

Affrontement

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Affrontement

by [Sharinganblossoms](#)

Summary

Post war/Post-rumbling.

The wounds which are skin deep can be healed, but the ones which slice through your soul may not be that easy.

Eren and Mikasa talk for the first time since 112.

Notes

It will be three shot story with heavy implication on inner thoughts.

Build-up

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I have always hated you...

He is doing it to protect us...

To all the subjects of Ymir...

What am I to you?

STOP!

Mikasa clenches her eyes shut, practicing the deep breath motion, again and again. *One, two, three*, it's ok. It's fine. It's over.

It's all over. The nightmare is over. She wants to sleep but she can't. The voices in her head, are constant, looming over every rational part of her brain. Glistening of a water drop, pearl-shaped on her lap catches her eye, as she realises it's her tear. They have been ever present for a while now. Ever since the day they reached Eren, and *ever* since he-

A coughing sound interrupts her trail of thoughts, as she rushes towards the bedside. He is still unconscious just like the day before and the day before that. Hesitantly, she bows down her head to his chest and there it is.

Thump. Thump.

His heartbeat.

Mikasa doesn't know why she has this strange habit of listening to the rhythmic beating of his heart. The doctor has already done a thorough checkup, and said his body was just weak, exhausted, and in need of heavy rest for a while. Other than few wounds which would be healed over time, he didn't endure any serious injuries. He is wrapped in white bandages, snoring lightly, still oblivious to his whereabouts.

I have always hated you

Her head flinches back, as the ugly thought crawls back inside, her throat jams up as she leaves him to rest. He had talked with everyone: Reiner, Armin, Jean *even* Annie. But not *her*. She didn't want to re-live the details of their fight from few days back.

It's all a mess anyways. All she needs to remember now is that the Titan curse is gone. After gaining the founder powers and demonstrating it to the world; more like threatening them, Eren made sure to eliminate the paths and the tree of life, *is that what's it called?*, from the root. The Eldians are just like normal human beings now. *They* are seen as the people who saved the world from the wrath of the devil, by ending him.

Yes, in the eyes of the world, Eren Yeager is dead. No one except her, Armin, Reiner and the others present during the battle know the truth.

Mikasa doesn't know why, what was the reason but they all agreed to keep it a secret among

themselves. Maybe it was due to the fact that Eren took down the two thousand year old titan curse, and in a way freed them all. She doesn't know the working of politics, nor does she intend to know, but from what she last heard: Armin, Hanji and Jean have gone to Marley to discuss about the peace treaty.

There have been outburst by minorities, the eldians and the other oppressed people all over the world after recent events. Eren's words may have sparked the flames of freedom among the people. It has created a great unrest among the nations, which is why they have decided to hold a global conference. Armin have assured her that the results will be different this time. She just needs to focus on Eren right now.

Eren

Who would have thought, the boy who saved her ten *almost* eleven years ago, will be the one to encite such a huge change in the world. She should have known better. He was always different, always a step ahead of others, full of passion for the things he really wanted to achieve. He was never one to give up, was he? No matter what it took, no matter how ugly things got, he just kept moving forward.

She brushes away those thoughts, its getting late and she needs some rest. What if Eren woke up next day? Is she ready to confront him? She definitely needs to be prepared to look him in the eye and say those things. The things she has been practicing since the day he cut her heart out and let it bleed.

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The sound of a chirping bird wakes Mikasa up, her groggy eyes blinking to take in the daylight, as she slowly sits up. A yawn threatens to rush past her chapped lips, as she gets back on her feet, and heads to the bathroom to freshen up. It's barely six o'clock right now, but she knows she will have difficulty getting back to sleep again. She also needs to write a letter to Armin, asking: how is it going over there? And Miss Kiyomi as well. They have surprisingly gotten close now, and she have asked her to send a postal letter once she was back in shiganshina.

Once she is done freshening up, she heads to the bedroom to check up on him. His bandaids needs changing regularly, lest the wound gets infected. The Titan powers had one benefit for them though, as they helped in healing fas-

Her legs freezes on the spot, as she reaches his doorway. Her eyes become wide, and her breath quickly turning shallow, as she takes in the vacant spot on the bed. He is...gone.

He- No. He can't leave like that. He is a normal man now, he has *no* powers. A part of her wants to laugh at that notion. Eren has *never* been normal, even when he had no powers. Even now. She snaps out of her frozen daze and puts the medical kit down by the table before rushing out.

