they touch him, but he knows if he struggles it won't make any difference. Dried blood coats his body, fresh blood simply adding new layers. His legs are streaked; his wrists are bloody and raw; his back is a crosshatched mess of cuts. He doesn't care anymore.

“It's time.”

They cut him down from the ceiling, making him crash down and bash his chin on the concrete. Then he's dragged, knees grating and banging, up some stairs to be doused in water. A harsh spray is turned on him, making him cry out as they open his cuts again. But at least the foul stench is scraped away.

Then he's roughly dried and soft boxers are pulled up his shaking legs. His blindfold is changed and his wrists are bound before him. He's sent stumbling after the men as they yank the rope. They lead him outside to where he's shoved inside a car of some sort.

Jared's body is screaming in pain, his throat is parched and raw, and he has no idea where he is or where he's being taken.

He's beyond humiliation. He doesn't care any longer. He just wants to be held by hands that don't hurt him. He longs for a single gentle touch. He wishes Jensen was here; Jensen never hurt him; Jensen's touch was always gentle; Jensen wouldn't let anyone hurt him. More tears fall into the blindfold at what he's been reduced to, at what these men have made him into. He just wants to feel safe again.

When the car pulls to a halt, he is dragged out. The men, completely oblivious to his knees scraping over the ground, continue to yank him until he eventually manages to get his feet beneath him.

He's taken to a room filled with quiet whispering and the sounds of chairs shifting about. The floor is stone cold beneath his feet and the air is dusty. Someone yanks his blindfold off and his eyes squeeze shut against the light. When he finally manages to squint, it reveals a small room, occupied by about seven other men, all seated in a semi-circle around where Jared is being held.

One of the men gripping his rope calls out to the group, "Who wants this?"

The men shift around, their eyes roaming Jared's shivering body languidly. "Ten thousand," yells someone from the back.

"Is he obedient?" asks another, shifting forward in his seat.

"He knows to fear pain, so yes, he is obedient," replies his captivator.

"Twenty thousand."

Slowly the price is raised, until one man stands up and bids, "Forty thousand."

The other men fall silent, until one other guy smacks his hand on his thigh, "Fifty."

Throughout it all, Jared gapes at the sick bastards before him, feeling bile rising in his throat. He squints at the men, trying to force his eyes to focus so he can make out who his 'bidders' are.

"Sixty thousand." Jared's eyes snap over to the side where a blonde man steps out of the shadows and Jared's sure he's hallucinating. He's sure... so sure. Because if he's not... if he's not hallucinating, then that's Chris, Chris standing the midst of all these other men.

"Sixty five thousand." Jared's eyes snap towards a large dark-haired man whose eyes glitter as they roam his body. Shivering, Jared turns back to where Chris is standing. He doesn't care how ill it makes him feel to see Chris here, he just needs to see a familiar face.

Chris grimaces, but calls out, "Seventy."

"Eighty," the dark-haired man offers, his eyes dangerous.

"Eighty five," Chris spits.

The man falls silent and the man holding Jared's rope calls out, "Eighty five, going once. Going twice. Going-"

“Ninety,” growls the dark-haired man.

Jared glances back at Chris desperately.

“A hundred.”

The dark-haired man looks murderous, but he just slouches down in his chair.

“Sold to Cowboy for a hundred thousand.”

Jared is tugged to the side, where they wait for Chris to make his way over. The blonde sends a glance in Jared’s direction, his eyes shadowed and without recognition. Jared immediately drops his gaze to the floor, shame tingeing his cheeks.

“You got a good deal here, Cowboy. This is yer first buy, eh? It’s a mighty fine one. Took a while to break him, I’ll tell ya,” one of the captivators states proudly.

“I’m sure he did,” Chris murmurs. Jared looks up in time to see Chris handing the man a bag, “Evening, gentlemen.”

Chris takes the rope from their hands and pulls Jared after him, not stopping until they reach his truck. “Get in,” Chris whispers, opening the door and helping Jared inside, all the while peering around.

He guns the car into motion and they peel away from the building in a cloud of dust. The man doesn’t stop until he’s changed directions several times and has driven them miles away from the building. Then he pulls over at a deserted stretch, hidden by a line of trees.

He turns to Jared, his eyes worried, “Jesus Christ, Jared! What the hell were you doing in there?”

Jared’s just too tired; he doesn’t even care enough to find out why Chris was there. He shakes his head, eyes slipping shut as his parched lips part enough to murmur, “Jen...Jensen... please...”

“Okay, okay, I’ll call him now, he’ll meet us at the hospital.”

\*

When he sees Chris’ name flashing on the screen, he nearly doesn’t pick up the phone. Then he remembers what happened the last time he did that.

“Yeah?” his voice is scratchy from lack of sleep and lack of everything else.

“Jen, I’ve got your boy.”

“What?” Jensen gasps, quickly getting to his feet, “What? Where?”

“He was up for auction at one of the main human trafficking centers in the province. Meet me at the Santa Maria hospital, okay?”

Chris hangs up, leaving Jensen shaking as he stumbles towards Steve, “Santa... Maria, now...”

\*

Chris’ hands are gentle as they help him out the car, but even still, simply breathing is painful. They get him on a gurney, medics surrounding him and shooting questions at the blonde, who answers them as smoothly as he can.

Then he’s suddenly staring up at the sterile ceiling, listening to the sounds of beeping and rushing feet.

He wishes Jensen were here.

Jensen would make the pain go away.

\*

“Where is he?”

Chris raises his head from his hands and gets to his feet, “They’re examining him now, the doctors haven’t told me anything.”

“He’s... he’s alright, though?”

Chris laughs hoarsely, “I don’t know what the hell you mean by ‘alright’. Those bastards really did a number on him. I barely recognized him.”

Jensen squeezes his eyes shut tightly, “But he’s alive?”

“Yeah. He’s a tough kid.” Chris glances up, “How the hell’d they get hold of him?”

That’s when the officers arrive, closely followed by Chad and the Padalecki family. Jensen nods Chris towards them and wanders down the corridor to try find out what’s happening.

\*

When he wakes up, it’s to the sounds of someone screaming. Hand press him down, merely making him struggle harder to get free, a hand clamps over his mouth and the screaming cuts off.

His eyes hurt when he opens them, but through his eyelashes he can make out the strange faces surrounding him. Unable to stop himself, he begins shaking, tremors of fear racing through him, “No... please... no...” he begs softly, trying to curl away from them and flinching when they keep touching him.

“No more... no more...” he whispers through chapped lips, “please...”

Something stabs his arm and he sinks into darkness.

\*

“When’s he gonna wake up?” Meg asks, coming to sit on Jensen’s knee. Her hazel eyes fall on her bruised brother and well up with moisture yet again.

Jensen pulls her against his chest in a hug, “I don’t know, Meg... Soon, I hope.”

Meg slides closer to the motionless form on the bed, stroking her tiny fingers over Jared’s bruised cheeks, “I want him back...”

“Me too,” he whispers hoarsely in response, his eyes glued on his friend.

\*

Someone’s holding him down. He’s trying to struggle, trying to push them away, trying to wake up, but he can’t, his body’s not obeying him. All he can manage is to shake his head, desperately trying to pull away from the hands that want to... want to hurt him... want to break him...

“Please...” he sobs, “don’t... please, ... Just kill me... kill me... please... Let it be over...” it’s a plea he’s repeated many times over the past few days.

He hears someone crying, someone calling his name, but he flinches away from the hand that touches his cheek. “Kill me...” he murmurs.

“Jare...” A distant voice calls his name, it sounds familiar. So familiar....

An ache fills his chest as he turns his head away from the voice, “Kill me...”

Someone’s warm hands cover his, hands that are gentle... different. The fingers tighten and a warmth presses lightly on his chest, the hands slipping up to cling at his shoulders. The person’s shaking, shaking badly.

“Jare... please, wake up.... Jay... I need you to wake up...”

He turns towards the voice, a familiar scent surrounding him. He recognizes it; his fingers curl up slightly, brushing over soft skin, feeling tears. "Jense..." he whispers hoarsely. "Jen..."

The hands slide over his chest and up his neck to stroke at his cheeks, "Jared... God, Jay... please... come back... come back..."

Jensen.... It's Jensen. The words don't seem to make sense. How can Jensen be here? Jensen should never have to be in a place like this. Jensen should never know the hell that Jared's been introduced to. Jensen is pure, clean and untouched.

"Don't leave me. Jay... please..."

Doesn't Jensen get what he's asking from him? To stay would mean more pain, more...

\*

He just wants it to be over. He doesn't want to feel anymore. He doesn't want to hurt anymore.

"Please, Jen..." he begs quietly. "Want it... want it to be over..."

