

Monster:



Some mistakes are irreparable: *His eyes crunch up and then slowly open. Hazel eyes blink up at me for a second before recognition crosses Jared's features and he yanks his hand away, scrambling backwards, wincing painfully, "Sorry, sorry, sorry," he murmurs, as if apologising for the contact I initiated.*

10,000 words, NC-17, ANGST, hurt!Jared, ignorant!Jensen, homophobia, possible character death

"Jen... I need to tell you something."

The quiver with which that was said makes me snap my head around to where Jared is standing. Running my eyes over his features, I take in the pale face and fearful eyes, with a frown, I ask, "Jay, what's the matter?"

He just turns his face away, "Just... can we go somewhere... I need... I need to tell you something."

Scrumching up my greasy napkin, I toss it into the bin and get to my feet. "Sure, let's go to your trailer. That okay?"

With a brief nod, Jared spins around and almost sprints out of the food-tent.

When I walk into the room, Jared is sitting on the couch, bouncing his leg like he's on crack.

“Dude, what the hell’s the matter with you?”

He stops his leg motion and looks down at the floor. After shutting the door firmly behind me, I join the nervous wreck currently occupying the couch.

“Jen, you know you’re my best friend, right?”

I roll my eyes, “Yeah.”

Jared continues in a rush, “And we’ve know each other a while now, right?”

With a frustrated sigh, I ask, “Jay, what is this about?”

“Um, just, I... there’s something you need to know about me...”

“Uh huh, go on.”

I eye Jared’s shaking hands, currently playing with a stray strand on his shirt and wonder what the hell is going on.

“Well, you know I don’t really talk to my family much anymore....?”

“Jared, man, we got to get back on set soon.” That comes out slightly harsher than I intended.

With a gulp, Jared blurts out, “I... I’m gay... Jen or... or bisexual...”

I stare at him, he doesn’t meet my eye as he continues, “I... I just thought you should know, seeing as though we are friends, and I didn’t want to lie to you...”

Anger and disgust replaces my momentary shock. “You.... You’re a fuckin’ fag! You... oh, god, you’re a fuckin’ fag!”

I jerk to my feet, shove him away from me, throwing in a punch for good measure and, without so much as a backwards glance towards him, storm out of the trailer, slamming the door behind me.

*

Spouting some crap to Kim about an emergency, I feel slightly guilty for delaying filming and as expected, he’s annoyed as hell but grudgingly allows me to go. After grabbing the keys to my truck, not giving a damn that Jared had gotten a lift with me and won’t have transport, I head outside.

Fury still seething through me, I drive away, ignoring even the cheerful security guard’s wave. When I get to my house, nothing’s changed. I’m just as pissed off and disgusted. I can’t believe Jared’s... that.

My face pulls into a disgusted snarl as I stare at the bag of candy lying on my counter. I snatch it up, toss it in the trash and rinse my hands afterwards.

I was his friend. I fucking trusted him. I let him in my house. I hung out with him. I fooled around with him. Fuck! I fuckin' *wrestled* with the faggot!

I storm around my house, looking for something to smash. My eyes sight upon a photograph of Jared and me at a CW party. Upon closer examination, Jared's wide smile actually looks more like a leer. The frame slips from my fingers and I ignore the smashing of glass as I race to the bathroom, heaving up the contents of my lunch.

After brushing my teeth about three times, I strip quickly and clamber into the shower in an attempt to try and burn off any traces of him, scrubbing my arms in case I brushed against him by accident.

When I finally declare myself clean enough, the world is pitch black outside my windows. I slip into some sweatpants and a t-shirt before making my way to the sitting room, my mind still raging furiously.

God, I allowed him to sleep here. I let him stay here while I was sleeping. He probably thought of fucking me the whole time. I bet he fucking watched me while I slept. Fuck, I think I'm going to puke...

I make it to the bathroom just in time.

*

Two hours later, and I'm still tossing and turning, wondering how I missed the not-so-little fact that my co-star's a homo. That he's tainted. That he's going to hell and just by being near me, he could turn me gay as well. The fact that he made me trust him; that he let me call him one of my best friends; the fact that we've known each other for a year and a half, all makes my stomach churn emptily.

*

I wake up feeling like crap and at first I wonder why. Then I remember: my best friend turns out to be a cocksucker.

The buzzing by my ear makes it impossible to bury my head under pillows and fall back asleep, which is exactly what I'm dying to do. I just want to wake up and find that it was all some horrendous nightmare, and that Jared is still normal. The buzzing doesn't allow that, and Jared is still a freak.

The culprit turns out to be my cell phone, buzzing a merry tune that Jared picked. Fuck, I need to change that.

It's Eric.

"Jensen. Where the hell are you?"

Letting out a groan, I fumble around for the clock.

Shit.

“M on my way.”

Eric just hangs up with a sigh.

*

When I arrive on set everything is subdued. It's like a fucking funeral or something. As I pass a PA on my way, I jokingly ask, “Who died?”

She just turns sad eyes on me and I feel instantly guilty.

Maybe someone did actually die.

“Something's up with Jared.”

Oh, is that all? What? That fag has a bad day and suddenly everyone's depressed as hell? If only they knew the truth about him.

In the make-up room the girls are just as bad. They turn doe eyes on me and ask, “Do you know what happened?”

With a roll of my eyes, I reply, “You know, Jared having a bad day doesn't mean it's the end of the world. Lighten up, people.”

A passing technician glares at me.

“What?” I ask the frowning girls.

They just shake their heads, faces twisted in disbelief and shock.

*

It's only when I get to the filming area that I realise I have to film with him. I have to act like he's my brother when he's probably undressing me with his eyes, the sick fuck.

When I first lay eyes on him I give him a sneer. One of my most patented sneers that's sure to convey just how much he disgusts me. From his flinch, it seems to work.

Unfortunately he's too busy examining the ground for me to do much more. I smirk when I realise we're filming a scene where Dean gets to taunt a tied up Sam which is exactly what I feel like doing to the bastard.

“Action!”

I circle Sam. Excitement flares deep inside as I take in the sight the younger man, weak and vulnerable. Sam's eyes flash as he struggles against the ropes. His chest heaves and strains as he tries to twist his hands free. A beautiful sight for sure, but a fruitless one.