Where. Where. Where are you?

He can't leave her. Not when he is yet to listen to her. He has wounded her deeply. He does not get to have the easy way out.

Coward. Did he run away? The living room and the kitchen is empty.

Coward. The backyard is also empty.

Eren Yeager, you coward, damn you. She won't let him get away. Not this easily. Not-

Her legs come to a halt when she notices the figure perched by the garden area in front. He is kneeling, his face impassive, as he stares down at a... butterfly. He is looking at a sea green butterfly, sitting over the pale green leaf. It's a strange sight indeed, seeing him like this. Now that all is over, what does he want?

He wanted to die, remember? *But you didn't let him.* She shakes those thoughts away, swallowing, taking in his form. He looks weak, his ruffled hairs a mess over his shoulder and his cheeks a little more hollow than his usual structure.

What are you waiting for? Now is the time? Ask him! Tell him! You are not a slave. Tell him the truth!

Her heart is hammering, her palms clammy and her breath a bit erratic. This is Eren. The same nine year old boy who saved her. What is she so nervous about? It's not like he can say anything worse than he already did. Can he? His harsh words in earlier days never seemed to have great impact on her, because she knew he never actually meant them. But after that day- She have become vulnerable in a way she was *never* before.

It is in the midst of battle with her own thoughts, that his turquoise eyes fall on her.

And the world goes still.

Mikasa can't even feel if she is alive or not? Is she breathing? Why is it so hard to breath? Her heart is ready to claw it's way out of her chest, and bleed all over the patchy ground.

He is still staring at her. Emotionless.

Maybe it was a mistake to bring him here. She should have let him remain with Armin or Jean or Reiner *heck* even Levi. It's obvious he feels nothing for her. Right?

Blank. His eyes are void, a hollow pit as they bore into hers.

They are nothing like when he talked to others. He feels nothing! Nothing!

Maybe she was wrong. Maybe he *wanted* to throw the scarf away because it meant so little to him. Maybe he wanted to know her answer, to check their bond. And not because he have-*no* had, less than platonic feelings for her. Maybe it is all just a fantasy she built up herself. Maybe she had mistaken something deep, something emotional, something dangling close to the word, *dare she say it*, love, back that day.

Maybe the disappointment in his eyes, when they got interrupted was just a figment of her imagination.

Stupid. Stupid, Mikasa!

It's so funny how a minute earlier, she wanted to pour all her thoughts to him, but one look from him has rendered her speechless.

He is getting up now. His eyes are still trained on hers, as he slowly moves forward.

She wants to run. Is she ready to have her heart broken once again? Ready to bleed and scab until nothing is left?

Stop it, Mikasa! She is no coward. She is ready for anything. The worse he can do is say that he hates her once again. Yes. Yes, she has heard his voice say that *millions* of times in her head. She will handle it. She can.

They are face to face now. He is looking at her, as if she is a stranger. His face is *oh so* clearly masked right now. He remains still in front of her. Is he expecting her to say something first? Of course he is. What does he expect from her? She is not going to utter the *family* phrase, not right now, maybe not *ever*. She has learned it the hard way. He barely blinks, taking in her face and she suddenly feels exposed. *Very* naked. Her emotions are all out on display for him.

Mikasa, I have always hated you.

And she does the first thing that comes to her mind.

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“Keep the ice cube on, it will help with the bruising.”

He nods quietly, holding the ice pack over his bruised jaw as she fiddles with her hand.

She punched him. *Hard*.

That seemed to be the most appropriate response then, but now seeing him nursing another injury in his weakened state fills her with guilt. Her hand still stings where she fisted it to hurt his face. She may have lost her Ackerman powers. She knows she has.

But she is *still* a fighter through and through. She is well aware that she has hit him hard enough to leave a purple bruise.

“Doesn’t seem like you have lost your powers.” It’s a husky whisper. The first words he uttered to her, since...well that dreaded day. She feels an unwarranted shiver listening to him, before she hands him a glass of water to drink. His eyes are still heavy and tired, but his face isn’t as stoic as before. She watches his adam apple bob up and down, as he gulps down the water.

Feeling oddly uncomfortable, she looks away then, playing with her hands once and again.

“Thanks.” His voice is still groggy, both from sleep and what she assumes is exhaustion and pain. She can feel his eyes burning her up, staring at her with the intensity only Eren Yeager can pull off.