"Shhh," a hand brushes through his hair, fingers lingering, "I know, Jay... I know... but... but you can't... you can't leave. You can't leave me..." Jensen's breath hitches, "I need you, Jay... I need you..."

\*

He tries to pull back from the darkness; he tries not to be swallowed by the endless exhaustion that's threatening to drown him. But it's only when he feels the press of soft lips on his forehead that he lets out a soft sigh; "Jen..." his eyes flutter open and he blinks at the painfully bright light.

"Wha... where?" he looks around, searching for the grey, concrete walls and rusty piping, and seeing only surgically clean walls.

His eyes fall on Jensen, who's sitting on the edge of his bed, leaning close to him. "Jen...?" he whispers hoarsely, wondering how he got here.

Jensen looks so tired, his eyes red, puffy and lined with dark shadows, but even still, Jared's never seen a better sight. "Jensen..." he murmurs again.

The older man surges forwards, arms sliding around Jared and pulling him against a firm chest. The embrace is so painful that Jared has to gasp in order to breathe, but he doesn't pull away. "Yeah..." Jensen croaks, pressing his face into his shoulder, "I'm here..."

“How...?” Jared asks when Jensen finally releases him and lays him back down. He frowns as he tries to piece together his memory. “Chris?”

“Yeah, he...” Jensen chokes on a humorless laugh, “he bought you for a hundred thousand dollars, courtesy of the government.”

Unable to comprehend this, Jared just stares up at his friend.

“You’re safe, Jay. They can’t hurt you anymore...” Jensen strokes Jared’s arm subconsciously. “We’re in Santa Maria hospital and you’ve been out of it for six days.”

“I...” he trails off, wondering what he’s supposed to say. “Jen...?”

Jensen’s fingers are soft, brushing along his cheeks and then back to tuck his hair out of his face. Tears fill the older man’s eyes and he buries his face in Jared’s chest, “I’m sorry, Jay... I’m so sorry.”

Despite his protesting limbs, Jared manages to slide an arm around his friend’s shoulders, pressing him closer, “Why? Jen, what could you possibly have done to be sorry for?”

“I...” Jensen clings harder, making Jared squeeze his eyes shut at the pain shooting through him.

Footsteps approach the room and Chad’s voice is sharp, “Jesus, Jensen. Let go! Can’t you see you’re hurting him?”

Pulling away as if stung, Jensen stares at Jared, eyes darting down to the blood seeping through the white bandage from the torn stitches, “I’m sorry. Fuck, I’m sorry, Jared. Jare...”

Chad pushes past Jensen, quickly moving to kneel beside the bed and gently fingering the bandage, “Fuck, Jenny. Awesome way to say hi, huh? Just rip him to pieces again.” But the edge in his voice is only concern.

“Chad,” Jared reaches out for his friend, managing to fist a handful of his shirt, “I’m okay.”

Breathing out heavily, Chad gently covers Jared’s fisted hand with his, both wincing when his fingers slide over Jared’s torn wrist, and carefully slides his arms around the younger man, pulling him in for a long hug. “Man, when you’re back together, I am so gonna kick your ass. Do you have any idea how freaked we were?”

“I’m sorry,” Jared whispers when he pulls back, looking up at his two best friends, grimacing when his shoulder shifts slightly.

“I’m gonna call a doctor,” Chad murmurs, his fingers lightly sliding up to ruffle Jared’s hair. His voice is soft as he confesses, “It’s good to have you back.”

\*

“Jen...” a soft voice stirs him awake and he raises his head, his eyes automatically searching for his friend.

Jared’s eyes are squeezed tightly shut, his head tossing and turning in the throes of a nightmare, and in one fluid move, Jensen is beside his friend, his hands reaching out to wipe the terror from his friend’s face.

“Jay, I’m right here... wake up, man.... You’re safe now...”

The younger man tenses up under his touch and his eyes flutter open. His voice is so small, like a lost, young child searching for something, “J... Jen?”

Breathing out a sigh of relief, Jensen slides the back of his hand along Jared’s cheek, “Yeah, it’s just me, Jare.”

He doesn’t know whether the physical contact is more for his or Jared’s sake, but he pretends he’s just doing it to comfort his friend. It would be weird if he admitted how much he needs the contact to reassure himself that Jared is real.

As his fingers, slide down to rest pointlessly at the side of Jared’s neck, Jensen keeps track of the steady thumping, imagining that his own heart is following the pattern. Then he feels stupid and pulls his hand away, intending to shove it in his pocket to keep it from getting all touchy-feely, but it only gets far enough to curl around the bruised wrist of his friend, thumb stroking the delicate skin softly, unconsciously.

“How’re you feeling?”

Jared grimaces, his pale face shadowed, “Fine.”

At Jensen’s pointed glare, he shrugs, wincing only slightly, “Better. So, what’s happening with Eric?”

Frowning at the change in topic, Jensen sighs, “Well, obviously Eric wants us to get back to it, but he says that you must just take it easy and get better.”

Jared looks away, “What about you? You could go back now.”

A faint flush tints Jensen’s cheeks and he’s glad Jared’s not looking, “Well, uhm... I kinda told him to go to hell and stay there until you’re ready, then we’ll both show up for work.”

Jared bites his lip, making Jensen wince as the bruised skin begins to bleed. Jared doesn't even notice. "You don't have to do that... I know... I know how much you hate not having anything to do."

"What do you mean I don't have anything to do?" Jensen shakes his head, "Dude, if you think I'm gonna let you outta my sight, you're sorely mistaken."

A blush of color spreads over Jared's cheeks and Jensen has to grit his teeth to stop his fingers from touching. Looking for all the world like a five year old kid, Jared peers up through his bangs, his bruised jaw and cheek making him look so vulnerable and innocent, as he murmurs huskily, "Thanks, Jen... I..." his teeth tug at his already raw lip, "Thank you..."

Jensen leans forward, about to say something entirely chick-flicky and unDean-like, not to mention sappy, when someone clears his throat from the doorway, making him jump slightly.

"Not interrupting something, am I?" Chad grins cheerfully, his eyes slipping down to where Jensen's thumbing Jared's wrist.

Jared smiles up at the blonde man, "Hey, Chad."

Chad moves around to scoot up a chair on the other side of the bed, his hand skimming up Jared's chest and moving to brush the bangs from his eyes, "Hey, kid. How're you doing?"

"I'm okay, I guess. The doctors have been pumping me with meds and fluids and shit... so I don't even know whether it's actually me or the drugs feeling like this."

Nodding, Chad glances up at Jensen, "And you, emo-kid? Feeling better now that we got our boy back?"

Jensen's furious glare is spoiled by his impressive flush, and the blonde just chuckles. "Oh, and Jenny, the detective is in the waiting room, he wanted to talk to you."

\*

Once Jensen's left the room, Chad turns back to Jared, pulling his chair closer. For a few moments, he just looks at Jared, his eyes warm and soft. Then he clears his throat and grins, "The superman freaks are gonna show up this weekend, but be careful, I think Rosey said he's bring you a present. Never trust the Rosey presents."

Jared smiles slightly, remembering the last present that idiot Mike Rosenbaum sent. Jared had walked around covered in soot for the rest of the day thanks to it.

Then he frowns, "What did you mean when you called Jen 'emo-kid'?"

“Oh,” Chad shifts slightly, “Let’s just say that Jenny’s got separation anxiety when it comes to you. The dude went batshit crazy while you were missing. Hell, we all did. But he felt guilty on top of that as well and he’s Jensen to your Jared, so he was like... triple batshit crazy.”

Jared’s frown deepens as he remembers Jensen apologizing, “Guilty?”

Chad glances at the door, “Man, maybe you should just ask him, I don’t... I mean... just talk to him...”

\*

“Yes, detective, you wanted to see me?”

The man nods, “I know I should be speaking to his family members, but I think I’m right in informing you first.”

“Thank you.”

“Come, walk with me.” Jensen falls into step beside the man, wondering what this is about.

“Have you any news about the men responsible?”

“Mr. Ackles, as I’m sure you are aware, the organization that Jared was taken by is one of the largest human tracking organizations in the world. Their branches extend across the globe, from the States, Mexico, parts of South America, Northern Africa, Russia, Middle East, India, right through to Australia. They’re bigger than the police force and are out of our jurisdiction. The feds have taken over this case, it is out of our hands.”

Jensen stops walking, “So, what? The men aren’t even going to be arrested?”

“As your friend Agent Kane has no doubt mentioned, the organization is responsible for far more than this one kidnapping. I am not privy to the federal files, but I can safely presume that the feds are planning on bringing the whole organization down.”

Biting his lip hard enough to draw blood, Jensen’s reminded of the fact that Jared did the exact same not twenty minutes earlier. “Thank you for letting me know.”

\*

Jared wakes up with a soft groan, tensing up when he realizes there’s someone’s hand on his neck. After opening his eyes to meet intense green ones, he relaxes completely, “Jen...”

