

Waiting:



Jensen's been waiting for Jared his whole life: *There's a warmth around his shoulders which can only mean Jared's draped an arm round him. Raising his head slightly, just enough to peer up at his teddy (who he is hugging like a small kid), he meets Jared's glance, and gets a soft smile and gentle eyes accompanied by the tightening of the arm around him and the soft murmuring of, "Sleep, man. I'll be here."*

3,000 words, PG-13, schmoop

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Rumis: Looking For Your Face
From the beginning of my life
I have been looking for your face
but today I have seen it

Today I have seen
the charm, the beauty
the unfathomable grace
of the face
that I was looking for

Today I have found you
and those who laughed
and scorned me yesterday
are sorry that they were not looking
as I did

I am bewildered by the magnificence
of your beauty
and wish to see you

with a hundred eyes

My heart has burned with passion
and has searched forever
for this wondrous beauty
that I now behold

I am ashamed
to call this love human
and afraid of God
to call it divine

Your fragrant breath
like the morning breeze
has come to the stillness of the garden
You have breathed new life into me
I have become your sunshine
and also your shadow

My soul is screaming in ecstasy
Every fiber of my being
is in love with you
Your effulgence
has lit a fire in my heart
for me
the earth and sky

My arrow of love
has arrived at the target
I am in the house of mercy
and my heart
is a place of prayer

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Jensen knows he's not normal, knows that he's nothing like the other guys. He's just... different. His mom says it's because he's always lost in his own world, but quite frankly, he prefers his world. He prefers escaping to a place that accepts him, a place separate from the mundane everyday lives of the other normal boys whose only thoughts are focused on getting laid and winning the next football game.

His dad gets angry at him sometimes, telling him to snap out of it and be a man, but Jensen can't help it. His world is full of bright smiles and gentleness, whereas the real world is ruled by brash curses and painful backslaps. Maybe it makes him a girl, but he longs for love, longs for something other than the meaningless conquests all the other guys brag about.

As he grows older, he learns to pretend. It's easier that way, he gets less frowns of disapproval, less people angry at him. His mouth cusses fluently and his backslaps are as powerful and as manly as the next normal guy. He's everything he isn't, but at least no one's

looking at him like he's a freak any longer. It's only when he's alone at night that he allows himself to slip back into the world he longs for.

He's twenty-six when something happens that takes him back two decades.

A week after he received a phone-call from Eric Kripke, the director of CW's up-and-coming series – Supernatural, he finds himself pulling up behind an awesome, black Chevy Impala. It's a classic and as he slides out of his car his eyes are glued to the sheen.

“She's a beaut', ain't she?” murmurs a soft voice from behind him, a hint of home clinging to the drawl.

“Yeah,” he replies, turning round to come face to... neck with... “Wow, you're tall!”

His face burns when he realises he just blurted that out aloud. The man just laughs, a deep, strong laugh, it's almost... honest, in ways Jensen hasn't seen for a while, and deep dimples light up his tanned features, dragging a grin from Jensen despite his nervousness.

When the man calms down, he sticks out a hand and says easily, his voice ringing with mirth, “I'm Jared. And you're short.”

Shaking his head with a grin, Jensen grasps the hand firmly, “Jensen.”

The man's eyes light up, turning from a calming gentleness to a sharp, mischievous twinkle. “Aren't you a little short to be my older brother?”

“Wait. You're Sam?”

Jared nods and there is absolutely no plausible explanation as to why Jensen suddenly feels ridiculously happy.

With a smile, he teases, “Damn, and there I was hoping I'd get someone cool to act with.”

Jared's dimples come out in full play once again, “Awww, you say that now, just you wait. Give it a week, you'll love me.”

And he's right. But it doesn't even take a week: by the end of the day Jensen has to keep pinching himself just to make sure he isn't dreaming. Just to make sure he's still in this world. By the end of the first season, Jared's become an irreplaceable part of Jensen's life.

The thing Jensen can't wrap his mind around is the fact that Jared is so open, so welcoming. He's got a kind word for everyone, knows when to joke and when to comfort, and is always

there when he's needed. Like a pillar that everyone, even the lowest of PA's, can rely on and turn to in times of trouble. Jensen heard him giving Pete advice on how to ask his girl to marry him and two days later the wedding announcement came out. Jensen's saw him sharing his momma's soup recipes with Anna – one of the make-up assistants – for her sick niece. Jensen's heard him on the phone to their mutual friend, Tom, talking him through the freak out after Mike – another friend – kissed him, and barely a month later, the (very recently) gay couple moved in together.

Jensen himself needs Jared so much now, he can't even understand how he managed without him.

And most amazing of all, is that there isn't a single bad bone in Jared's body. He never even snaps, not even after an eighteen hour day, not even when he's freezing his ass off because someone forgot to bring his change of clothes along, not even when Mindy – from wardrobe – spills dye all over his favourite shirt. In fact, the only time Jensen's ever seen him angry, is that one time when some jerk at the park kicked at Harley just for sniffing at his trousers. But then, Jensen was right there yelling at the guy too, so that doesn't really count.