A deep chuckle escapes me, “I don't think that's working, Sammy, you see I know a thing or two about knots.”

“You’re not him,” Sam hisses, eyes staring daggers at me.

A slow, deadly smile spreads over my face, “Oh, but I am. Sammy, can’t you tell? Can’t you recognize your own big brother?”

Sam turns his head away, “You’re not him. You’re not Dean. He would never hurt me.”

My hand reaches out to cup Sam’s cheek delicately, fingers running back to slide softly through his unruly hair. Sam tries to pull away, but the ropes leave him with no option.

“Sammy,” I whisper softly, my breath ghosting over his face. His eyes slip shut and he leans slightly into my hand.

“Pathetic.” My voice is harsh and cruel as I step back and away from Sam.

“Are you that desperate for my love? For my affection? You’re *pathetic*. What makes you think I would ever love you? What makes you think that anyone could ever love you? You’re disgusting. You’re nothing more than baggage to me. I don’t care about you, not even slightly. This is just a job to me. Once it’s over, I’ll ditch you. Ditch you and never look back. You know this... don’t you?”

My fingers jerk his chin up, forcing him to look at me. His eyes are glistening, and with a sneer, I hiss, “Don’t you!”

Sam squeezes his eyes shut and I step back abruptly. He sags forwards against his bonds, hanging limply, his brown bangs falling into his face.

“Look at me,” I taunt coldly. Sam doesn’t react.

“Look at me!” I command.

Sam slowly raises his eyes to meet mine. They are wide, filled with hurt and pain and it’s just, oh, so delicious that my knees feel weak. The unabridged defenselessness of the younger man makes my mouth water.

“Let’s have some fun,” I say, opening my weapon’s cupboard. The shelves are packed with knives, guns, saws, axes, screwdrivers, spikes, and everything else I could possibly need to enjoy this as much as possible.

Sam’s sharp intake of breath makes me give him a predatory smile. I run my fingers over the cold metal, lightly caressing each one, until finally landing on a long slender blade, slightly curved, made from gleaming silver.

I return to Sam with the blade held easily in my hand. His breath hitches as I run the deadly metal over the line of his jaw, curving down to the hollow of his neck and back up again. My other hand rests gently against his chest. He shivers, muscles twitching with the desperate need to jerk away, unable to do so due to the merciless bonds.

The sheer power I have over this being is exhilarating. The way his breath catches as I tilt the blade just so, the way his heart beats beneath his fluttering, warm skin, all of it, is so delectable that I just want to hurt him even more.

I lock eyes with him, gripping his jaw tightly to keep him from turning away. “I hate you.”

Sam’s eyes fill with glistening tears and a single one trickles down his jaw. “Dean...” he whispers.

“And CUT! That was excellent, guys: a few more shots and I think we’ll be done early today.”

I withhold a smirk, amazed that Eric’s so happy with our first go. That happens so rarely, well, it happens but he’s never been this excited. But I have a feeling it’s because the scene was so real. I meant every single thing that I said. And I think Jared got that.

And the best thing: I get to say those things over and over again until he gets just how much I mean them.

*

An hour later, I’m dizzy with the power I’ve had over Jared. Running the blade up and down his neck, I have to keep fighting the urge to hurt him. Hurt him for real. Make him know how much he repulses me, how much I loath him. Locking eyes with him, I make sure to let him see that desire: the desire to make him cry out in pain, to punish him for being such a freak.

His shimmering eyes widen and tears trickle down the side of his face. With a cold curl of my lips, I show him just how meaningless he is.

This time, when Eric calls, ‘cut’, it’s to say we nailed the scene perfectly, and can have the rest of the day off.

Eric calls me over, and the first thing he asks is, “What’s wrong with Jared?”

I shrug uncaringly.

Forehead creased with a confused frown, Eric replies, “Uh... okay, I’ll see you boys tomorrow. Tell Jared that he did amazingly.”

Hmmm... where did Jared go off to? I bet the coward’s hiding, can’t bear to show his pathetic face.

With a sneer, I head for my trailer.

*

An hour later, boredom draws me out. I’m not used to being bored. But I’ll have to find a way to get over this because now that I know what Jared is, there is no way I’m letting him anywhere near me when not strictly necessary.

Jeff comes over as I'm walking towards my car, "Hey, Jensen. Do you know why Jay's so upset? Was there an accident or something? Has anyone he knows been hurt?"

Barely holding back a grin, I reply, "Is that all you people care about? Why don't you go ask the fucker yourself?"

His eyes harden and he stares at me for a few moments. Then he spins around, walking off without even saying goodbye.

Letting out a huff, I clamber into my truck.

It's when I'm nearly halfway home that I get an idea. Wheeling my truck in another direction, I dial a number that I usually avoid like the plague.

"Hey. Is that Stars and their quirks? ... Yes, Jensen Ackles here, I'd like to make a statement, a never before told, truth-revealing secret, but could it be printed anonymously? ... Yes, that's great, I'll come in immediately."

With a click I hang up, a smile on my lips at the knowledge that everyone will soon realise why I don't care that Jared's upset."

*

"And in groundbreaking news on Celebrity TV, we have a credible statement from a source that wishes to remain anonymous. The truth is about to be revealed about a certain Jared Tristan Padalecki..."

"Quoting the statement, 'I am afraid that one of your stars is not as they appear. The seemingly flawless Jared Padalecki is hiding a giant secret. Despite his public appearance as a straight, recently separated from his girlfriend, now eligible bachelor, Jared is in fact... gay....'"

I grin as I flick my TV off. My work here is done.

*

Arriving on set, the first thing I notice is the collection of people gathering along the road. A smile ghosts my lips at the thought of what they will do to Jared. Trust them to have an instant response. He'll be kicked out in no time.

As I get out the car, I take a moment to read what's written on their wildly waving placards.

'We still love you, J!'

'You being gay is soooo hot!'

'You're still our J-man'

'Do you think we care?'

‘Marry me (they can do it in Canada)’

‘I’m having a sex-change.’

And the like.