“Morning sunshine,” Jensen replies with a grin, “Guess what?”

“You’re secretly a grim reaper and I’m secretly dead?”

Jensen’s grin falters only slightly, but his fingers twitch against Jared’s pulse-point. “Nope, you get to eat proper food today, none of that goopy mush.”

Smiling at how cheerful his friend’s trying to be, Jared reaches up shakily to clap his hand lightly on Jensen’s shoulder, “Awesome, guess you’d better help me sit up then.”

Jensen immediately moves to slide his arm around Jared’s shoulders, his fingers soft as they brush past the bandages and bruised skin to grip the younger man’s side firmly. Pressing his hand flat against Jared’s chest, Jensen pulls him upwards, wincing with Jared’s every soft hiss of pain.

They’re both relieved when Jared’s upright, and, just on time, the nurse comes in with a tray of food.

“Awesome, hospital food, now I’m a saved man,” Jared chuckles lightly.

“Better than pronutro or whatever baby food you’ve been eating for the past week or so.”

“Yeah...” Jared falls silent, his shoulders slumped slightly as he stares at the food balanced on his lap.

When he moves to open the containers, his hands are shaking so badly with the exertion of it that he nearly spills the jelly, but Jensen’s gentle hand intercepts it.

“The doctors say it’s going to be a while before your limbs are back to their usual strength...” Jensen looks down at the jelly in his hand.

Jared nods, shadows flittering across his face, “Yeah... I guess being tied up for so long will do that....”

Jensen flinches, his jaw clenched painfully. They haven’t spoken about it. This is the first time Jared’s brought it up. “I...”

Raising trembling hands again, Jared tries to spoon some food, but the spoonful ends up tumbling back into the bowl. He feels like crying. It’s so pathetic, he’s about to cry just because he can’t feed himself. He feels so useless and worn out.

“Hey...” Jensen murmurs softly, his fingers prying the spoon from Jared’s hands. “I never told you about that time in eighth grade when I had that really bad flu,” he spoons some jelly matter-of-factly, and nudges Jared until he opens his mouth, cheeks blushing furiously.

Jensen purposefully makes it not a big deal, hating the shame in his friend’s eyes. “I had snot pouring down my nose,” Jared grimaces and the older man laughs, “Yup, sneezing,

coughing and all that. Anyway,” he spoons another big mouthful, “I eventually felt so awful that I couldn’t even move. My mom had to, like, feed me and everything. But, you know what the worst part was? A bunch of my buddies came to visit me and they came when my mom was feeding me. Most embarrassing moment of my life.”

This pries a chuckle from Jared, and Jensen just grins, “So, what do you feel like next, the omelet or the weird blocky thing that may or may not be custard?”

\*

Some days are worse than others. Sometimes Jared jolts awake, uncertain of his whereabouts, oblivious to anyone around him and flinching away from the gentlest touches.

On these days, Jensen has no idea what to do. He knows what those men did to his friend, how they broke him, and seeing Jared so vulnerable and terrified does things to Jensen. For the first time in his life, Jensen is considering murdering someone. He probably wouldn’t have any moralistic issues with slowly and painfully torturing the men who did this.

The other thing that’s changed is the fact that he physically needs contact with Jared. When he’s sitting beside the bed, he can’t not touch. Whether it’s Jared’s arm, his wrist, his chest, it doesn’t matter, so long as it’s Jared.

And that’s why he finds it so hard on days when Jared’s ‘untouchable’, like today.

Jared’s lying on his side, facing the wall away from Jensen, his back tense and his shoulders visibly shaking. Jensen wants more than anything to slide his hand along the curve of his friend’s torso, to ease the terror and pain Jared’s carrying.

But the doctors have warned him not to touch in any way. They say that Jared’s reliving the fear, as if he’s back there, and any touch will be interpreted as the ‘wrong’ sort of touch.

It doesn’t make it any easier though.

“Jay?” Jensen calls out softly, wincing when he sees Jared’s shoulders tensing up completely. “It’s just me.”

Jared merely curls up tighter, forming a small, vulnerable ball. He’s healed up a bit, but he’s still way too thin.

“Jare, it’s me, Jensen. Come on, man. Uhm... I’ll buy you two packs of maxim’s M&M’s if you look at me.”

Whereas the old Jared would be leaping at the offer, this Jared simply continues shaking; the soft, telltale hitches in his breathing let Jensen know that his friend is crying.

In that moment, all common sense and heed for the doctors' advice flies out the window, and Jensen slips closer to the bed, running his fingers along the curve of Jared's side, making the younger man whimper and pull away. "Jare, it's just me," Jensen curls his fingers around Jared's arm and tries to turn his friend around. "Jared, you know I'd never hurt you."

When Jared's soft sobs meet his ears, Jensen feels like he's been kicked in the stomach. He scoots up to lie on the bed beside Jared and curls his arm around the younger man, curving himself protectively around his friend, comforting him in the only way he can think of.

The shaking doesn't cease and, with every broken sound that escapes Jared's lips, an icy knife plunges into Jensen's chest. He'll do anything, absolutely anything, even cut off his own arm, if it means that Jared will stop hurting.

Slowly pressing himself closer, Jensen curves a hand around to cup Jared's jaw, tilting the man's head towards him. "Jared... Jared, open your eyes, you know me. You know me, Jare. I'd never hurt you. Never. You know that. You know that, man."

Jared's breathing hitches, his chest quivering as he slowly blinks his eyes open. "Je... Jen?" he whispers so softly and so brokenly disbelieving that it nearly breaks Jensen's heart.

His chest clenches painfully and he feels tears welling up in his own eyes as he strokes his fingers along Jared's tear-streaked cheek, "Yeah, Jare... it's me. It's me."

With a soft sob, Jared rolls around, burying his face in Jensen's neck and clutching at him desperately, his whole body seeming so small and fragile. "Jen..." he chokes quietly, "Jen..."

Pressing himself even closer and curling a leg around his friend as well, so he's completely wrapped around the younger man, Jensen hugs him tightly, breathing out shakily, "It's okay, Jay. It's okay... I'm here.... I'm right here..."

"They... Jen, they... they wouldn't stop.... I just wanted them to... to stop... I... tried to fight them... Jen... I never... I never gave in... no matter how... how much they... they hurt me... but... but then..." Jared shudders, hiding himself further in Jensen. "They... they... down there..."

"Oh, God," Jensen chokes, squeezing his friend closer as understanding dawns on him, "God, Jare... fuck, I should've been there. I should've been there to stop them... I should've done something..."

Jared shakes his head, “Just... just... don’t... don’t leave me... don’t leave me alone... please, Jen... I... I can’t...”

Squeezing his eyes shut tightly and breathing in against Jared’s soft golden-brown curls, Jensen makes the easiest promise he’s ever made, “I’ll never leave you, Jay. I swear to God. I’ll never leave you.”

Jared relaxes at the words, sinking into Jensen’s embrace entirely. But only a few seconds have passed when the shivering starts up again.

“Jay?” Jensen whispers softly, fearing that Jared’s sinking back into the memory.

Firmly fisting his friend’s shirt, Jared gasps a breath as if he’s coming up for air, “I... Jen... I can see... them... feel them... like... like they’re here...”

Clenching his eyes tightly shut and cursing God for putting Jared through this, Jensen shakes his head, “They’re not here, Jay. They’re not ever going to come near you again. It’s just me, Jare. It’s just me.”

“Can... you... can you...?”

“What is it, Jay? What can I do to help?”

Jared turns his head slightly, hiding his face in the older man’s collar as he whispers, “Talk... just talk to me...I... I don’t want to go back there...”

“kay,” Jensen buries his nose in Jared’s hair, his lips brushing just over his friend’s ear as he takes a breath, choosing the first thing he can think of, “You know what we’re going to do this Christmas? We’re going to apologize to our moms for not going home, and we’re going to get into my Jeep and we’re going to drive. I don’t care where we go or how long we take, we’re just going to drive. We’ll buy you candy, tons and tons of candy, and beer. We’ll keep going until we feel we’ve gotten far enough away from everything. Then we’ll take out our sleeping bags and sleep on some beach or by a lake or somewhere like that. And it’ll just be you and me... just you and me,” Jensen breathes out against his friend’s neck and continues to whisper. Gradually his friend stops shaking and they both relax.

Neither of them releases their tight hold of the other, both needing the full body contact and the reassurances it provides, and so, when Jared begins to drift off, his head tilts limply to the side, pressing his lips to Jensen’s neck.

Jensen keeps murmuring about everything he can think of, hoping that his words will keep the bad dreams at bay and, as he talks, his hands stroke gently up and down his friend’s spine, keeping him as close as possible.

