“You shouldn’t be out here so late,” David softly murmured as he climbed out onto the roof besides me. “I think mom and dad would prefer if you weren’t out here at all, actually.”

“Shut up,” I grumbled at him, refusing to look his way. I kept staring out at the sunset over my knees, which I was holding tight to my chest. I heard the window get slid shut behind me, before David took a seat besides me, and for a second neither of us said anything as he joined me in staring out at the sunset.

“It really is pretty, isn’t it?” David asked.

“I said shut up,” I grumbled again. My eyes were still stinging from all of the tears that I shed earlier, and though I could still smell the grass stains in my jeans from earlier in the day, everything felt so weird no. None of it made sense.

“You’re still upset with them,” he mused.

“I said shut up! And of course I am!” I exploded back at him, letting go of my legs as I shot my arms out in exasperation. I could feel the tears starting to tug in the back of my eyes once more, and my breathing hitched. I didn’t want to cry, not again, I’d already spent so much time crying. “They’re such assholes! They keep treating me like I’m ten! I’m thirteen now! I know how the world works!”

“Hey, language, Lizzy,” David coolly replied, though he couldn’t keep himself from letting out a slight chuckle – a slight chuckle that I responded to by jabbing him under the ribs with all of the force I could muster. It either didn’t hurt, or he didn’t want to seem hurt, and either option just made me sulk a little bit more. “Even if… I agree.”

“You think mom and dad are assholes too?” I mumbled as I brushed the few tears that had gathered from my eyes, slowly shifting to sit pretzel-legged on the roof. I finally turned to actually look at David, maybe just a little bit of awe within my eyes as I waited for him to continue.

“Well, I did, if that’s any consolation,” he said with a small chuckle that earned him another jab – one that, this time at least, he responded to with an “Ow! Stop that,” before he tried to continue. “But yeah, Lizzy, I did. Still kinda do if I’m being honest. But… those adults have a different way from seeing the world than us.”

“You’re an adult too,” I whined, which he gave a full-blown laugh to.

“Yeah, just because I moved out and you stole my bedroom doesn’t mean I’d consider myself an adult yet, Lizzy. I’m only nineteen!”

“That’s six more years than me,” I continued to grumble.

“And mom and dad have twenty-six on me,” he pointed out. I sighed. David continued, “They’re… just from a different time, Lizzy. They… care about you, I think.”

“No they don’t,” I mumbled, even if my own words were starting to lack the conviction I wished they had. After today, I just didn’t have the energy to continue arguing.

“Well, they care enough to try to keep you alive, at least,” David replied with a sigh. “I… know they’re difficult sometimes, though.”

“Yeah, right. ‘Difficult’. Davy, they told me I’m not gay and that there’s no point in talking to her anymore!” There, once again, were the tears welling in my eyes, which I swiped away with more aggression this time.

“Her?” David asked. “Oh, Beth?”

“Yeah, Beth…”

“Isn’t she your best friend?” he asked again, his tone a bit softer now.

“Yeah! And they said I’m not allowed to see her anymore, that she’s poisoning my mind,” I mumbled through the tears. I wanted to push David away, but I didn’t have any more strength than just to wiggle a bit as he wrapped me up in a hug.

“I’m so sorry, Lizzy,” was all he had to say.

More tears were falling now, and I couldn’t strip them away now. So I sobbed, and I stammered out, “It’s not your fault.”

“I know,” David mumbled back as he gently patted my back. We sat there, and I cried just as much as I had earlier in the day again into his arms. It felt better than crying alone, to be here with my big brother as I cried, but it still felt wrong to be doing so. I didn’t want to be crying, but my entire body was heaving with my sobs as David just held me and let me cry. “Y’know, mom and dad didn’t want me to be a writer, either,” he softly explained.

“They didn’t?” I weakly replied, and slowly felt my tears at least pause for right now.

“I spent an entire night out here when they told me to give up on it doing the same thing,” he explained.

“Oh,” I mumbled, tilting my head down. “Aren’t you… a writer now?”

“Yeah, I am. Maybe… not the most successful,” he said with a small laugh. “But I still aim.”

It wasn’t the best metaphor, I acknowledged on some level; being a writer and being… me weren’t exactly too comparable, I thought. But it still comforted me all the same.