The hell’s going on? They should be mad, out for his blood, and furious at him for pretending to be normal. What the heck are they going on about still loving him? He’s a fucking fag, he doesn’t deserve this!

A full on collision with Eric is just exactly not what I want as I head for the make-up tent. Papers scatter in all directions, he flusters and huffs as he scrambles to pick them up. He’s trying to find Jared’s replacement. They’re obviously going to have to replace him.

“Jensen. Finally. You heard about what happened?”

I give a brief nod, “Front page of every magazine. So: what’s going to happen? You found a new guy to play Sam yet?”

Eric’s eyes widen scarily, “Are you frickin’ insane? Why the hell’d we do that?” he asks incredulously.

Confusion creases my brow, “Well, after what Jared’s been exposed as…”

With a strange expression on his face, Eric replies, “Jesus, Jensen, we’re not getting rid of Jared just because he’s gay. It doesn’t matter who the fuck he sleeps with. Don’t worry: Kim and I will make sure the CW doesn’t try anything.”

What...? Of course it matters that he’s a fag. He’s a sick, perverted sinner, how the heck can they just allow him to keep filming with me?

Instead I just ask, “So, where is the bastard?”

Frowning, concern marring his face, Eric murmurs quietly, “He’s not coming in today. We’ve decided to cancel filming for a week or so. Not everyone’s taking this well and we think it’s best to allow them to cool off a bit.”

He’s only getting what he deserves.

Eric’s still talking, and I manage to catch the last bit, “I swear if I ever find out who made that statement…”

My cheeks flush lightly, but I ignore it, I was only doing my duty. People have a right to know when their actor turns out to be a sick weirdo.

*

My cell phone starts ringing just as I’m entering my apartment, it’s Sandy. Finally, someone who’ll understand why I’m so disgusted.

“Jensen,” her voice is cold. Why is her voice cold?

“Yeah?”

“How could you?”

My stomach gives a little twist but I reply innocently, “How could I what?”

“I know it was you.”

That fucker went and told on me, well, can't say I expected anything more from the fag.

She continues, “And no, he didn't tell me, he hasn't spoken to anyone. But I know it was you because he wouldn't tell anybody else.”

Another little thing stirs in my chest.

“How could you do that to him after claiming to be his best friend for so long? I thought you were a good guy. Hell, Jared thinks you're the Second coming. He'd do anything for you, you know that? And you've broken him. You were the only one who ever had that amount of power over him and you've torn him to shreds.

“Even when his parents kicked him out, disowned him and told him to never come near them again, he wasn't this broken. He managed to pick himself up, make a life for himself, never asking for a single, bloody thing from anybody.

“But now... I don't think he's going to make it. You've well and truly knocked him to the ground and stamped him to the dust. And you know what the worst thing is? He doesn't blame you. He thinks he deserves it. I hope you're happy.” Her breath hitches, “I hope you're fucking happy.”

And with that, she hangs up, leaving me reeling with shock.

Wasn't Sandy Jared's girlfriend? How can she talk like she still cares? Why is she mad at me? Why doesn't anyone understand? I had to do it. People have a right to know. I did the right thing, didn't I?

Flopping down onto the couch, the blank screen stares back at me. He's only getting what he deserves. Sinners don't deserve sympathy. They don't deserve anything.

*

I got a phone call from my dad stating that under no circumstances am I to be friends with Jared. That was expected, I've always been raised as a good Christian and there was never any doubt in my mind as to what they'd say, I'm actually surprised they're even allowing me to continue when there's a chance that I might have to film with him. But according to my mom: I can't allow a fag to ruin my career, so I'll just have to grit my teeth and pull through.

It's been a week since I last saw him, not that I'm counting or anything and we're meant to return to set on Monday. I can't say I'm not relieved, it'll be nice to have something to do, these past days have been pretty boring, spent mostly erasing any signs that Jared has ever been in my house.

Usually I spend Friday nights with Jared, chilling and watching games, but as there is no way I'll ever do that again, so I'll make do with flicking between channels, unable to focus on a single one.

Eventually I land on a news broadcasting channel just in time to see the flashing lights of an ambulance and the flurry of activity. Hey, I've been there. The ambulance is parked outside a pub nearby Jared's house, we've often gone there.

“Now showing: footage of what is rumoured to have been a homophobic attack, one that took place near the Gin and Tonic Bar five hours ago. The victim was apparently the recently outed Supernatural star – Jared Padalecki. Police and medics have arrested the four men accountable thanks to various eye witnesses. They refused to comment any further.”

It's like I've just swallowed several ice-cubes whole. Jared's hurt. He's hurt because of me.

Before my brain can think anything through, I'm out the front door, keys clutched between sweaty fingers. I can barely unlock my car door my hands are shaking so badly.

The drive is a blur, I'm not even sure how I managed to make it to the hospital (which fortunately is the only one in that area), nor whether the hospital receptionist is a male or female. I just know that I am sprinting towards where he or she said Jared is.

Rounding the corner of the corridor, the first thing I see is Sandy's hunched over form, sobbing into her hands. At the sound of me approaching, she looks up, her tear-stricken face turning into one of pure fury.

Leaping to her feet, she shoves at my chest and hisses, “What the fuck are you doing here? Don't you think you've done enough? Don't you think he's been punished enough for being gay? Does he have to die before you leave him be?”

It's only then that I remember why I shouldn't care for Jared. Why he deserves to be in the hospital bed. Why he isn't my friend anymore.

I turn to leave just as the door opens. Through the crack, I get a glimpse of Jared. I've never seen him like this. His face, exposed chest and arms are stained and marked by angry, purpling bruises and cuts. One of his wrists is in a cast and a white bandage circles over his ribs. There's something over his mouth, connected to a machine at the side that – I realise with a jolt – is breathing for him. He looks small in a way I've never thought possible, vulnerable and in a weird way, innocent. How can he possibly look so innocent when he's gay?

His ghostly, pale face is coloured only by the dark shadows beneath his eyes and the bruises along his jaw. There are even bruises – finger-shaped – around his neck. His cheeks are thin, hollow as if he hasn't been eating in a while. There's nothing of the Jared I used to know.