“This is...your parents house, right?” Yes, it is. But that’s not the question he should be asking right now.

“Its...nice.” Nice? Is he trying to make small talk? What is his intention? Does he want to pretend he never said those things to her? Or that they never stood on opposite sides? Or that he never broke her heart? She doubts he even knows how cruel his words were. Or does he?

He is still staring at her, now in silence. Maybe expecting some kind of verbal response from her. Right. She is the one who bought him here after all. What if he really thinks she is *clingy*?

She is the one who can't thread up enough words to form a sentence now. But she has to. Or else she will break. She has to.

“Mika-“

“I am not a slave.”

Chapter End Notes

It seemed fitting to end this chapter here. Next chapter will be the real confrontation. This was just a little buildup to it.

A colloquy

Chapter Notes

Part 2 of 3.

Thank you for your lovely support and positive feedback so far .

“I am not a slave.”

The words are a slow drawl, as it leaves her mouth. How many times has she wanted to say this? How many times has she wondered, if she will ever get to say this again. Because, Mikasa can handle having her feelings unrequited. She can *also* handle having her heart shatter into a million pieces, by his *oh so* cruel words.

I have always hated you.

But one thing she can't and will not EVER tolerate is the damage to her pride.

Because, not only his words have damaged her tender feelings, they have also questioned her whole existence in general. She is...a human *with* emotions. She isn't some kind of lowly being, who will take anything and *everything* thrown at her. She isn't someone who will bow at *anyone's* will, like a spineless creature.

His mouth is half open, half closed, as he blinks up at her. His carefully placed mask slowly peeling off, as his eyebrows furrow together and his eyes widen just a little.

She doesn't back off from his stare this time, and why should she? She has NOTHING to be ashamed of. NOTHING!

“I didn't follow you or care about you, because I am a slave to some genetically crafted bond. I am my own person. I am a...human being, with real emotions. And no-no one tells me how to live my own life! *Especiall*y not you.” She won't stop. And he isn't stopping her either. Good.

“I lost the people I cared about time and again. So, I tried to do anything in my power to prevent that from happening. Armin and...you, were my *only* dear friends back then. I wanted to protect you *both* from harm. Armin didn't throw himself in the face of adversity, *head-on*, like you did. Maybe that's why, I wasn't so...overprotective of him.” His eyes are lowered under the lashes, but she knows he is listening to her, if that slow twitch of his hand, and the rapid change in his breathing pattern, whenever she says something, a little bold, is an indication.

“I should have kept more faith in you from the very beginning. The way I acted, it was wrong of me. I should have...given you the space and trusted in you more.” She gulps, taking in some air. She owes it to him, Mikasa thinks, this words in reference to her younger self being a *tad* more protective.

“The young me, never found anything more important, than keeping the people I care about safe. Maybe that did make me, as you like to call it clingy.” He flinches. His shoulder flinches ever so *slightly*. It's easy to miss, if her trained eyes were not staring at him carefully.

“If...there was some Ackerman instinct, it didn't make me a slave to you. It stemmed from my

desire to protect you. If I was a slave, I won't *ever* tell you off, when you did something wrong. I would always do what *you* wanted me to, and never go against you. And I would--"

"You are right." He interrupts her. His voice barely above a whisper, as she takes a second to process it. What? Her tongue goes out to lick at her chapped lips, as he *finally* looks up at her. It hurts her to see, the light in his eyes diminished like that. He looks so...defeated, and for a moment she wants to just let go of everything, and hug him. Offer him some sort of comfort. But...she can't. Not yet. She will allow herself to be a little selfish for *once* in a life, and focus on her. Just for a little while.

"The bond thing...It was not true." He starts carefully, and Mikasa holds her breath, something she seems to be doing a lot more often around him. Hearing it from him seems so... strange and makes it feel much *much* real.

"Some of it was true, but I made most of it up, to hurt you." She doesn't show him a reaction, but inside a storm has started brewing in, shaking her terribly. She has doubted it *sure*, but hearing it from now...crushes her.

Why?

She must have said it out loud, as he sighs heavily, curling up his palm in his lap.

"The part with the host was true. You did form a connection with me, but it was one of my guardian...not a slave." Oh. Her assumption was right then. Well her and Levi. When she has asked her former captain about it, he was just as oblivious to the truth, as she was. But he did curse out Eren, and assured her that if there was a bond, it wasn't similar to a master and slave.