He's never felt like this: never needed to be near someone this much; never felt this protective over anyone. The scary part is that he never wants to let Jared out of his arms; he just wants to stay here. Pausing in his semi one-sided conversation, he presses his lips firmly to Jared's forehead, loving the soft, relaxed breath of air that's released against his throat.

A cough comes from the door and Jensen tenses, earning a muffled sound from Jared, which he immediately soothes from his friend with whispered words and soft touches before he glances over his shoulder to see Danneel in the doorway.

She looks resigned.

"Jensen, Jared's parents are out here, they wanted to see whether Jared was awake, but the doctor's only allowing one visitor at a time, because last time it stressed Jared. Sherri's busy arguing with the man now."

Glancing back down at his friend, hating how Jared whimpers softly, his shoulders hunching up as if he's fighting some unseen foe, Jensen runs his fingers through Jared's curls, brushing them out of the young, innocent face. A faint tremble passes through the younger man and hands reach out, searching for Jensen. At Jensen's soft whisper of, "Shhhh, I'm here, Jay," the man sighs, his lips parting slightly in such an endearing way that it takes Jensen a few moments before he remembers that Danneel's still in the room.

Feeling slightly guilty, Jensen turns back to his girlfriend, "Uhm, Dan, Jay's having one of his off days, I think it's best for him to just sleep it off. Can you let them know for me?"

Danneel nods, "Okay." She pause for a bit before saying softly, "Jensen, we...we aren't working..."

Jensen nods, thinking he should feel more upset than he is.

"I think we should see other people. I've gotten an offer with a modeling agency in Paris, I'm going to take it."

He nods again, wondering if there's something he should say. "I hope things work out for you."

She smiles softly, her eyes flickering towards the form cradled in Jensen's arms, "You too." She turns to go, "Bye, Jensen, look after yourself. And look after Jared." And then she's gone.

Jensen doesn't really feel any different. He gets the feeling that he should be devastated about his four-year relationship suddenly flying out the window, but he's not. All he does is curl closer to Jared, pressing his nose to his friend's hair and inhaling the soft scent of home.

\*

It's the first time since the kidnapping that Jared's felt this relaxed, this at ease. But most amazing of all, Jared feels safe. He never thought he'd feel safe again, not after he was taken from his own house, but now he does. Safe and protected.

Blinking open his eyes, Jared realizes the reason. Jensen.

A gentle hand strokes through his hair, another rests at the small of his back, pressing him closer. Beneath Jared's ear, he can hear the steady thumping of his friend's heart, and the rhythm of Jensen's chest causes Jared's head to rise and fall in a soothing pattern. A soft puff of air is expelled against his forehead every few seconds; Jensen's lips are warm and gentle against his skin.

Jared never wants to move.

Pressing himself closer, Jared lets out a soft, happy sigh when Jensen takes this as permission to hug him tightly. He doesn't even feel the urge to complain when Jensen's lips shift, pressing firmly against Jared's cheek.

"Jen..." he breathes out, clutching at his friend.

"Shhhh, sleep, Jared... It's okay... just sleep, man. I got ya."

\*

When Jared tenses up in his arms, Jensen knows his friend is back. It's the last thing he wants to do, but he loosens his hold, allowing the younger man to slip away from him.

Keeping his head lowered, Jared scrubs a hand over his blushing cheeks, shakily sitting up. "I..." he looks up, his hazel eyes shining with humiliation. "Sorry, Jensen," he murmurs softly.

"Jay..." Jensen reaches out for his friend, running his fingers over the tense shoulders, "Man, it's okay."

Jared looks away silently, his jaw clenching. When he speaks, his words are bitter, "I'm pathetic."

"Stop it, Jared. You're not. You're nothing like that, okay?"

Laughing hoarsely, Jared swipes a hand roughly over his face, wiping away dampness, "Look at me, Jen. Look at what I've become. I'm crying. I don't even know *why* I'm crying. You saw me yesterday. You saw how... fuck, Jen..." Jared turns desperate eyes on his friend, whispering brokenly, "I don't know what I'm going to do... I can't go on like this... Jen, I can't."

Jensen slides closer to his friend, curling a leg around him so he's bracketed, his back against Jensen's chest. Jared resists for a few seconds, fruitlessly shaking his head and trying to pull away, but Jensen just hold on tightly, pressing his nose to the nape of Jared's neck. "We'll get through this, Jay. You and me, man. I'll make sure of it."

Falling still, Jared lets out a shuddering breath, hands sliding down to curl over Jensen's arms, wrapping them more firmly around his chest.

"I don't... I don't know what I'd do without you..." Jared confesses quietly, leaning back into him. "I... fuck.... Jensen, I don't know why.... I... fuck..." he looks to the side, staring out the window with unseeing eyes.

Jensen scoots closer to his friend, wrapping himself completely around the younger man, and narrowing the bracket of his legs so his thighs press firmly against Jared.

With his mouth a breath above his friend's ear, he whispers softly, "When you were taken, I lost it. Completely. I didn't care about anything anymore; you were the only thing I could think of. I've never been more terrified in my life than I was at the thought of losing you. I'd rather die than lose you, Jare. I'd rather die."

Jared is silent for a few moments, before he asks softly, "What was Chad going on about when he said you felt guilty?"

"I... I... shit... Jared... I should have stopped them... I... you phoned me, man... You phoned me and if I'd picked up, we might have been on time to... to stop them taking you..."

Jared silent for a few seconds before he replies hoarsely, "Jensen... they'd been planning it for a while, when they... when they took me, they drugged me... it was... I was taken within minutes... there's nothing you could have done that would have changed anything.... And... I don't blame you at all, you've got to know that?"

Jensen's arms tighten around his friend as he nods slowly, relaxing as he finally allows the guilt to seep out of him.

"And you're here now, that's what matters," Jared whispers, closing his eyes and tilting his head slightly to the side, allowing Jensen to bury his nose in the vulnerable skin of his exposed neck, just over his pulse.

A soft huff escapes the young man, "Man, I think I've been turned into a girl."

Grinning against Jared's smooth skin, Jensen replies unthinkingly, "Well, you always were a bitch."

The reaction is instantaneous, every muscle in Jared's body tensing up as the memories surface with the word.

*“Take it, bitch. Bet you love this, huh? You filthy slut, nothing more than a whore. You like this? You like being fucked by a real man, don’t you?”*

*Jared shook his head, screaming and begging behind the gag for the man to stop. Screaming at the pain of the dry intrusion, screaming as the man’s girth was shoved brutally upwards, entering him further than should have been possible.*

*He didn’t know how long it had been. It felt like years. Through the pained haze, he vaguely recalled a time other than this. A time when he wasn’t used like this.*

*It didn’t matter how hard he tried to shut off what was happening to him, the pain kept it real, kept him conscious.*

*When the man tore out of him, Jared sagged onto the ground in relief. It was short-lived, as he was soon being dragged onto his knees, his parched lips being forced apart and made to take... “Such a bitch, aren’t you? Suck it! I said suck it!” The whip was out again. The man’s angry curses flew at him when he couldn’t do much more than blink. His body was so tired... so drained... he didn’t want to be there... “Bitch....”*

*“...God, fuck... Jared... Jared, come back, Jay... wake up, man. You’re safe, you’re in hospital, I’m here.... Jare, Jared... please, please....”*

Jared’s eyes flicker towards the blurred shape above him; he can make out green eyes. Something damp lands on his cheek, waking him up further, bringing the world back into focus.

It’s Jensen above him, kneeling beside him, hands curled at his shoulders, a desperate look in the man’s tear-streaked cheeks. It had been a tear that woke Jared up.

“Oh, God,” Jensen chokes, realizing Jared’s awake. Pulling his friend towards him, the older man shakes his head, “I’m sorry, fuck... Jared, I’m so sorry.”

Squeezing his eyes shut to try ridding himself of the flashback, Jared shakes his head, allowing the older man to pull him against his chest. Curling his hand around Jensen’s torso, Jared clings to his friend, terrified at what just happened. “Jen... I... I... how am I supposed to live like this? One... one joke and I’m back there... one word and I... God.... What have they done to me?”

Gently cupping his friend’s cheek, tilting his head up to look him in the eyes, Jensen replies shakily, “Nothing that I can’t fix.”

Jared breath catches, his eyes slipping shut as he lowers his head to Jensen’s chest again. Pressing his lips to the younger man’s forehead and exhaling roughly, Jensen continues, “I mean it.”

\*

There's a soft knock on the door and Jared feels himself tense up involuntarily. He hates this, hates that he's so scared all the time, hates that he only feels safe when he's protected by Jensen, hates that everyone has to tread on eggshells when they're talking to him, he hates it all.

Jared can feel his friend's chin resting on his head. He knows he should pull away, but he can't. He needs Jensen. It's terrifying just how much he needs his best friend.