And Jared loves. He loves like Jensen never imagined possible, caring and considerate, always putting others before himself; and loyal, loyal like you wouldn't believe. He gives and gives, never asking for a thing in return.

Jensen's seen him with Sandy and that's the one part of his friend that he doesn't get. Longs for, but will never get. Sandy has no idea how lucky she is. When she shows up on set, Jared has eyes only for her, sliding long, slender fingers along her cheek and pulling her in for a kiss, a soft, slow, gentle kiss, as if letting her know she means the world to him. She just laughs and bats him away after.

Each time Jensen is witness to this, his stomach clenches in a dull ache of longing.

But make no mistake, Jensen is damn grateful for what he has. It's times like now, lounging in the back of the car beside his friend, that let him know there is a god. They've just come from a grueling day of both physically and emotionally testing scenes, and they're slumped against one another, holding each other upright while Jared is busy rambling about his sister's new school.

It's nice just listening, feeling the vibrations of Jared's voice. Soothing and low-pitched. Jensen's been drifting on the edge of wakefulness for a while and somehow his head's managed to find its way to Jared's shoulder. The younger guy just takes it all into stride, shifting to make Jensen more comfortable and continuing his semi-one-sided conversation. Jensen grunts occasionally when he's awake enough.

When he wakes up next, it's to find that his head's migrated its way down, to land with his cheek pressed into the soft material of his friend's shirt. There's a warmth around his shoulders that can only mean Jared's draped an arm round him. Raising his head slightly, just

enough to peer up at his teddy (who he is hugging like a small kid), he meets Jared's glance, and gets a soft smile and gentle eyes accompanied by the tightening of the arm around him and the soft murmuring of, "Sleep, man. I'll be here."

Burrowing his nose in Jared's chest once more, Jensen is more than happy to oblige.

For the first time, his dream world is identical to his reality.

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It's a year after Supernatural started filming that something happens which throws a spin on everything.

"Hey, Jensen, do you know where Jared is?"

He frowns, looking up from his script, "Nope, isn't he in his trailer?"

Running a hand through her hair, the flustered PA shakes her head, "No, and he's not answering his cell or home landline. We need him for some dialogue. Kripke needs it right away."

"I'll check around, tell me if you find him."

Already halfway across the yard, she nods, "Yeah, okay."

His cell just keeps going through to voicemail, and after leaving several messages, Jensen gives that up. Jared's trailer is deserted, and after banging on his apartment door until his hand hurts, Jensen slumps down, running out of ideas and beginning to get the twinges of worry.

He hasn't seen his friend all weekend, so he has no idea where he might have gone. But it doesn't make sense, because Jared's Jared, and he would never just up and disappear without informing someone, and he would never just not show up.

Sandy.

Scrolling down through his contacts, Jensen is relieved to see that he does indeed have her number, God knows why. After a couple of rings, she picks up, "Jensen?"

"Yeah, hey, Sandy, uhm, I was just wondering if you know where Jay is."

There's a long silence. Then in a weird, strained voice, she replies, "No, no I don't. Why? Is he missing?"

"Yeah, but don't worry, I'm sure he's just lost track of time or something. He'll show up soon." Jensen's cheerful tone is so fake it makes him cringe.

"Yeah."

"Thanks Sandy."

He hangs up and swallows down the ever-increasing fear bubbling inside of him.

Where the hell are you, Jay?

Neither Mike, Tom nor Chad has any clue either.

"Fuck, Kim. I don't know what to do."

He's beginning to reach full-on panic mode now, and Kim somehow senses this. Placing a reassuring hand on Jensen's shoulder, he says softly, "Go home, Jen. Get some sleep. We'll call you when we find him."

He opens his mouth to stubbornly refuse but Kim looks him in the eye, "You're no good to us, to him, when you're inches away from losing it. Go home. We'll find your boy."

My boy.

It's that thought that distracts him enough for Kim to shove him in the car and inform the driver to take him straight home.

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He doesn't think he's ever been more relieved than when his eyes fall upon Jared's slumped form. His friend's sitting on the ground before the door, head between his knees, and arms wrapped around himself.

"Jesus, Jay! You scared the crap out of all of us."

He jerks his head up and... holy crap!

“Shit, Jay! What the hell happened?”

Dropping his head back between his arms, he hides the pale face and red eyes from Jensen.

Grasping his shoulder firmly, Jensen pulls him to stand, forcing his friend to look him in the eye.

In a softer, gentler voice, he tries again, “Jay, what happened?”

Averting his eyes, he mumbles something incoherent.

Standing in the middle of a corridor is not exactly the perfect place to drill your best friend for answers as to why he looks like a zombie straight out of Kripke’s whacked world, so Jensen quickly unlocks his apartment door and pulls Jared in.

He slumps against the door the moment it’s shut, and Jensen takes a moment to examine him. In all the morning-after hangovers Jensen’s seen his friend have, none of them even scrape the surface of this. Dark shadows cling to the once-tanned skin, his eyes are dull and red-rimmed, untidy stubble clings to his jaw, and his mouth bears no hint of a smile.