Nothing of the Jared I used to call my best friend; nothing of his easy smile and quick, cheerful jokes. There's nothing, just nothing.

I did that. I made him like that.

No, I didn't, he's a faggot, he made himself like that.

Why the hell do I still care about him? He deserves this, doesn't he?

Does anyone deserve death?

He's a sinner.

He's your best friend.

He's gay.

He's Jared.

God hates sinners.

Would God be happy if Jared died and it was my fault? Would I be happy if Jared dies and it's my fault?

I hate him. He makes me sick, he deserves to die.

He's Jared. I loved him. He was my best friend. Does he deserve to be treated like this?

My infuriating internal battle is interrupted by the door being shut with a snap and Sandy glaring at me, hate in her eyes.

“What the fuck are you still doing here, Jensen?”

I blink blankly at her for a few seconds before blurting, “How can you not care? He's gay and he lied to you for years, why the fuck do you still care about him?”

In a cold, calm voice, Sandy replies, “He's bisexual, you ass. He loved me, and I loved him. Still do. He never lied to me. We broke up, because that's what couples do sometimes, they break up.”

Staring openly at her, I murmur, “How can you be so calm about this? He's a sinner, he's going to hell, how can you just act like it's no big deal?”

Evenly she gets out, “He's still Jared. He's still everything good in this world. He'd never hurt a thing, loves with his whole heart and gives all he has. It shouldn't matter who he loves. I'm sorry your god thinks that it matters, but mine sure doesn't. Any god that would send Jay down to hell just for loving is no god of mine.”

Setting steely eyes on mine, she continues, “And you can thank the guys who did this to Jay, because I'm sure it's what your god would have wanted.”

She turns to enter the room, stopping with her hand in the doorknob, “Oh... and Jensen. I’m not sure if you got this but, just so we’re clear: if you ever try to come near Jared again, I will personally kill you.”

And with that, I’m left in stunned silence, the corridor echoing her words: ‘kill you.’

Sandy’s a Christian, right? So what the hell was she going on about ‘my god’ and ‘her god’?

I wander out of the hospital, still lost in thought, struggling to decipher what she’d meant. It’s only when I’m reaching for the huge wooden door that I realise I’m standing before a church.

It’s deserted inside, the mass long over. My footfalls echo eerily against the stone walls. The stained-glass saints cast coloured glows over my skin, contrasting the long shadows beneath the arches. The occupant of the massive cross up on the front wall peers down at me, His thin, beaten body, so similar to Jared’s, His mournful eyes so knowing, so sad. I fall to my knees on the cold floor, gazing up at the man I’ve tried to live my life by.

Have I done right? I’ve followed your rules haven’t I? I’ve tried not to sin, I’ve tried to be good. Why do I feel like I’ve torn my soul out? Why do I feel empty? I miss him. Is that a sin? I don’t want to see him hurt, is that going to send me to hell? If someone hurts the one they love, are they cursed? I feel cursed. Lord, why did this happen? How can Jared be one whom I must hate? It’s hard, Lord, so hard. How can this be right? How can Jared be wrong? He’s so innocent, so innocent. Why do I have to hate him?

The sorrowful, desolate eyes stare back at me, giving me no answers.

Footfalls sound out from behind me, causing me to spin round on my knees.

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t realise anyone was still here,” the smiling, grey-haired priest apologises as he turns to allow me some privacy.

Scrambling to my feet, I call out, “Wait, Father... I need your guidance.”

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I leave the church two hours later, mind swirling as everything I was taught in my childhood loses its sturdy ground.

Clutched in my palm is a sheet of paper, slightly crumpled from my tight grip.

I’d been asking the priest over and over again about the rule given in the bible, that: “No man is to have sexual relations with another man; God hates that.” (Lev 18.22)

The priest had replied, “Anything found in the Old Testament cannot be taken seriously, if we did take it seriously, we would all have to obey the rest of the rules found in Leviticus, and that’s just crazy. We’d be constantly bathing, and sacrificing animals. That’s just cruel. No my son, for any truth, look beyond the foolish beliefs of outdated men, and search for the underlying wisdom in the new pages.

Scrawled on my sheet of paper are two quotes:

“The message you’ve heard from the beginning is this: we must love one another... Whoever does not love is under the power of death. All who hate others are murderers... murderers have not got eternal life in them.” 1John 3.11 – 15

“The lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love and to live in humble fellowship.” Mic 6.8

Locking my door behind me, I sink to the floor, reading and rereading the lines over and over again. Finally, after what seems like hours, it finally dawns on me what the priest was trying to get me to understand: God made us all. God loves us all. God wants us to treat each other with the love and respect he has shown us. God doesn’t want me to hate Jared.

That thought, just that one thought, takes about two tons off my shoulders. I don’t need to school my thoughts away from how much I miss him any longer. I can...

The image of Jared laid out on the hospital bed, serves as an icy bucket of water over my happiness.

He thinks I hate him. Fuck, I thought I hated him.

Less than an hour later, I’m racing towards the hospital doors, thankfully it’s a 24hour Emergency Service hospital so after some banging on the door, a middle-aged guy opens it.

“Sorry, visiting hours are over.”

“Please,” I gasp, “he thinks I hate him. Please, I need to see him. Please...”

I know I’m begging but I really don’t give a damn.

“Who you here for?”

“Padalecki, Jared Padalecki.”

The man goes inside, returning moments later with a file, “Name? And proof of identification.”

“Jensen Ackles,” I hold up my driver’s license. Please God, don’t let Sandy have removed me from that list.

Withholding a sigh of relief when the man swings the door open, I smile and race past calling my thanks over my shoulder and running towards Jared’s ward.

Pushing the door open, I exhale when I see there’s no one else there.

That’s when I allow myself to look at Jared. Really look at him. See him for Jared – my best friend, instead of Jared – the faggot.

There’s a big difference.

The machine is still breathing for him, making rattling, gasping sounds from beside the bed. There's a heart monitor beeping nearby and an IV drip attached to Jared's arm.

I can barely see him through the wires and my own tears but what I do see, makes me want to turn away to hide from what I've done to him.

The knowledge that all this, every single wound, all of it, is entirely my fault, makes me feel like throwing up. And I don't even know the extent of the injuries.