"Ackermans were the knights of the king, their protector. They were genetically altered, yes, so that they will always remain powerful and loyal to the royal family. But the experiment went wrong somehow. They indeed became powerful but they were no compliant by any means. Heck, they were the only ones immune to the founder powers. They were as farthest from the slave you can go."

Farthest from slave

Farthest from slave

A knight

She wants to howl loudly, and laugh and cry at the same time. She wants to hit him and hurt him, just like he did to her. She wants to...*oh*, she wants to do so many things, but her body has turned to stone, it seems, as she can't move a muscle to react.

A bitter laugh leaves his mouth, his features contoured in an expression akin to pain and somewhere close to remorse. He isn't looking at her, instead finding the floor much more interesting, as his legs tap *once, twice* against the wooden surface.

"That's not even the worst part of it." She looks up from his feet, as his gaze finally *finally* falls on her. There is a heavy cloud of sadness looming above him and something similar to disdain. But this time, it's not directed towards her but rather...towards himself. It's funny, how now his emotions are naked, while she is the one masking her thoughts. It hurts her to see him like this.

Even if he tore her apart in *worst* way possible, Mikasa knows she will never stop loving him. And this situation is so difficult. She wants to see him smile again. She wants to hold him in her arms, but for now she settles upon listening to him.

“I am the worst thing that could have happened to you.” She wants to shake her head, tell him no, but she also wants to know why he thinks so. Even though she knows why. Patience. She might not get him to open up like this ever again *possibly*.

“I intentionally made you bond with me. Even after I knew, you will never be the same, I did it.” Confusion laces her features, not understanding exactly what he means. He didn’t know anything about these things when he was nine. Then why-

“I sent my younger self to save you that day. Through paths. I told him to say those words to you. I manipulated him to say that.” Her blood turns ice cold, her face probably turning pale as well, as a shiver dares to run up her spine.

Manipulated

Manipulated

He...manipulated himself? Himself? Is that thing even...possible?

How? This-This is too much.

She has heard about the workings of path when he was talking to others. Heard about the real powers of attack titan, but she never knew he could manipulate things to such extent.

If he is capable of doing that then...what else did he do. How far did he manipulate things to make all the pieces fall into their right place?

“That’s not even the worst thing I have done.” His voice is laced with malice now, something she has never seen on his face. Well not for himself. This is Eren. The real Eren, who regrets doing those things. Does he regret though? In the end, he reached his goal, didn’t he? Even though it was a rocky road.

What else did he do?

She shakes her head, not wanting to know. He is weak, he needs rest anyways. Maybe she should have waited until he fully heals, to talk to him. And even though there are so many things, she wants to ask him, he should recover fully first.

“Eren, leave it, I don’t want to-“

“I killed the Reiss family. Those innocent children included. It wasn’t my father. It was *all* me. I told him to.”

He

Did

What?

She is immediately bombarded with the image of a fifteen year old Eren, crying and filled with guilt and shame, at his father’s actions. He...Did...That.

Eren did that?

She is at loss of words. He- no. He will- *but* then again, he will. He has. That chilly feeling inside her veins is stronger than ever, threatening to frost her insides.

He looks ashamed, his eyes not meeting hers, and her heart breaks for him. Breaks for the boy who has to go to such extent, all alone, to ensure their freedom. If there is one thing Mikasa knows, is that there is no way he remotely liked or felt comfortable with what he did. He must have been forced to take such action...even if it's so, *so*, she doesn't even have a word for it.

“Why?”

It's just a small whisper, which leaves her. Her shoulders slump, and she lets out a tired sigh.

And then he is speaking again.

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She has no idea how much time have passed. What is time even, when you are bombarded with such truth. She is still sitting on the wooden chair, *a little* on the edge, as her head feels like it's going to explode. All this information. The founder ymir, the first king. *Oh god*.

Bile dares to rise in her throat at the thought of their founder, and what she went through. As a woman and a human it's so sickening to even comprehend her situation. And Eren...he saw all of it, with his own eyes. She can't even begin to imagine what he must have felt at that sight. There is too much...TOO MUCH to process. He has been keeping it all in, for four years. FOUR YEARS!

All alone. He dealt with those demons of his memories all by himself. Knowing what he is about to do for such a long time. She is too shocked to move, to speak, to do anything.

What do you even say to someone who went through this hell. Is there a word in dictionary she can use?

Will words even be enough for it?

No, they won't.