"Hey, guys." It's Chad's voice. His footsteps enter the room. "The doctor's now allowing more than one visitor, so Jensen you have to share."

The blonde takes a seat in Jared's line of sight, his fingers reaching up to ruffle Jared's hair. It's minute, but, at the contact, Jensen's arms tighten around him almost possessively.

"Hey, Chad," Jared whispers hoarsely.

"How're you feeling, kid?"

Jared opens his mouth to reply, but no words come out. He's fine, really he is. Only he isn't, he isn't at all.

With another soft squeeze, Jensen answers for him, "He's getting through this."

Nodding, Chad's eyes are soft as they roam Jared, then they flicker towards Jensen, down to the protective arms tight around the younger man. "I wanted to give you a heads up, the Padalecki troop is on its way. And Mama Padalecki sure is determined."

Jared slowly pulls away from Jensen's chest, shivering as he does so. With his eyes lowered, he shifts to sit with his back against the headboard. Jensen pulls himself up and mimics the position, nudging his shoulder gently against his friend's, earning a small smile.

Chad clears his throat, "They're on their way, now."

Hesitantly, Jared glances up at Jensen, "I... Jensen, you don't have to... I mean, you can go if you... if you want... I don't... I don't expect you to... to stay..." he looks away again.

Reaching out to ruffle his friend's hair, Jensen grins, "I promised, didn't I?"

"Yeah, but... that was when I... when I... You don't have to... I mean..."

Squeezing Jared's shoulder lightly, Jensen confesses, "I don't want to be anywhere else."

“Oh, God,” comes from the side, and they turn to see Chad mimicking throwing up. When he looks up, he’s grinning, “You girls *quite* finished?”

\*

After much hugging and tears, Sherri finally calms down enough to form coherent sentences. It’s like this every time she’s visited Jared.

“The doctors say you can come home tomorrow. We want you to come home to San Antonio, we think that’d be best.”

Jared’s heart begins thumping, his skin feeling tighter. After glancing at Jensen, Jared drops his gaze to his shaking hands. The thought of being so far from his friend terrifies him. Also, he knows what a tight knit community they live in back in Texas. He’ll be big gossip news there, all the people who’ve seen him grow up will know what he’s been reduced to, and he’ll have people showing up just to see how damaged he is and he’ll be the local amusement and....

Jensen’s hand squeezes his thigh and his steady voice cuts in, “I think it's best if he stays with me.”

Looking up desperately at the older man, Jared wants nothing more. “Pl... please,” he hates how his voice shakes.

The hand on his thigh squeezes again, comforting him more than he’d like to admit.

His mom’s mouth is slightly open, “Oh... I... honey, if... wherever you feel safer... I mean...”

Feeling terrible about turning his mom down, Jared replies softly, “I’d... I’d like...” he glances up at his best friend and is met with warm, green eyes. “if Jen... I’d like... with him...” Jared bites his lip, his cheeks going red.

Sherri nods slowly, looking slightly disappointed, but when she looks at Jensen, she smiles warmly, “You’re a wonderful friend, Jensen. Thank you for looking after my baby.”

“Mom,” Jared protests, now beetroot.

Jensen laughs, throwing an arm around the younger man’s shoulders and tugging him up against his side, “Don’t worry Sherri, I’ll look after your baby boy. I’ll make sure he eats his veggies, brushes his teeth and goes to bed early, won’t I, Jay?”

Grumbling under his breath, Jared punches his friend’s chest. But he doesn’t pull out from under the older man’s arm or move away.

\*

After a tearful goodbye (mainly from Sherrri), the Padalecki's and Chad leave for the airport. Jared's not sure how he feels. Numb is probably the most accurate.

But then warm hands slide over his shoulders, massaging the tension out of him and he glances back to be met with a soft, warm smile, and he knows he's made the right choice.

Jensen stops the massage and slides his arms down to slip around the younger man's waist. With his chin resting on Jared's shoulder, he murmurs, "I'm glad you're staying."

Leaning back into his friend's embrace, Jared whispers back, "Me too."

It's strange how their relationship has shifted. There's a lot more physical contact now. It's softer, more precious somehow. Neither can explain it, but they're not complaining. To Jensen, anything that gives Jared comfort and security is a good thing, and if he can give that to his friend simply by being more physical, then he sure as hell is going to.

He's still unbelievably grateful for the fact that Jared doesn't flinch from his touch. After what happened to him, what those men did to him, it would be perfectly understandable if Jared hated any male touch, but it would hurt Jensen so much if Jared flinched away from him.

Skimming a hand down Jared's side, Jensen pulls away. "You ready to get out of here?"

It takes Jared a few moments before he looks up, meeting Jensen's eye as he replies, "You have no idea."

Despite all the time spent healing in the hospital, Jared is still unsteady on his feet and has to lean heavily on Jensen as they make their way out to where the car is waiting.

Taking one final look at the hospital, Jared hefts up his shoulders and allows Jensen to help him into the passenger seat.

\*

Unrolling an air mattress, Jensen lays it beside his bed. "I'll sleep here, you're taking the bed."

Opening his mouth to complain, Jared is interrupted by his friend, "And no, you can't sleep on the floor, doctor's orders. You're taking the bed and that's final, got it?"

Quirking his lip up into a small smile, Jared nods, "Yes, mommy."

Jensen grins, "Awesome, I'm only thirty and I already have a twenty-six year old kid. Jeez, I don't even want to know what age I started doing it."

Smacking his friend over the head, Jared glances around at the room, taking in the familiar, everyday things that he now treasures. It's warm and cozy, smelling of Jensen, which Jared is sure has now become his favorite smell. He flushes at the thought.

\*

Mike and Tom show up that evening, bearing movies, pizza and beer, and hug Jared tightly. "Glad you're back, buddy."

"Yeah," Jared replied, his words muffled by the smothering Mike is giving him. He concentrates on not panicking. It's just Mike.

"Alright, that's enough. Break it up, Rosey," it's Jensen's voice that has Mike pulling away, allowing Jared to breathe.

Mike smirks, "Getting possessive there, Jenny?"

Jensen clenches his jaw, shaking his head and turning back inside to hide his flush.

The mood eases up as the evening wears on, and it's not long before they're all half asleep.

Mike's singing under his breath, some weird lullaby that's annoying as hell, but everyone's had too many beers to do much about it.

What breaks through Jensen's drunken daze and sobers him up, is the sight of Jared's head drooping. He gets to his feet, "Alright, sasquatch. Enough partying for you."

Jared's pliable, obediently lifting up an arm so Jensen can pull it around his shoulders and hoist the younger man up. It's only when they reach the bedroom that Jared turns towards his friend, pulling him into a tight hug and slurring in his ear. "You... you don't... don't know... much I need... need you... Jense...n... You... you make it all..." Jared waves an arm through the air, "go 'way... like... like it didn't... didn't happen... I love... love you... love you so much... much... you don't know... you can't... can't know..."

Jensen carefully unwraps his friend from around him, sitting him down on the bed. As he helps his friend get undressed, he replies, "'s not one-sided, Jare... I need you... I love you too. Now, come on, let's get you to bed, huh?"

Pulling the beer-stained shirt off his friend, leaving Jared in only his boxers, Jensen pulls back the covers of the bed and helps Jared slip in.

Running his fingers lightly through Jared's hair, Jensen murmurs, "Night, Jay..."

Then he gets ready for bed himself and grabs a duvet from the cupboard, sighing as he eyes the blown up mattress on the floor.

\*

At two in the morning, the sounds of soft sobbing wakes him and he jolts upright, glancing over at the bed. Jared's curled in a fetal position, clinging to his pillow desperately as he shakes his head, "No... please... please... no more... it hurts... please... no... no..." he gasps and his body jerks.

Quickly scrambling up onto the bed, Jensen kneels beside his friend, grabbing his shoulder and pulling him around to face him. "Jared, Jay. Wake up! Dammit, Jare, open your eyes. It's just a dream. You're safe. I'm here, I'm here."

Cupping Jared's face, Jensen thumbs at the tears streaming down the younger man's cheeks. In a surge of desperation over the fact that Jared isn't waking up, Jensen can't stop himself from moving forwards, pressing his lips to Jared's in a fierce, possessive kiss. "Jared," he whispers against his friend's cheek. "It's me, it's only me."

Jared's eyes fly open, his pupils dilated and unfocused. As his eyes latch onto Jensen, a flicker of recollection flickers in the hazel and the black slowly begins to shrink. "Jensen...?" he whispers up.

Laughing shakily, Jensen doesn't even realize what he's doing as he presses his lips back over his friend's. It's only Jared sharp intake of breath that reminds him that what he's doing is practically molesting his friend. "Shit..." he breathes, pulling back. "Sorry, Jare... I... you were... I just..."

