

How can I say no?

Being around her is overwhelming. In a good way. She's that kind of people that drags you towards her. She has this aura like she's just something else. Something out of ordinary.

But she's no hero. Sometimes she's so miserable it hurts in me, her divorce, that band hiatus, this is when we spend most of our time together, this is when she calls me and how on earth could I reject Hayley Williams's call.

I just go. Stop whatever I'm doing and go. Pick up some snacks on my way, and a pack of beer, "girls night" she says on her audio message, as excited as a child.

I know she's faking. Calling me in a Friday night can only mean one thing: she's lonely.

Someone else would probably feel used, but I don't. It's not like she only calls me when she needs, she is an amazing friend all the time, so why not making something for her. And deep down I like it. Her company is better than any party I could hit tonight.

When I get to her place the door is unlocked.

"Hayley?" I left the bag with our snacks on the kitchen counter and go upstairs.

"Hayley?"

"Lindsey? I'm here! Taking a shower."

Her bedroom door is halfway open. I snuck inside as quietly as I can. The bathroom door is also open, I can see her naked back through the dim and the glass.

"I should scare the shit out of you for leaving your door open like this!"

It had the desired effect. She jumped scared and turned around. I was able to watch her face go from scared to confused and then happy. She smiled like a dork.

"I knew you were coming and I had to take a bath so." She tried to make it simple.

"You got a point." I could never discuss with her.

"And this is Nashville. I mean. A crime in this town would be something to break the boredom." I had to laugh with her.

"You live in a completely different Nashville Hayley."

"Hey" she ended the shower and pulled the white towel. "I got us that tea that you like."

"Uh, I'm going to boil some water."

"Thanks babe."

I'm not an easy going person. It takes time to me to open up and get comfortable around someone and some environments. Hayley's home is one of those places where I feel like this.

Of course we have been friends for a long time now. And when she called me to say that he cheated on her I know I was the first one to show up and stay here with her. Make her company. Make sure that she would eat, shower, drink water and then, when she finally decided to take some therapy sessions I would stay with Alf for her.

Hayley is not the most open person herself. Maybe this is way our friendship is different from what she has with Brian or Taylor. She said herself that I'm the one she goes first when she needs help. The first when something good happens and she wants to talk about it. And the last one to go through her thoughts before bed.

I know I love her. I can't see my life with her anymore. I don't even want to do that.

I almost forgot the boiling water.

Hayley appeared drying her hair with a different towel. The smell of tea was in the air.

"Hm, smells good. What else did you get us?" She peeked the paper bag.

"The usual stuff." We did that a lot. Sometimes in her place, others in my place.

"Wow, is that beer?" She lift the pack.

"Yes, I tought it would go well with the snacks.

"Jesus, I love you." She said while closing the fridge.

Spending the night in hayley's place is a must in these days. I already have some clothes here and even a toothbrush. We got comfortable on the couch, TV is on but we are not paying attention. She's talkative tonight. This happens sometimes. She takes a while to get to the point, the reason why she called me today. I know something is up but I can't speed things up. We have our own pace.

She tells me about her day and I could listen to it forever. Then she ask me about my week, and I can't lie, it was tiring. Working. Taking care of my place. Deals to make, photos to edit.

"Did you got the finish those pics we took last weekend?"

"God! If you don't remind me. I would never remember. I only finished one. take a look." I grab my phone to show her.

Hayley is so photogenic. She looks amazing in this one. The yellow training bra, her messy hair and a random shoe on her hand. She bursted into laughing.

"Jesus! I didn't remember this!"

"You were so wasted at this point." I tell among laughter.

"We had a blast!"

"Always do babe. Can I post this?"

"Sure. Make a cool caption for it. "

"I will."

I don't spend much time on my phone. Specially around her. Besides being a photographer and surrounded by technology all the time, I really enjoy these moments with real life friends. And that's what we do. We laugh. We grab the beers and it's like time flies when we are together. I get so hypnotized by her, the bad jokes, the stories she sometimes reapeat a hundred times.