The guilt inside her is strong now, rising, rising, *an inch by inch*, threatening to consume her whole person. Mikasa knows that each one of them is somehow responsible for Eren's misery in a way. She should have done better. She knew. God, she knew he was detached, alone and suffering. But she turned a blind eye to it. Wanted to pretend everything was fine in her little bubble.

Naïve girl. *So naïve*.

“You shouldn't have ke-kept those things bottled up.” Her voice is foreign to her own ears. It took her a lot of strength to string those few words. A sad smile graces his lips, and Mikasa wonders, if she will ever see him smiling like he used to ever again?

“It won't have done anything good. It was my-“

“It wasn't your responsibility! Why do you feel like it was YOUR goddamn job to do this all alone? WHO decided that, Eren?” And her voice is a little above her usual pitch now, and she knows that she is almost, *almost* shouting and losing her calm. But the only other option she has is to breakdown and cry, and that is unacceptable.

He looks a little taken aback by her outburst, gently shrugging his shoulders, and Mikasa has to wonder if even doing that is hurting him.

“I haven’t-WE haven’t been the greatest of friends to you for past few years. *We* should have been more understanding of what you were going through.” And then she is telling him, apologizing *sort of* for not being there for him. Funny, how this all started with her trying to reclaim her pride, but now it has delved into a much deep rooted issue.

Ignorance is bliss. But for how long?

And he is stopping her again, his hand touching her palm gently, and a tremor of shock rushes through her. And he is pulling back, maybe realising he crossed the line or maybe there is something in her expression which tells him it is too much. Too soon.

And then he is calling himself a monster, telling her it’s not their fault, it’s not their responsibility, it should not be on their conscience, *his actions* that is.

For the first time, she sees a glimpse of what he is really feeling. Has been feeling all this while. He is diving into the deep *deep* ocean of self hatred. Because *how* can his actions be excused? Because he is a horrible man who deserves a cruel punishment. All this is pouring out from his mouth NO his heart, and it hurts her to think he feels that way.

“I am a poison for anyone who cares about me, Mikasa. That’s all I am. *Epecially* to...you.”

“No, you are not.” It’s not a lie. It’s not. He has done so much for her. So much! He sacrificed everything for all of them. This is the prize he is paying for all of it.

“Don’t excuse my actions, for once. Don’t defend me, please. Not now.” His words are a pleading murmur, as he tells her to stop. But, she doesn’t have to listen to him.

“I am not excusing your action. I will NEVER make an excuse for the death of innocents. But we all have tainted our hands in their blood. You are not alone. And it’s the world we were born in, that made us this way. Kill or die! Atleast the future generations won’t have to go through that sufferings anymore.”

She can’t believe the words coming out of her mouth. But all these time, spent fighting, seeing the horrors of war has changed her. She knows, she can never steel her heart hard enough to do what Eren did. But the least she can do right now, is emphasize.

“I wanted you all to hate me, so that when time comes, you won’t hesitate in killing me. You won’t miss me.” Her knuckles are turning white now, with the way she tightly holds on to the edge of the chair. Stop it. She is done listening to him for now. He doesn’t, of course.

“But it still wasn’t enough. You should have let me die there. I deserved to die, and bleed and lay rotten in the ground. Just like I have left innocent people do the same.”

“That’s enough, Eren.” He doesn’t listen, oh when does he *ever* listen to her? He is so stubborn, hurting her this way, always doing what he wants. Always!

“I deserve to die a painful death. Just like I made everyone suffer. It’s still not too late. Maybe you shou-“

His face jerks back with the intensity of her hand landing over his cheek. This time she *wanted* it to hurt. His sun-kissed skin turning a glaring shade of red, as he looks back at her slowly. Tears are threatening to spill out of her eyes, as she shakes her head.

“Death is a coward's way out. You need to live and see for yourself the world you have helped to create. It's what you wanted, isn't it? I thought you have grown wiser. But apparently, you are still the same immature boy inside!” Her words are harsh, she knows, but necessary. Because he is being a big hypocrite right now. Telling her, his actions were necessary, needed to be done. But at the same wanting to bury himself in the ground for it!

And she tells him so. Berates him for such thoughts, for a long *long* time. Mikasa doesn't remember the last time she has spoken to Eren for this long, in a stretch that is. And he is sitting silently, listening to her, and he seems like a lost child. And she wants to embrace him and pour her heart out. But she won't step into that abyss. It's a forbidden ground for her.