Jared's lips are slightly parted, a slight sheen on them. Flushing, Jensen thumbs the traces of his kiss from the younger man's lip. Then he begins to pull away, not wanting to scare Jared any more than he already has.

Just as he's about to slip off the bed, Jared's hand reaches out for him, his voice small and vulnerable, "Don't... Jensen... please don't... just... stay with me... please..."

"I..." nodding, Jensen clears his throat, "Sure, anything, Jay." He carefully shifts up the bed, making sure not to touch his friend.

Jared completely ruins that by rolling on top of him, tucking himself in the crook of Jensen's arm and pulling it around him. Letting out a shaky sigh, Jared whispers, his breath tickling Jensen's chest, "I don't know what I'm doing."

"I kissed you," Jensen murmurs into the darkness, wondering why Jared's allowing him this contact.

"I should be freaking out," Jared replies, sounding confused. "They... back there... they... they kissed me... I tried to stop them... they wouldn't..."

Swallowing thickly, Jensen squeezes his eyes shut, “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have. I don’t know why I...”

Jared shakes his head, his nose brushing over Jensen’s collarbone. “I don’t... I don’t understand why... but it’s different with you... I don’t... I don’t think I want to stop you...”

His hand comes up to rest over Jared’s side, holding him, “What do you mean?”

“I mean...” Jared takes a moment before he continues, “If you did again... I wouldn’t want to stop you... I... I don’t think... with you... I don’t mind...”

Jensen’s face heats up, “Really? I mean... are... are you sure?”

Raising his head up, Jared locks eyes with Jensen, “You make them go away.”

Breathing out shakily, Jensen raises his hand to cradle the side of Jared’s face, marveling at how the younger man leans into it, his eyes slipping shut. “I don’t want to hurt you... scare you in any way... you must tell me if...”

Jared just shakes his head and leans further into Jensen’s palm as if to say ‘you could never hurt me, I trust you’.

Moving slowly, Jensen lifts up, leaning forward to brush his lips lightly over Jared’s. The younger man’s breath catches, his body moving closer as his lips follow Jensen’s.

When Jensen’s tongue carefully nudges his friend’s lips apart, Jared lets out a soft whimper, making Jensen pull back in concern, “You okay, Jared? We can... I can stop...”

Jared shakes his head, his eyes squeezed shut, “Don’t stop... please, Jen...”

Jensen moves forward again, gently licking into Jared’s mouth, skimming his tongue over the younger man’s palate and curling it over the other man’s tongue, tasting him for the first time. His low groan startles them both and he flushes but doesn’t pull away.

He continues for a few moments, and just as he’s about to move away, Jared’s tongue slowly slides up to meet his and he moves forward instead, carefully rolling Jared onto his back and leaning over the man, a hand on the mattress beside Jared’s head to hold himself up, while the other remains curled against his friend’s cheek.

“Jared...” he breathes, wondering how this can possibly be happening.

There are tears streaming down Jared’s cheek and Jensen frowns, “Jay, Jared. Man, we don’t have to; we can stop. It’s hurting you.”

Shaking his head furiously, Jared reaches out to wrap his hand around Jensen's neck, pulling him down, "Don't stop. I can still feel them."

Realizing what's happening, realizing that he's erasing the memory of the other men, Jensen doesn't hesitate to close the distance between them again.

He slides his fingers down Jared's neck, lightly brushing over his friend's pulse point before moving further down, tracing the muscled contours of his friend's body.

Jared shivers beneath him, tears still trickling from his clenched eyes. Jensen's lips slide over his cheek, laying a trail of kisses as he lowers to whisper in Jared's ear, "I love you, Jay... god, forgive me, but I do... So fucking much."

With a gasp, Jared arches up against him, pressing their bodies together, pulling Jensen flush against him and clutching at him tightly.

Jensen softly kisses the tanned skin of his friend's shoulder, his fingers sliding down to rest just above Jared's boxers.

"Can I...?" he asks softly, not sure whether Jared's ready for anything more.

Jared lets out a half-laugh, half-sob, "God, Jensen. I... you can... you can... anything..."

Pressing his lips against Jared's chest, Jensen slips his fingers under the waistband of the boxers, running his fingers over the hidden skin and making Jared writhe beneath him. "That's... that's ticklish! Jen..." Jared chokes out, sending him a watery smile.

Grinning, Jensen slides his hand lower, making Jared fall still. "This okay?" he asks quietly, gently brushing over the younger man's arousal.

The tears start up again, trickling back to dampen Jared's bangs. "I..." Jensen wraps his fingers more firmly around Jared's dick and the man gasps, his head rolling to the side. "Stop... please, stop, Jen... I can't..."

Immediately pulling his hand out, Jensen starts to roll off his friend, but Jared reaches out, tugging him flush against him and wrapping his arms around Jensen firmly. "I'm... I want to... I do... I want you... but..." Jared's voice lowers, "But... it hurts... they... I don't... I don't understand why... why people do it for fun... it... it tears... it tears you apart... I'm... I'm scared..."

Understanding what Jared is talking about, Jensen suddenly feels an overwhelming wave of anger. He can't believe how anyone could do something like that to another being. They hurt Jared in more ways than one; they made him associate sex with another man as having to be painful.

“Jay...” he whispers softly, “I hate them... I hate them so much for what they did to you... I... I’ve been with a man before... it was... it was amazing... it doesn’t have to hurt... not if it’s done properly... I want to show you... but... Jared, I don’t expect anything from you... we don’t have to do that ever if you aren’t ready... if... if we want to, you can even do it to me... but... tonight, I just want to make you feel good. Can I do that?”

Nodding, Jared presses his nose to Jensen’s cheek, inhaling deeply. “I... I trust you, Jensen. More... more than anyone...”

Smiling, Jensen tilts his head, pressing a kiss to the tip of the younger man’s nose, earning a small smile.

Then Jensen slowly slides down his friend’s body, mouthing along the tanned skin and only stopping when his lips are over Jared’s belly button.

His fingers move out to grip the waistband of the boxers and he tugs it down, revealing Jared’s half-hard dick. Smiling reassuringly up at his friend, he slowly lowers to press a kiss to the tip, grinning as it jerks.

It one steady move, he has it in his mouth, groaning at the taste and running his tongue up and down. Jared’s hands are clenching the sheets, his back arching as he moans, his member now fully erect and aching.

Being his first blowjob, Jensen can’t imagine it’s very good, but he recalls all the blowjobs he’s been given in the past and he tries to mimic what he found arousing. As he gets more into it, he begins experimenting, slipping his fingers back to fondle Jared’s balls and making the man cry out softly. Glancing to check that Jared’s okay, he winces when he sees the tears streaming down his friend’s face, but, knowing the reason, he doesn’t stop.

Remembering what his one girlfriend did, Jensen hums around Jared’s dick, feeling smug when it causes his friend to arch up one final time, coming without warning and moaning, “God, Jen...”

Swallowing as much as he can, Jensen pulls away, noticing from the dampness in his boxers that he came as well. Sliding up his friend, he carefully reaches out to wipe the tears away and is pulled down into a fierce kiss.

When he manages to regain his senses enough, he staggers towards the bathroom, returning with a damp cloth with which he cleans them both up. Tossing it off the bed, he turns back to his friend? Lover?

Jared’s eyes are shut, but his breathing is steady and deep. Jensen reaches out to brush the damp bangs from the younger man’s face. Cracking his eye open, Jared reaches out for

him, fingers tracing Jensen's jaw line reverently. "Thank you... love you..." he murmurs softly.

Jensen smiles happily, amazed at how much he loves hearing those last two words. Pressing a light kiss on Jared's forehead, he murmurs back, "Love you too."

Then he flops down and folds himself around the younger man, holding him possessively, protectively. Jared's now his. Even more so than before.

\*

The door bangs open, jerking them both into wakefulness. "Hey, guys. We're headed out-"  
"Mike cuts off as he steps into the room. "O-...kay," he peers at the pair on the bed.

They're completely wrapped around one another, arms and legs entangled, boxers hanging low, hands splayed over bare skin. Mike whistles, "I knew it! Tom!" he yells.

As the blushing pair starts to separate, Tom steps into the room, his eyes widening as he takes in their debauched forms. "Shit..." then he claps Mike over the head and drags him out the room by his ear, "Sorry, guys."

Jensen glances back at Jared, raising an eyebrow in a silent question. Jared bites his lip, hesitating for a few seconds before he nods, slipping his hand in Jensen's as he allows the older man to help him from the bed.

As they get dressed, they keep shooting glances at one another and when their eyes meet, they grin sheepishly.

Unable to restrain himself any longer, Jensen wraps his fingers around his friend's arm, tugging him flush against him and sliding an arm around his waist to keep him there. "Hey," he whispers softly, lips bare centimeters from Jared's.