Somehow I manage to find his icy fingers between the wires and begin to rub my thumb softly over his raw, bruised skin.

There's no sign of life beside the rise and fall of his chest in time with the breathing machine.

One of my favourite songs suddenly hits me and takes residence in my head

Disciple Lyrics - Things Left Unsaid

It's just a matter of time

A few days ago, I saw you

You were fine

Oh, how'd we talk

For hours upon end

What I would give

Just to do it again

You're lying there

In this hospital bed

Won't you open your eyes

And let's talk once again

If you fly away tonight

I want to tell you that I love you

I hope that you can hear me

I hope that you can feel me

If you fly away tonight

I want to tell you that I'm sorry

That I never told you

When we were face to face

Well, I've been here all night

And I'm watching you

Breathe in and breathe out

Is it really you

Or just a machine

That's giving you life

And it's making it seem

That there could be hope

I could say it to your face

If you fly away tonight

I want to tell you that I love you

I hope that you can hear me

I hope that you can feel me

If you fly away tonight

I want to tell you that I'm sorry

That I never told you

When we were face to face

The new meaning behind the once-meaningless words makes me want to start sobbing and pleading for Jared to wake up. I don't know what I'll do if he doesn't come back, don't know how I'll ever be able to live with myself.

I can't tear my eyes away from his broken form and I stay there until the man comes to escort me out the hospital. Then I sit on the step outside for the remaining few hours of darkness, staring out at the night's sky, searching for answers.

I'm the first to enter at the start of visiting hours.

Unsurprisingly he hasn't improved since I saw him but the sunlight casting a glow over his skin, accentuating the bruising and cuts, makes me wince.

I don't talk, I'm afraid to. What could I possibly say to make this better?

Eric and Kim show up a few silent hours later. They send me off in the direction of the hospital canteen.

After managing to choke down a few mouthfuls of something, I return to Jared's ward. Spotting Sandy and a doctor inside as well, I hesitate by the door. I can hear the doctor asking, "Shouldn't we be contacting his parents?"

Sandy's sad voice replies, "No, his family doesn't want anything to do with him. I'm all he's got."

"You and Jensen," Eric's voice adds.

There's a pause and then Sandy's cold voice states firmly, "No, I am all Jay's got."

That's my cue to leave; leave and throw up into my bathroom when I get home. So I do.

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I have to hear it from the evening news. That 'gay star Jared Padalecki woke from a coma that morning'.

The knowledge that I'm probably the last to know he's awake, cuts like a blade: but I deserve it.

After my nightly pleading session with the night on-call doctor, I race towards where Jared has been moved. I have no idea what I'm going to say, only that I have to say it.

As usual it's empty apart from Jared. His breathing piece has thankfully been removed and the soft, natural rise and fall of his chest is a sight for sore eyes.

Kneeling beside the bed, I call out shakily, "...Jay?"

I reach for his hand, interlinking our fingers, "Jay?"

There's a soft moan and it's like music to my ears. After two weeks of nothing but the damn heart monitor answering me, even such a small noise is precious.

Squeezing his fingers, I try again, "Jared."

His eyes crunch up and then slowly open. Green-blue eyes blink up at me for a second before recognition crosses Jared's features and he yanks his hand away, scrambling backwards, wincing painfully, "Sorry, sorry, sorry," he murmurs, as if apologising for the contact *I* initiated.

It's impossible to see him as disgusting any longer. It's like a cloud's been lifted from my eyes and I can finally see how beautiful he is. How could I possibly have thought he was filthy? I'm the disgusting one. I'm the one who hurt him like this.

"Jay," I whisper hoarsely, reaching out for his hand, he snatches it away as if scared of what I'll do if I touch him, "Jay, I'm sorry, I'm so fucking sorry."

He just blinks blankly at me, still inching backwards, wincing with every movement: his breathing coming out in short ragged wheezes. He shouldn't be moving. "Jared, lie back down, you shouldn't be up."

Fearful eyes widen and he scrambles to obey, still curling up at the furthest corner of the bed away from me.

Bile's fills the back of my throat and barely grab the nearby bucket in time, heaving my stomach out. After rinsing my mouth at the nearby sink, I turn back to Jared. He's got the blanket up to his nose, mortified eyes peering out; the heart monitor beeping like crazy in the background.

I'm terrifying him.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry," is still coming from beneath the blanket and I squeeze my eyes shut, take a deep breath and:

"You've got nothing to be sorry for, Jay." There, I said it. I've defied all that I was taught as a child and have taken a step forward.

Jared's just keeps staring at me, probably wondering if I'm losing it. Maybe I am.

Resuming my kneeling position, I lay my hand over the lump in the blanket, beneath which is Jared's hand.

He tries to tug it away, but I hold on firmly, "Jay..." I start off softly, "I want you to know how sorry I am. For everything..." I gather up speed, "See, while I grew up, I was always told that gay equals going to hell. And that all good Christians hate gay people." Jared's head turns away, "But I hurt you, Jay, and I'm sorry, so fucking sorry. I... I don't..." taking a breath, I continue, "I don't care that you're g... gay, I just... I just want you back."

There's a long silence, and then his quiet, shaking voice breaks it, "It... it's okay, Jen. I don't blame you."

Just as I'm opening my mouth, the door creaks and the night-doctor calls, "Time out, Mr Ackles."

I don't want to go but I know that my chance of getting back in here at night will be slim if I disobey. Standing, I say softly, "Thank you," and then I leave.

*

Sandy found out about my visits to Jared. She's ensured that the doctors know not to let me in. It's horrible. I can't see Jared until he gets released in three weeks.

*

He's getting out tomorrow. Or at least that's what Eric's told me. Everyone still has no idea why I've been cut out of Jared's visiting list.

Apparently he's looking better. His bruises have all disappeared and his wrist along with the three broken ribs are healing up well. Filming can resume soon: Sam apparently got smashed around by a zombie.

In a really nervous way, I'm excited. I'm dying to see him again, it seems now that I've accepted that he's gay, he's really growing on me again.

A hug, that's all I want from him. One of those huge Padalecki-hugs I used to tease him so much about...