Until she got up and turned the radio on.

"What are we listening to?" I ask.

"After laughter."

"So narcissists listening to your own music."

"Well, somebody gotta do it. Besides my mom. And you, of course."

"Oh yeah, I listen to it all the time." I said sarcastically and earned a slap on my shoulder. But she can't get angry with me. We never had a fight. We argue. But we don't fight. Since we met I dint think I spent a whole day without talking to Hayley.

She pulls me by the hand, and we start dancing around the living room. It's fun. It's good.

"Look Linds." Her gaze becomes deeper. We still dancing but slower and closer so I can listen to her.

"I'm sorry about this, but, he called me this morning." She starts.

"Chad?"

"Yeah."

"The fuck? What he want?"

"Small talk I guess. Said that he's in the country and asked about Alf, about the band, about me. "

"And how do you feel about it?"

"Well, I don't know. It was nice talking to him but right afterwards I finished the call I cried, I tried to find something that was his to, you know, smell him again, feel him someway closer to me.

I can't avoid imagining things differently." She stopped dancing completely. I took both of her hands tried to make her hold my gaze as she tried to keep her head down, ashamed.

"Babe, listen, it's okay. It's not easy and you don't need to get over it in a week, or a month, or even a year. Take your time. But you need to remember what that man did to you."

"Yes." She squeezed my hands. "Thanks for coming, and for being here, and understand."

"I will always do that. I'm with you my girl."

She looked up at me and smiled. Those green eyes recovering it's brightness. The little freckles on her skins, and her laugh lines, I can't avoid scanning the features of her face, and the time I spend checking her lips, when I finally get back to reality it's like emerging from a dive. She still smiling. Like she's waiting for something. And I don't know if it is the same thing that I'm waiting for.

Eventually we fall asleep. We never do it right. This time we fell asleep on the couch. Cuddling. A terrible movie on TV so boring it got us snorting before the end.

I woke up in the middle of the night. Holding hayley's waist, smelling her hair, but with this terrible pain behind my neck.

"Hayles, we need to get to bed."

She wakes slowly. When she turns around I'm already trying to get up.

"Come on." She lets me help her up. We make the way to her bedroom. Alf is asleep on the floor next to the king sized bed.

"Sleep with me." Is the only thing she says.

Can I ever deny something to her? Guess not.

And so we do. We sleep.

I felt this wet thing on my cheek. A weird smell. God what is this? I opened my eyes, so hard, then I realized. Alf is licking me.

"Fuck, Alf!" I try to him away. But it's too late I smell like a dog.

"Are you okay?" She's at the door. A tray on her hands. Alf is ready near his momma, pretending that nothing happened.

"I'm fine. What is this?"

"Breakfast in bed!"

I sit on the bed, she's all smiling. The tray, well, she did her best but cooking will never be her strong suit.

"I got you all that you like. Avocado toast, tea, cereal and honey. "

"That's so sweet, what did I do to deserve that?"

"You are incredible, just that." She says sitting next to me.

"What are the plans for today?" I ask as I start eating.

"Well, nothing I guess, but if you are not busy we can get something to do. Walk Alf, or, I don't know."

"Well, I'm free, I mean I got work to do but I can do that later of course."

"Have I ever told you how much I love you?"

"I think this breakfast says it." We laughed.

Even routine with her was something else. Brushing ou teeth, getting our hair done and dressing up is fun. She makes it fun. Even when she gets quiet and contemplative I know that she's fine. It just hits her sometimes. And I'm here to bring her back on track.

We end up taking Alf to the park, it's just a few blocks away from her place. Its sarurday morning so it's a little bit too crowded. But unlike other days that doesn't make her uncomfortable. Nobody approaches her around here. Nashville is just not aware of the rockstar living among them. Apart from one or another long glance, but that can be because of her hair.

"Wanna grab a latte on the way home?" She asked. I agreed.

It happend at the cafe, the servants didn't see Alf, and we didn't realize we should not bring him inside. But while we were at the line hayley whispered at my ear.