Jared flushes, his eyes bright as he whispers back, "Hey."

When their lips meet, they kiss hungrily, arms wrapping around one another tightly as they try to ground themselves.

Breathing heavily, they pull apart, foreheads pressed together and breath mingling. Jensen grins, "Today already looks like an awesome day."

Laughing breathlessly, Jared moves forward again, burying his nose in the dip of Jensen's shoulder and hugging him tightly, "Yeah, it really does."

"Despite Mike?" Jensen asks quietly.

Squeezing tighter, Jared replies, "Despite Mike."

They make their way out to the living room where they're met with the sight of Mike rubbing his ear and glaring at a grinning Tom. They turn towards them.

Mike is completely blunt, "So, you two finally got hitched, huh?"

Tom smacks him over the head. "What he means to say is that it's awesome you finally got together, we've known you'd be perfect together for ages. And we wanted to know how long this has been going on."

Unable to stop the proud grin from spreading across his lips, Jensen glances over at his lover.

Jared's ducks his head and flushes as he mumbles, "Last night."

"Shit? Really?" Mike looks delighted, "So... you need any tips?" he waggles his eyebrows and ducks the swipe Tom aims at him.

"Anyway, we're headed out, we're needed back on set. We're really glad you're okay, Jared, man."

Mike nods, "Yup, and just to prove how glad I am to see you, I even got you a present."

The three sane people exchange glances and Jared hesitantly reaches out to take the package gingerly from the bald man's hand.

When the superman guys leave, Jared flops down on the couch holding the bag at an arm's reach, "You think I should open it?"

"No, but you're going to do it anyway."

Nodding grimly, Jared opens it, blinking when nothing explodes or jumps out at him.

"It's candy," he murmurs, reaching into the bag and pulling one out.

"Wait, don-" Jensen tries to stop him, but he unwraps the sweet... and is hit on the nose by it.

Jerking backwards and holding his nose, Jared stares down at the spring and then at the sweet. He grins, "That fucker." He picks up the sweet carefully and tentatively licks it. Establishing that there's nothing wrong with it, he pops it into his mouth.

"Here," he holds out the bag for Jensen, who takes it with a wary look and sticks his hand in, emerging with another sweet.

Holding it at an arm's length, he unwraps it. Nothing happens. "Maybe it's a dud." After carefully examining it, he slips it into his mouth and grins, "I got a dud." He bites into it and a loud, unspeakable sound comes out his mouth.

Jared begins laughing, "Dude, you got a farting candy! Oh, God, that's brilliant."

"Ha ha," Jensen tries to say sarcastically, but kind of comes out wrong because he's so damn happy to see his friend laughing again. "Your turn, man."

Squinting down at the bag, Jared carefully grabs another one, pulling out a small jar with little candies inside. He twists the lid and a jolt runs through him and he jerks away wringing his hand, "Ow, shit! That's a shocker."

Laughing, Jensen sticks his hand in the bag and pulls out a simple, black sweet. With a glance at his friend, he pops it in his mouth. And immediately spits it out, "Oh, man. Gross, that tasted of fish. Rotten fish."

Jared shakes his head and grabs a red sweet. A few moments later, red foam is streaming down his chin. Jensen feels his breath catch in his throat at the sight of it. Just like blood. He looks away, biting his lip. He never wants to see Jared bleeding ever again.

After rinsing out his mouth, Jared returns to sit beside him, closer this time, their shoulders pressing. "You okay?"

"Yeah," Jensen murmurs, clenching his hands in his jeans to stop himself from touching Jared, needing to make himself believe Jared is with him. Then he realizes he's allowed to touch now.

Turning towards his friend, he slides his hand around Jared's neck, pulling him into a desperate kiss and tugging him until he's straddling him. A few moments later, Jared pulls away, dropping his head down against Jensen's shoulder and laughing slightly, "Mike is so weird."

Running his fingers up and down Jared's smooth, muscled back, the older man murmurs, "Yeah..."

"But that farting candy was awesome!"

Grinning against Jared's cheek, Jensen shakes his head, "You're such a dork."

"A sexy dork?" Jared asks, biting down over Jensen's shoulder.

Jensen huffs a laugh, "Yeah, a sexy dork, and so modest too."

"Don't I know it," Jared replies, flopping down to rest his head on Jensen's chest.

They lie in comfortable silence for a few minutes, happy just listening to the other breathe.

Inching closer, Jared whispers, “Hey, Jen... can I tell you something weird and probably a lot girly?”

Grinning, Jensen presses his nose to Jared messy hair, “Go ahead.”

“I’m not grateful that I was taken and that I was hurt like that,” Jensen’s arms tighten around the younger man. “But, some part of me is glad... ‘cause... ‘cause... we would never have... I would never have been with you like this... I would never have known how much I... I need you...” he buries his nose against Jensen’s neck and murmurs, “Yeah, so you can call me a girl now or whatever.”

Hefting Jared closer to him, Jensen nods, “Yeah, I know what you mean... God, it’s so weird... now I’m so...” he flushes, “possessive over you... even when it’s just Mike hugging you.”

Jared grins against the older man’s smooth skin, but then he lifts up his head, the grin falling away. “I’m sorry about you and Dan, though... I know... I know you loved her.”

Smiling slightly, Jensen shakes his head, “No... I mean... I loved her in some way... but... not... not *love* love. Like, I mean, when I looked at where I wanted to be in ten years time, it wasn’t her I was with. It was... oh, God, I think we’re both girls now, it was you.”

“Even... even before all this happened?” Jared asks softly.

Jensen rolls his head to the side, “Yeah, even before all this happened. It... it was actually pretty obvious how I felt about you, but I just didn’t notice. I think Dan did. That’s why she always got so upset. I talked about you all the time. I missed you whenever you weren’t there. Like... dude, when Dan and me went to the beach, there were these two guys there, they were just like us, fooling around and play-fighting each other... I wanted you there, I wanted us there.” Jensen snorts, “And then the dudes started making out. I should have realized how close you and me are.”

Jared’s eyes are bright, “So... so this isn’t just... just ‘cause...?”

Pressing his lips firmly against his friend’s, Jensen murmurs, “I think I’ve loved you forever.”

Jared snorts, but he’s grinning as widely as ever, dimples dancing, “I think our dicks have fallen off.”

Smirking wickedly, Jensen eyes Jared’s pants, “You want me to check? I’ll do it free of charge.”

“Perve.”

“Only for you.”

“Aren’t I lucky.”

“Nah, I think I’m the lucky one.”

“Oh, and how do you figure that?”

“Well, I’ve got you.”

“Yeah,” Jared scoffs, “And I’m all that.”

Looking up at him, eyes serious, Jensen gently thumbs his lover's cheek, “You are, you know that?”

Flushing, Jared looks away.

“You are, Jay. And I love you.”

Meeting Jensen’s eye, Jared smiles shyly, “I love you too.”

The phone rings and Jared slips off the older man’s chest to allow him to wander towards the machine and put it on speaker. “Hello?”

There’s a groan, “Man, since when did you guys become such girls? 'Ohh, I love you', 'I love you too'. 'Oh, you’re so special', la di da di day. You fuckers totally ruined my prank video. I was gonna post it on youtube and everything.”

“What?” the pair yells at the machine.

“Oh, I forgot to mention that I set up the webcam on your laptop, I’ve been watching you all this time. Glad you like the farting candy, Jared. It’s one of my favorites.”

“Mike, we are going to kill you,” Jensen growls.

The bald man cackles and hangs up.

“Oh, God,” Jensen murmurs, noticing the open laptop for the first time, facing them. As he heads for it, he pulls the middle finger at it and slams it shut.

“We need to get him back,” Jared calls from the couch.

“Yeah, really badly.”

\*

“Hello?”

“Hey, Jensen. It’s Chris. I just wanted to let you know that we’ve just had a massive crackdown on the trafficking organization, we’ve caught the guys at the top and they’re not in any rush to protect the smaller guys, so we’re getting them all.”

Shutting his eyes for a moment, Jensen murmurs, “Oh, thank God.... Are you sure? They’re behind bars?”

“As good as, I just wanted to let you know. Give you guys some closure.”

“God... that’s... Chris, thank you.... Fuck, I can’t wait to tell Jared... you have no idea... thank you.”

After hanging up, he heads towards the bedroom, where Jared is standing by the window.

Moving quickly, Jensen wraps his arms around his lover and spins them around, hugging him tightly.

“Jen?” Jared laughs breathlessly, “You okay?”

“Oh, God.” Jensen squeezes the younger man tightly, “They caught the guys, Jared. They’ve got them... they’re no longer out there... you’re safe... you’re completely safe and they’re paying for what they did to you.”

Jared chokes, “Wh... what?”