It takes me a few swallows before I smack myself on the head, Jared isn't a pervert. He hugs everyone: he's not going to molest me.

*

Sandy's threatened to take out a restraining order against me if I show up anywhere near Jared. She's become a growling Rottweiler. I can't see him until filming starts. His number's not working either.

*

I arrive on set early, desperate to see him. This past month has been hell for me. I've been reading and rereading the page the priest gave me. Re-evaluating all my homophobic thoughts, re-living the past few years I've been friends with Jared, cursing the way I grew up, retracting my faith in what my parents taught me as right and wrong, and rejecting all their influences.

And the conclusion I've come up with: there is absolutely nothing wrong with being gay. In fact, I seem to have had gay thoughts on occasion. My face heats up just at that thought. But it is true. I've often watched the sliver of flesh exposed each time Jared stretches for a second too long, or admired the man's physique. Not that that makes me gay, of course. But it does take away some of the taboo qualities of homosexuality.

Plus, I've been visiting the church frequently and Pastor James has really been helping me through my homophobia, even going so far as to introduce me to two of his friends who happen to be a gay couple. It's amazing how different your outlook on life can be if you just start afresh. If you don't follow what you've been taught and instead go and find out for yourself.

Tom and Mike – my two new, gay friends are really cool guys. Tom's a mountaineer and Mike's a lawyer. It's weird, for some reason I'd always thought of gay guys as thin, girly-looking, cross-dresser types. But turns out I'm wrong. What surprised me even more was the

fact that the couple is actually cute together, they really and truly love one another. I'm almost envious at the easy comfort they have with each other and after a few times of watching the one slide his arms around the other from behind, I've finally stopped squirming uncomfortably.

Once I'd gotten a bit more used to their physical contact, they invited me to go on a hike with them. To my surprise, I really enjoyed it. It was then that I finally realised that gay people are just normal people; normal people who just happen to love firmer, stronger, bodies than the rest of us.

The set is a quiet buzz of conversation but there's no sign of Jared anywhere. Then I spot him. But it doesn't look like the old Jared at all. This Jared is hunched over; his gaze lowered to the floor, mouth unsmiling and face slack. Someone walks up to him, making him look up, startled. He forces a smile but it's merely the stretching of his lips, nothing like his real smile that lit up his whole face, hell the whole room.

Before I can say anything, Eric appears out of nowhere, "Oh, Jensen, great, you're here. We can start a bit earlier. Go get ready."

Glancing over to see whether Jared is coming, I realise he's already in his Sam-clothes. I bite my tongue at the knowledge that he probably did that to avoid me.

After rushing the make-up and wardrobe girls to the point of head-smacking, I hurry back towards the filming area. Jared's already in position: seated on the bed.

Like the professional he is, Jared aces the scenes. We get quite a lot done but it's painful how he surreptitiously tilts his body away, so we don't even brush jackets. It's not noticeable on camera but it is to me.

When we get to the last scene, it's so painfully ironic, I nearly break down:

"Dean, uh..." he begins. I turn to look at him, "I wanna thank you."

I frown, "For what?"

Sam looks down at his hands, "For everything. You've always had my back, you know? Even when I couldn't count on anyone, I could always count on you. And now... I don't know... I just wanted to let you know—just in case."

It's so cruelly far from reality that I have to bite my lip before I can get out what I'm meant to say. All I can hope is that no one notices how shaky my hands are as they clean Dean's shotgun.

The moment Eric calls 'cut', Jared's down. Back to the subdued replacement that's been there since I...

...Since I broke him.

*

Set has become a dull and gloomy place. There are no smiles, no laughter, no light-hearted pranks. It's become nothing but a job, everyone merely doing what we're paid for.

It's like I used a fire-extinguisher to put out Jared's spark and the result is ice.

Not a day goes by when I don't curse and hate myself for what I've done and what my upbringing caused me to lose.

I haven't spoken to my family in about a month. They're not the ones I want to talk to.

Each time I see him, Jared looks thinner; more hollow; his eyes emptier. Each morning, Katie has to use more base to cover up the dark patches beneath his eyes. Even the ones beneath my eyes are no competition. He doesn't talk unless asked a direct question. I've tried to get him alone but it's impossible, he avoids me with trained skill.

He only smiles when it's expected of him. He hasn't touched me once. No innocent pats or good-natured hugs. Even when handing me something, he places it on the table and slides it over to avoid contact.

It hurts.

It's my fault.

*

We're at some promotion party or something, at some bigshot's mansion. Gazing out the window at the lawn, my eyes are zoomed in on Jared. Jared: who is smiling. I want to jump up and whoop for joy that he can still smile. And that I haven't broken him irreparably.

He's fooling around with the owner's two dogs, and they're gathered round like they think he's the best thing ever. I can't help the ache of jealousy at the fact that the dogs can draw that smile out of him, whereas I can barely get him to look me in the eye.

Dragging myself away, I flop down on a nearby couch, automatically switching into mingle-mode.

A few hours later, I hear a sound I'd never thought I'd hear again: Jared's laughter, full on laughter. Quickly heading in that direction, I find an image of Jared, the real Jared.

I think he's drunk, but I don't care. He's laughing.

It's like he's forgotten everything that's happened and is just back to how he used to be. Laughing, cracking jokes and hugging people.

He's slouched over Jeff, waving his free arm around and grinning at someone nearby. The ache inside of me flares up to a fiery flame as I watch, from the sidelines, what I used to have. Jeff's smiling fondly at Jay, pressing him closer as if protecting him. That should be me. I should be the one holding Jay...O-kay, where the hell did that thought come from?

Then, as if he's making the rounds, Jared goes on to slump an arm around Eric and Kim, laughing about something I can't hear. Leaving a trail of widely grinning people, Jared turns towards me, he's heading straight for me as if he's about to pull me into a bear-hug just like he used to. Sucking in a deep breath, I wait for it. I'm actually desperate for it. He's about to reach me, about to hug me when suddenly he stops dead. It's as if a light's been switched off inside of him, sucking everything happy away with it. His smile slides off his face and his gaze drops down to his feet, he changes directions and heads inside, sobered up completely.