Crouching down beside the limp form, Jensen lays a hand on his friend’s shoulder, “Jay, did something happen?”

Jared turns his head away, a glimmer of tears in his eyes. Jensen’s never seen him like this. Squeezing the quivering shoulder, he waits for the next move.

When nothing obvious and helpful pops up, he decides enough is enough, and manhandles Jared up and onto the couch, settling down beside him.

Suddenly a dreadful thought occurs to him, “Oh, God. Jay, your family’s fine, right? Has someone been hurt?”

Even more tears well up and Jared shakes his head, mumbling, “No, no they’re all fine. It’s stupid, it doesn’t matter, it’s my fault anyway.”

Shifting until their sides are pressed up, Jensen begins rubbing soft circles on his friend’s back, his chest filling with warmth as Jared leans into him. “Jay, whatever it is that’s making you so upset, it matters, okay? It matters to me. Everything about you matters to me.”

And maybe he said a bit too much, but it doesn’t matter when Jared’s breathing hitches and

he turns to bury his face in the side of Jensen's neck, arms sliding around his waist, hugging him tightly.

"I..." his breath hitches, "... I asked her to marry me, Jen.... I... I mean, what kind of an idiot am I? I was actually... I was stupid enough to think she'd want to marry me. What the hell was I thinking?"

Jensen freezes as he tries to take everything in. "She... she said no?" He can't believe it. Can't believe how anyone could possibly be so stupid as to refuse a proposal from Jared Padalecki. Hell, he knows... okay, let's not go there.

"Jay..." softly carding his fingers through the soft curls, he stoops to whisper softly, "Then she doesn't deserve you, man. If she couldn't see what she had, then she must have been blind or mentally challenged or something."

There's a choked laugh as Jared tries to wipe the moisture away, "Thanks, Jen."

Patting his friend lightly on the back, he tries to lighten the mood, "Now, I think getting drunk off our asses sounds like a good idea, don't you?"

"Hell, you know me so well," Jared grins. Jensen completely ignores how watery it is and slides off the couch towards the fridge, tossing his friend a beer.

"How's pizza and a movie sound?"

"Really great," Jared replies quietly, staring down at his beer.

After calling the pizza delivery place and messaging Eric, Jensen heads over to the movie cabinet, not even hesitating before he picks out Jared's favourite and pops it in. Then he grabs a blanket and heads back to the couch, throwing it over the both of them and sitting as close to his friend as he dares.

Jared's quiet and subdued the whole night, but as the credits of the second movie flicker on the screen, he nudges Jensen's knee.

"Thank you."

Shrugging nonchalantly, Jensen reaches out to squeeze his friend's shoulder, "Man, you know I'm here for you."

“No, no. Thank you. Like, really. I... I don’t know what I was going to do.” Jared looks up with wide eyes, “I was scared, Jen. I... I was alone. I... I don’t like being alone.”

“Jay...” Jensen punches his shoulder lightly, “Why didn’t you call me?”

“I...” ducking his head to the floor, Jared bites his lip, “I was so sure Sandy loved me, that we’d make it, you know... It was kind of like realising everything I thought was solid wasn’t. I was...” Jared sighs and continues quietly, “I didn’t want to find out you weren’t either.”

Ignoring the clenching in his chest, Jensen shakes his head furiously, “You idiot. How could you possibly think that? Jared. You and me. We’re us, always will be. I...I’ll always be here, Jay. Get that into your thick skull, okay?”

“Yes, sir,” Jared mock salutes, a small grin on his lips.

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Three months after Jared and Sandy’s break up, Jensen gets a strange voicemail from Jared.

“Jen... I... do you... uhm... shit... okay, uh... I bumped into Sandy yesterday at the store... uh, she said... fuck. Okay, uh, what I mean is... can we go... out... uhm... as in... uh, shit, never mind... forget it.”

Then there’s another one.

“Hey, Jen. Me again, just... can you just erase the previous message? Please? Thanks.”

And a third.

“Shit, okay, here goes,” Jared takes a deep breath, “Dwanagoutwime?”

There’s a fourth and final one.

“I... Jen, I really don’t know what I’m doing here, but I think she might be right... Uhm... please just give me a call... uh... and please don’t hate me...”

Jensen full on chuckles at the last sentence. As if that were even possible. Then he immediately hits speed dial because he doesn't like how upset Jared sounded and because unless he's entirely incorrect, Jared's asking him out.

“Jay...”

“Jen, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. We can forget I said anything, delete the messages and everything. It doesn't have to-”

“Will you just shut up for a second?” Jensen chuckles into the phone, his chest feeling lighter than it's felt in a long time. When Jared's train of words cuts off, he continues, “Pick me up at eight, my truck's break line's not working.”

He can practically hear Jared beaming on the other side. “Sure, yeah. Okay, great... I'll... uhm.. I'll be there at eight... Uh, see you then...”

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And so, Jensen realises, sometimes there are things worth waiting for in life. Even when other people might think you're foolish and naïve, sometimes, just sometimes you get what you've longed for all along. And more often than not, that something is a million times better than what everyone else got.

And Jared is definitely that something.

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