Pulling back slightly, Jensen grabs him and pulls him into a fiery kiss, their bodies pressed tightly together.

Still in a daze, Jared backs away to sit on the edge of the bed. “Really?”

“Yeah,” Jensen laughs, deliriously happy. “Chris just called.”

Flopping backwards onto the bed, Jared swipes a hand over his face, “Oh, God. It’s... it’s really over?”

Crawling up the bed to straddle the younger man, Jensen nods, his hands cradling Jared’s face, “It’s really over.”

Jared pulls him down, crashing their lips together, kissing him frantically.

It's not long before their shirts are discarded and they're both fully aroused. Jared gasps beneath the older man, hands roaming the muscled length of his lover's back, moving down to his ass, pressing him closer.

"I..." Jared looks up at him, "I... want you... want you in me.... Please, Jen... need you..."

His breath catches and his dick jerks at the mere thought, but Jensen hesitates, his finger gently brushing the hair from the younger man's face, "You sure?"

Jared nods, his voice choked, "Yeah... I don't... don't want them to have anything of me... want you to have me... but I..." he looks away and whispers, "I'm scared, Jen... I trust you... but... but it hurt so bad... I don't..."

"Shhh, let me show you how good it can be... we can stop at any time... you hear me? If anything's wrong, if you want to stop, we can."

Jared nods, "kay, Jen."

Brushing his lips over Jared's furrowed brow, Jensen kissed away the frown, "I'll take care of you, Jare. Just lie down, I'll be right back."

Opening his bedside cabinet, Jensen grabs the lube and a condom, before returning, taking a moment to savor the sight of a disheveled Jared lying sprawled across his bed in tented boxers.

Sliding up the younger man's body, Jensen presses kisses over the bare skin as he goes, deepening the kiss when he meets Jared's lips. "You okay with this?"

Nodding, Jared bites his bottom lip, "Yeah."

Slowly, Jensen's fingers begin to roam Jared's body, searching for spots that make the younger man arch up in surprise, secret spots that even Jared probably didn't know about.

He finds one over Jared's hipbone, the curve of his waist. Jensen gently tickles the spot with his tongue, making Jared's eyes widen and pupils dilate in arousal.

Another, that he's really pleased to discover (because it's kind of one of his favourites) is Jared's pair of dimples. Tracing them with his fingers, Jensen grins down at the man beneath him, "Love your smile."

Jared's fingers slide up his sides, "God... fuck... Jen, get a move on already."

Smirking, Jensen doesn't speed up at all, taking his time before reaching to remove what's left of their clothing.

He slides down Jared's body, grabbing the small bottle of lube and pouring some on his hand. With his other, he firmly wraps it around Jared's length, slowly teasing the man as his lubed fingers slide lower.

Jared gasps as he circles the tight entrance, shying away from the cold. Jensen distracts him by licking a stripe up his member, stroking his tongue over the tip.

As he slips the point of his first finger in, Jensen slowly sucks Jared's leaking cock into his mouth, sucking as he wriggles his finger around, slowly stretching him.

His finger finds a small knob and he teases over it, making Jared cry out and press down, wanting more. Grinning around Jared's cock, Jensen glances up at the aroused man, feeling his own dick twitch when Jared doesn't know whether he wants to push up into Jensen's mouth or push back to stimulate his prostate again. It's damn hot.

When he slips in his second finger, Jared barely notices, too lost in the double pleasure. Rubbing his tongue over the slit of Jared's cock, Jensen slowly slips the tip of his third finger in, pressing at the sides of the sphincter, stretching further.

After working Jared open enough, Jensen pulls away from the younger man's cock, blowing over the tip and smirking at the reaction. Pouring more lube over his hand, he coats his leaking dick liberally and slides up to brush his lips over Jared's cheek, wiping his hand on the sheet beside them.

"You ready?" he asks quietly, biting down on Jared's lip softly.

A flicker of fear dances in Jared's eyes, but he locks them with Jensen's. "Yeah."

Threading his fingers with Jared's, Jensen presses their entwined hands above Jared's head, his other hand skimming down to guide his member to press at Jared's entrance.

In a slow, steady motion, he presses in, angling straight for Jared's prostate, wanting to cause the man as little pain as possible. Every few seconds he pauses, kissing over Jared's shut eyelids, longing for them to open.

When he finally slips in fully, Jared's eyes fly open, his hand squeezing Jensen's tightly.

"You okay?"

"I..." Jared looks up at him in confusion, "You're in? I... it... I thought..."

Pressing a kiss to Jared's nose, Jensen replies, "I told you it doesn't have to hurt that much, didn't I? You ready for more?"

"I..." Jared nods, "Yeah."

Jensen slowly pulls out and then slams back inside making Jared arch up to meet him with a low moan.

It feels so good, Jensen loves this, loves being so intimately connected with Jared, loves seeing him like this, loves everything there is about him. "Oh, God... so good, Jay... So tight, fuck... so hot..."

Jared freezes, a cold chill running down his spine.

*"I was right," the man bit Jared's neck, "hot and tight, just how I like them."*

*Then the finger was gone and something much thicker was being shoved inside. Crying behind the blindfold, Jared desperately tried to pull away from the pain, but the rough hands gripped at his sides and yanked him backwards, impaling him. Something tore inside of him, the pain so intense he nearly blacked out. The man grunted as he pulled out, thrusting powerfully back in. Jared felt like his insides were on fire. He was being torn apart and the man was just forcing his legs wider and plunging in deeper.*

*"So... fucking... tight..." the man panted, jerking Jared back harder, shoving faster, each thrust yanking downwards on his bound wrists. The pressure on his already dislocated shoulders made him cry out even more, but it was mainly tears of shame that soaked the dirty cloth.*

*The man's hands roamed Jared's chest, pinching and rubbing over his muscles, then they slid down to Jared's limp cock, tugging at it painfully. A cry escaped Jared's lips and that was all it took for the man to drive in erratically, coming with a painful bite to Jared's collar. "So... fucking... tight..."*

"Jared, Jay... God... Jared, are you okay?"

Jensen's still inside of him, his hands cradling Jared's cheeks. Hot tears spring up and begin trickling down the younger man's face. He turns his head away. He feels so useless, he can't even have sex without ruining it.

Soft lips press down over his, making him exhale sharply, allowing Jensen to slip his tongue in, gently soothing him. Then the older man lifts up again, "It's me, okay, Jay? We can stop if you want. There's always another time."

"No," Jared chokes out, "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, Jen. Please... please don't stop..."

When the man hesitates for a few seconds, Jared presses himself up, taking Jensen in deeper, making the older man groan loudly despite himself. "Please, Jen. Keep going."

Carefully thrusting upwards, Jensen drops his forehead against Jared's shoulder, reaching down to stroke the younger man's dick back to full hardness.

They find a rhythm that works for them and as Jensen whispers softly, “Love you, Jay,” Jared squeezes his eyes shut and comes with a soft moan.

Jensen’s quick to follow, driving in a few more times before coming, Jared’s name on his lips. He sags down on his lover, both breathing heavily.

After a few moments, he pulls out of the exhausted form and heads for the bathroom, returning with a damp cloth to clean them both up. Then Jensen slips back in beside his lover, pulling him up against his chest, wrapping his arms firmly around the slightly shaking form.

He whispers softly in the younger man’s ear, “I love you, Jay. And I’m so proud of you. Thank you for doing this for me; I know how scared you were.”

Breathing out shakily, Jared shakes his head, “It... I’m sorry I panicked... I just...”

“You were back there for a moment,” Jensen finishes, pressing his lips to his lover’s forehead.

“Yeah... I just... thank you, Jen.... I just... I didn’t know it could feel like that... I just... I love you...”

Jensen lets out a sigh, all the tension seeping out of him. “We’re going to be okay. When you’re ready, we can start filming again. And when you feel up to it, I’ve got someone who can help you sell your house. Most of your important stuff is here, but I know there are some things you still want to get.

“And I was thinking we should buy a place together. Someplace nice, with a pool and a garden for the dogs, what do you think?”

Jared’s fingers trace patterns on Jensen’s bare chest, “I think I love you so goddamn much it hurts. And I think my pups are gonna kill me for leaving them with Lucy Lans for so long... actually wait... she spoils them, so they’re probably going to hate coming back to me.”

Laughing softly, Jensen shakes his head, “They could never hate you. So... you up for some house-hunting tomorrow?”

“Can we get a Jacuzzi?”

Jensen grins, “Only if we don’t ever let Chad near it. I seriously do not want his spunk floating around.”

“Eeeeww,” Jared whines, gently punching his friend, “Great, thanks for that. Now my happy afterglow is ruined.”

“Well, how can I remedy that?” Jensen asks seductively.

Jared rests his chin on the older man’s chest, smiling up at him. “I’m sure you can think of something.”

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