**After**

I wake up to the sound of sizzling.

I feel exceptionally well-rested, despite the sluggish feel spread through my body – like I’d sweated my worries out with a exercise(?????). Looking around, I see a vaguely familiar sight.

Ah, right – I’d stayed at Tess’ place. It feels a bit off, as I usually wouldn’t be sleeping on her bed.

I turn my body over, in an effort not to be facing a blank wall. By the stove(?), I see Tess’ figure from behind.

*It really is a nice ass you have there, Tess,* I think.

Before I can get too absorbed in these thoughts, it turns away from me. I look up to Tess’ face – with a sweet smile plastered on it.

“Are you awake? I’m making breakfast,” she says.

*Mm,* I grunt out, not yet awake enough for a coherent response.

I throw my legs out the bed, getting seated on the side of the bed. While doing so, I finally notice a distinct lack of clothing on my bottom side. Or the top side, looking further.

*Right,* I think, as I start to recall the events of yesterday.

Tess and I ended up getting together, right outside this room. Later, right inside this room, we ended up getting togetherer.

“Hmm…Done enough, I reckon,” Tess says, serving breakfast as if nothing happened. “Are you going to eat like that?”

Only then does the embarrassment from sitting butt-naked seem to hit me, as I scramble to get dressed.

“Scrambling,” I say, catching a glimpse of breakfast. “I guess you did some of that as well.”

Tess seems confused, until she looks down and sees the eggs.

She lets out a small giggle (no doubt at the stupidness of the joke, as opposed to its merit).

“Dork.”  
  
  
{playful banter after class}

Suddenly, I feel a familiar pain on my back, combined with the familiar sensation of the wind unwillingly abdicating the inside of my body.

“Trish, my bish, how the fuck you doing these days? I heard you and Devin finally broke up,” the perpetrator says, without so much a hint of any guilt.

I vow to get this Henry fucker back tomorrow.

“Finally? What’s that supposed to mean?” I say to the man hanging onto me.

“Oh come on, you two were about as hopeful as a pair of baby shoes. It was never going to last.”

“Well, it’s a good riddance either way,” I respond.

“You say that, but I bet you got all pissy and drank your tits off again,” he says while snickering right to my face.

“There’s no better way to forget than with a drink in hand.”

“Attagirl, you get it,” he laughs.

But then, he seems to take a closer look, like a detective inspecting the evidence.

“You don’t seem so mad about it though. Usually, you’d be lashing out a few days longer. Will I even need the list of emocore songs I compiled for karaoke?”

“Well, maybe I’ve matured a little more. Have you considered that?”

He busts a gut at that remark – even slapping his leg for added effect.

…

I hate how observant this fucker gets sometimes.  
…

“You done yet?” I ask.

“Ah, yeah, I’m fine,” he says, winding down. “That was a good one though, that was a good one.”

“But for real,” he continues, “I bet there’s something more to it. Did you find a new guy already or what?”

Trying to prevent a reoccurrence of the previous incident that just passed, I take a moment to consider my response.

“So you did, huh?” he says, while I’m still in thought. “I didn’t know you had vultures hanging about.”

“I didn’t even say anything!” I protest, but he just laughs it off again.

“You’re about as subtle as a peacock, Triss.”

I don’t grace the comment with a response.

“Well, I’ll tell you I didn’t have any ‘vultures’, whatever that means.”

“Hmm,’ he goes, seemingly going back into detective mode. After observing my face for a moment, he dials back and looks off into the distance, as if the answer will be there.

Coincidentally, this happens to be the direction where Tessa is exiting right now – who he locks onto like a sharpshooter.

“You had quite a nice vibe going earlier, didn’t you Triss? Don’t tell me…”

I don’t tell him.

“Really? You two actually got together? That’s incredible.”

“Did aliens give you mind-reading tech or something?” I ask, while I wonder what’s supposedly ‘incredible’ about it.

“It came as a bonus with the probe,’ he jokes. “Still, I never knew you liked women.”

“Huh? I don’t.”

“The fuck do you mean you don’t? You’re literally dating one.”

“What? That’s like, an exception. I don’t think it means anything.”

He looks me dead in the eye – seemingly staring right into my soul.

“Then, have you fucked yet?’ he asks.

“I’m not telling you that.” I respond plainly.

“That doesn’t sound like a no to me.”

He just looks at me again.

“Did you like it?”

“I’m *definitely* not telling you that.”

“That doesn’t sound like a no to me either.”

He puts his hand on his chin, deep in thought. I’m speechless as a mute right now, so I have no words to break that train either. After a few moments of listening only to the chatter of students in the halls, he finally breaks our mutual silence.

“I think you’d best come with me, Triss.”

“Come with you? To where?”

“Tesco’s,” he says. “I need to get milk.”

Sitting in the passenger seat of Liam’s car while the radio blares shitty mumble rap, I wonder what in the world brought me here.

“Who the fuck put this shit-ass song on?” he says.

“You, dumbass!” I exclaim. “Instead of explaining what the hell I’m doing here.”

“I’m getting to it okay, I’m getting to it.”