"I think dogs are not allowed in here."

"I see no sign."

"I see no other dogs in here."

"You got a point."

It was our turn. She cashier smiled waiting for our order.

"Can we have dogs inside?" I asked and hayley covered her mouth avoiding laughing.

"Sorry. But no." The girl looked at Alf surprised.

"Even when he's this cute?" Hayley cracked a joke.

"Unfortunately no."

"Grab mine then babe." I said as I walked away with the dog.

Hayley came outside a few minutes later. Two cups on a cardboard holder.

"She thought you were my wife." Is the first thing she said.

"What?" I grab my cup and we continue our way home.

"For real. She was all like "it's so nice to see people like you in this neighborhood" and I went like "people like us?" And she said "yes, you and your wife, your little dog, it's like a family right"

"I mean. That's nice of her but..."

We were laughing at this point. But something in the back of my head kept that moment.

"Yes, like, I can't bring my dog and you call me a lesbian, all at once."

Well. The cashier wasn't completely wrong. I'm not a lesbian. But I'm into girls. I just don't see myself getting married anytime soon.

Somehow hayley's divorce kind of messed up my conception of marriage. Commitment is hard. Waiting to spend the rest of your life with someone seems impossible. But I can't understand why someone wouldn't want to spend their lives with hayley. She's the only person a know that deserves that. If true love is still a thing. She deserves that.

That stayed in my head the rest of the morning. Until hayley got sick of my quiet self and ask me what's going on.

"Whay you thinking?" We are back on the couch. TV is on.

"Thinking. I mean. "

"Put it out. You seem weird. You got things to do right?"

"No. It's not that. I'm just wondering. Hayley, would you get married to another woman?"

She looked at me. We stare at each other. I can see that she's cool about it.

"Sure. I mean. I married an stupid so, why not?"

I gave her a little smirk and she continued

"I mean. It's not something that I planned. But, you know, I just need to be happy again. And if that makes me happy. But not anytime soon. No marriage for a while. Why? Are you planning to

propose?"

I laughed. This girl doesn't let anything go.

"Just wondering. I mean. " it's my turn to look away and she patiently waits.

It's no news to the world how I feel about her. I deny it to our close friends. But I can lie to myself. It's been going for a while. Actually is an old thing. I got over it when she got married. Of course. But staying like this, always near her, always talking to her, it's like it's back from where I left it.

Its overwhelming. It feels good but it also frightens me. I know I'm not what she wants. But God, if only she knew.

"Linds? You here?" She asked.

I looked back up at her. Her beautiful eyes staring at me. So wide. And I'm measuring her face again. I didn't realize how close I was until I felt her breath on me. God, the only thing I can see are her lips. So inviting. So close. When I look up her eyes are closed. This is when I end up the distance between us. And I kissed hayley Williams. I kissed her like it was he last thing I got to do of my life.

And she kissed me back. I felt her hand on my hair. She pulled me closer.

A fire lighten up on me. I moved my body towards her. Shes like a magnet. She has this aura that makes you want to get closer to her. And I was attracted to it for so long.

The kiss ended slowly, with little pecks.

"Wow." Its the only thing she says as she backed away. Her finger on her, now swollen, lips.

"Hayley I... I think I should..."

"What?"

"I..." I don't know what to say. "I'm sorry. I just wanted to do this so bad. I'm sorry. We can talk some other time ok? I gotta go." I got up, I barely took my phone and wallet. I was almost at the door when she shouted

"Don't leave me!"

Fuck. Why I cannot say no to her?

I didn't move. She came to me. Barefoot, she took my coat from me and tossed it on the floor. She took my phone and wallet and put it back on the table. Next thing I see is her face getting closer again, her hands around my neck, our height difference is not that much, but she need to pull me down a little so she looks me in the eye, her eyes are dark, and with a quick glance at my lips she does it again. We kiss. A second time in less then 5 minutes. Not even in my brightest dreams this would happen.

"We should go to bed." She says when we end the kiss. And damn. How can I say no?