I want to cry. Like, really, really want to. It's like I've finally realised just what I've lost: And it's everything.

*

I want him back. I need him back. More than anything I've ever longed for before. It's like a never-ending starvation in my chest. Each time I see him, my arms twitch just to hold him, just to touch him again. My heart warms every time I see a smile slip from him, but it's never at me.

Whenever I apologise for what I did, he just repeats in a dull voice, "I don't blame you."

Never, 'I forgive you;' just 'I don't blame you.'

I don't know what to do. Mike and Tom have tried to give me advice, but they don't know the full story, they don't know what exactly it was that I did, only that it was bad.

He looks like he's fading away. I don't think he's eating. I don't think he's sleeping either. I know it's my fault. I don't know how to fix it. I just want to hold him again.

*

It happens just over a month later: Jared faints during the filming of a gruelling scene.

The scene involved Sam having a showdown with John after the three Winchesters had nearly had their asses kicked by the demon.

I watch it in almost slow motion: how Jared's eyes blink continuously and he sways slightly.

Being nearby, I reach out to steady him. That only serves to make him sway backwards, away from me, sagging fortunately against Jeff's chest, his eyes slipping shut. Something about the way he allows Jeff to hold him and look after him, sparks a vicious feeling inside of me.

After a medic checks him over, stating that his minor faint was due to his body being worn out and that he should get at least a week to relax, I volunteer, "I'll look after him."

Jeff, who's lifted Jared back up against his chest, gives me an uncertain look, "Uhm... Jensen, not that it's any of my business or anything but I'm not sure whether he'd want that."

At my glare, Jeff shrugs innocently, "Look, I have no idea what went down between you two, but--"

Eric cuts him off, “It makes sense for Jensen to look after him, after all: Jensen’s schedule’s the same and it’s not like he can do any real work while Jared’s out of order.”

After pausing to glance down at the limp form in his arms, Jeff nods, “Okay,” and he carefully hands Jared over, allowing me to hold my friend for the first time in over six months.

The knowledge that he had to fall unconscious for me to do so only dampens my mood slightly.

He’s way too light; fragile in more ways than one. I lock my hands beneath his butt and hoist him closer to me, his cheek brushes lightly against my jaw and the slide of stubble over stubble makes my skin tingle.

His arms are limp around my neck, his breath brushing against my ear. When I reach my car, I’m reluctant to let him go but I eventually lower him onto the backseat.

Throughout the drive, I constantly check on him, at one street light, I even reach back to brush his bangs out of face so I can see him more clearly.

Finally arriving at my apartment, I am quick to get him back in my arms

After the difficult task of carefully stripping his baggy Sam-clothes off, leaving only his black boxers, I slip him carefully under the covers.

Then I sit and gaze at the being I’ve missed for so long. Vaguely I wonder whether this could be considered kidnapping. But I continue my creepiness, running my eyes over his weary features.

I can’t believe I ever have thought those cruel things. I wanted to hurt him. Hurt Jared. Hurt the one I should have been protecting.

Jared lets out a whimper and my hand finds its place against his cheek. *What monsters are you fighting? Is it me? Do you remember who those men were that hurt you? Will you ever tell me about it? Will you ever trust me again?*

I squeeze my eyes shut at the memory: *I lock eyes with Jared, and let him see that desire: the desire to make him cry out in pain, to punish him for being such a freak.*

Barely making it to the toilet on time, I once again empty my stomach of its contents.

As I step out of the bathroom, I realise Jared’s awake. Smiling nervously, I murmur, “Hey...”

His fearful eyes are darting between me and the nearest exit, and I feel my spirit falling a little bit more.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, trying desperately to ignore how he shies away, I whisper softly, “Tell me how to fix this? Please, Jay.... tell me how to prove I’m not like that anymore.”

His eyes flicker towards the bathroom and I realise with a jolt that he thinks I was throwing up because of him, as if he disgusts me.

“What am I doing here,” he croaks before I can tell him just how much he doesn’t disgust me.

Caught slightly off guard, I stammer, “Oh, I, well, you fainted and Eric said it was a good idea for you to come here.”

His hands freeze where they were playing with the edges of the blanket and he begins to scramble to his feet, “Sorry, sorry, I’ll go now, I’ll go.”

He freezes when he realises he’s half naked and his face turns ashen. He grabs for the blanket to hide himself from me, “M sorry, I’m sorry.”

Unable to stand it a second longer, I step forward, wrapping my arms tightly around Jared’s slim form. He falls stiff, motionless and rigid in my arms, like a chunk of wood. I press him closer, “Jay... you don’t disgust me, far from it. I’m sorry I was such an idiot before. I’m sorry I told the media about you being gay, I’m sorry, so fucking sorry that you got hurt because of me.”

He’s still unmoving in my arms and I continue, “You’re here because I asked to be allowed to take care of you. I want to make it up to you.”

In a flat tone, Jared gets out, “I told you, I don’t blame you. It was my fault for thinking you’d be different. You’ve got nothing to make up for.”

Squeezing my eyes shut at the knowledge that Jared had trusted me above all and I let him down, I try to blink away the tears, “Yes, I do.”

He tries to shrug my arms away but I cling on even tighter. Finally his shoulder’s slump and I pull away to see exhaustion taking over once more. In a small voice, he murmurs, “...just wanna sleep....”

Taking this as a major step forward, I let him out of my tight embrace and lead him back towards the bed, draping the covers over him once more. He opens his mouth to get something out, but sleep overcomes him before he can.

Yet again, I can’t stop myself from watching him sleep, I can’t look away from his mournful face and when I finally do, it’s to admire the bare chest laid out before me. And there I was being all homophobic. When actually, I wouldn’t even mind being gay if it’d mean I’d be allowed to touch that.

That thought makes me sway: Fuck, am I gay? I can’t be can I?

When my eyes fall upon Jared’s soft, gentle lips and the urge to taste fills me, I slump back on my knees. Oh, God. I think I am.

I’m everything I once hated. How fucking ironic is that?.

*

I wake with a painful crick in my neck in time to see Jared trying to stumble out of the bed.

“Jay.”

He looks up, eyes wide like a deer caught in the headlights and he shifts away from my outstretched hand.

I don't know what to do. Swallowing, I plead, “Jay, please, just... just let me take care of you for a bit.”

There's a long silence and then he murmurs, “Why would you want to?”

“Because I was wrong, I was a bastard, I was a complete fucker, and I'm sorry.”

Jared bends over to pick up his clothes, while saying in that same flat, dull tone, “You've got nothing to be sorry for.”

“Stop it,” I snap, instantly regretting it from the way he freezes, hands dropping his shirt and takes a step back.

More gently, I repeat, “Stop saying I've got nothing to be sorry for. I've got *everything* to be sorry for.”

Still staring at the pile of clothes on the floor, he mumbles, “Sorry.”

“Jared, look, I... I'm sorry I never told you just how much you mean to me.”

His jaded eyes look up, “You never told me but you made it obvious how much you hate me, can I go now?”

“Fuck, Jared, I... I freaking love you, okay? I'm sorry I treated you like crap, sorry I wasn't there for you; sorry I betrayed you.”

His eyes don't meet mine and he reaches for his clothes once more. “It's fine, you don't have to pretend. I know how you feel, and I don't blame you.”

Stopping him with a hand on his arm, I pull him back up, “No, you don't, Jay. You don't know just how much what I did kills me. I'd do anything not to have been that person. These past months I've gotten help, I've gotten more educated. I no longer think being gay is bad. It's not; not at all. Let me take care of you... please?”

Rubbing his eyes roughly, he stands upright, no longer reaching for his clothes.

Sighing my relief, I ask, “Jay... can I... can I just hold you?”

He tenses up, shifting a minute step backwards, his eyes widening. Slowly I approach him; he squeezes his eyes shut, turns his head away, and nods jerkily, “If that's what you want.”

My fingers come in contact with his bare chest, I can feel him trembling. I slide my hand over his smooth skin, admiring the muscles, but worrying about the thinness of his figure. My

palms run over his back, pulling him closer to my chest. Slipping my hand up to cradle the back of his head, I press him to me. My other arm loops around his waist, shifting him flush against me.

I can't believe how good it feels to have him so close to me, to have him breathing and alive in my arms

Ignoring his attempts to pull away, I just hold him locked in my arms. I don't care how long we've stood here. Finally, finally, he leans into me slightly. Pressing his nose to my shoulder, he chokes out in a broken voice, "I'm sorry. So sorry. Wish I was normal. Wish I wasn't like this. I'd do anything. Anything not to have told you. Any of you. Maybe then I'd still be loved. Maybe then I wouldn't be so alone."

And then, just as suddenly, he pulls out of my arms, grabs his bundle of clothes and is out of the door before I can even remember how my mouth works.

"Jay, wait!"

There's no sign of him when I run out onto the road. No sign of him as I drive up and down trying to find him.

*

"Star Jared Padalecki's body was found washed up on Sandy Beach just this morning. It was apparently suicide according to the police spokesperson, who revealed that a note was found wrapped in plastic, sewed into the pocket of Padalecki's shirt. Details were not revealed. Jared Padalecki was recently outed publically, and was subject to a homophobic attack..."

*

Dear Jensen

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for everything.

I wish it could have been different. Wish I could have been normal. All I've ever wanted was to be loved. I didn't know that it was so wrong. So disgusting. If I had known, I would have ignored that side of myself. I would have forced it to hide. My parents were right, you were right, I am a freak.

I know it's the last thing you could possibly want to hear, but I have to tell you anyway. I would have told you to your face, but I didn't want you to have to feel guilty about hurting me, which you would have had every right to do. What I'm trying to say, is that I love you.

When I was sixteen, a boy called Robert came to my school. When I told my parents that I had found someone who made me happy, my dad gave me his right-hook and kicked me out the house, saying I was no son of his. Rob tried to help me, but he had his own life to lead and he left me. So much for love, hey?

I hitchhiked to L.A and met Sandy. She was, and has always been, there for me. I tried to show her how tainted I was, told her why I had been disowned by my own parents, but she still loved me. I love her so much. She's always reminded me of an angel.

I started acting because it's so much easier to pretend to be someone I'm, not. So much easier to hide who I really am.

But then I met you.

Jensen, you were, and are, everything I'm not. You're perfect in ways I could never even dream of being. And somehow, somehow you thought I was good enough to be your friend. Not a day went by without me wondering why you hung out with me. I've always been too goofy, too stupid, too tall, too tainted, and yet you seemed to give a damn about me.

I didn't want to start loving you. I cursed my heart every minute of every day for being so wrong. Sandy made me think that it was okay, that being gay isn't wrong. I wanted so badly for that to be true that I eventually let her convince me. I guess even angels are wrong sometimes.

When I told you, I expected you to be angry. I even expected you to punch me. I just wanted to be honest. I just wanted you to know me. Foolishly I hoped that you might still care for me even after seeing who I really was. I'm sorry for being so far wrong. I'm sorry that you hate me. I'm sorry that I turned you into someone you aren't. I'm sorry, so fucking sorry, and I hope when I'm gone you can become the kind, caring person I once knew.

I know that I'm going to hell, so hopefully that will be enough penance for my sins. Maybe someday you might manage to forgive me. That would be worth going to hell ten-times over. Hopefully you will one day be able to think back on our friendship before I screwed it up, maybe you might even smile. If that's even possible, then maybe my whole life hasn't been a failure. If not, well, I just want you to know that the years spent knowing you were my happiest.

Look after yourself. Move on. Forget about me if it makes it easier. Just be happy. The thought of you smiling down at your kids someday makes me sure that I'm doing the right thing. You don't deserve to have your life tainted by me. I know you will find someone to love. All I can hope is that they will love you as much as I do.

I'll always love you.

Jay.

Attached to the letter was a photo.



*remember me when I
could make you smile
like this*

“Supernatural’s star, Jensen Ackles was found dead in his apartment building this morning. The actor slit his wrists and wrote three words on the floor in his own blood: ‘I’m coming, Jay.’ His gay co-star was found dead last week, also suicide. Could this be a tragic ‘Romeo and Juliet’-type love story? Were the two stars in love? Will they meet again? This is Celebrity TV, thank you for watching...”