Because YES, he told her he never meant anything, and yes, he did all that to push her *no* them away. But that doesn't automatically mean his sentiments mirror hers.

And he needs to rest now. He has taken a lot of toll, both emotionally and mentally.

And then she is asking NO *commanding* him to go lie down on the bed. He needs rest.

Her hands are a little shaky, her thoughts a little unsure and a little messy, as she helps him head to the room and changes his bandages. He has grown silent again, and for once she is grateful for that. Her heart can only take too much for a day. And she just needs him to be quiet now.

After feeding him some food and enough water, she is leaving. And that's when she hears him again.

“I am sorry...for everything. I am sorry for hurting you. You deserve better.” And before she can correct him, before she can chastise him, before she can tell him it's not his place to decide what she deserves, he has already fallen deep into the slumber, with his eyes closed and rhythmic breathing.

And she just wishes she could have told him, that all she *ever* wanted was to remain by his side. Not anyone else's.

But what good will it be, if he doesn't feel the same way.

Collision

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the love and support so far. I love you guys so much♥.
While we don't know how the manga will end, I do hope to get atleast a proper conclusion to these two.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Feelings hurt...Feelings wreck your world and turn it upside down. They hurt you beyond the amount you can endure. It becomes a blood clot in your head. So many emotions, so many sentiments, all of them storming your head, trying to drown you in grief.

Mikasa closes the book with a frown, the last thing she wants to read about, is a catastrophe of feelings. She has borrowed few books from Armin's collection, to pass her time nowadays. A whole week has passed since she took shelter in her old house, and five days since Eren regained consciousness. Ever since their 'talk' the other day, they haven't engaged much into a conversation. It is still *too much* to endure for her, to process everything that happened and everything he told her. Eren doesn't seem to mind the silence, as he too like her, spends his time reading. But sometimes she finds him gazing too long in the distance, his eyes hollow and painful...and it breaks her heart. She wants to reach out to him, ask him what he is thinking, assure him that she is here. He is not alone!

Clingy.

But it's not easy to get rid of the insecurities, once they have rooted itself deep inside your soul. She knows that things between them will never go back to how it used to be before. They are not ignorant kids anymore.

They are adults now, with scarred skin and broken soul. They will never get over the horrors they endured, so easily. But maybe...*maybe* one day it will all become less painful and a little easy to deal with.

On week two, he asks her to take him to Sasha's grave.

They haven't lived in shiganshina in a decade, so it's easy to mingle in the crowd in their civilian attires. It takes them around a day before they are in the graveyard, and Mikasa decides to give him some space for his prayers. She sits on a bench in nearby park and observes him, as he talks to their deceased friend's tombstone for hours. She can see him crying and laughing as he makes some gestures, and twists his face into those expression which reminds her of his younger self. Some passer-by gives him odd look, while some ignore him blatantly. His eyes lifts to her in the midst of the long drawn conversation, and her heartbeat increases ever so slightly. Is he talking about her?

Mikasa doesn't ponder on it much as they head back to their temporary resident. He doesn't utter a word during the boat ride, as he is probably still grieving. She understands what he must be feeling right now. The reality of Sasha's death must have hit him in full force after seeing her tomb. It's not easy. It's *never* easy to watch your loved ones six feet under.

He doesn't question her, when she reaches out her hand to hold his gently, and keeps it like that for

the rest of the journey. And Mikasa pretends to not notice, the heat of his skin or the way his grip tightens around her hand just a little bit. Because the erratic beating of her heart is due to the hot weather, and it has nothing to do with the man next to her. Nothing!

She receives a letter from Armin after a couple days, notifying her that they are coming back in three weeks. There are many things, which needs to be sorted out. It's difficult, but they are going to make it work this time. And she lets out a happy sigh in a long LONG while! She has missed her best friend very much.

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The dark circles under Eren's eyes, becomes more and more obvious over the next few days, and she asks him, if he isn't getting proper sleep? *Nightmares*. He answers slowly, and then she is silent once again. Did visiting Sasha trigger him badly?

She gets her answer the very next night, when a loud scream wakes her up. She is on her feet immediately, rushing towards his room, and finds his body spasming, his pained voice speaking something incoherent reaching for someone. She holds his hands down, as best as she could; losing her powers has reduced her strength by a great amount, so it's not an easy task. She calls out his name, telling him it's alright, again and *again* and AGAIN until his eyelids flutter and he opens those irises. He looks scared and confused, before finally registering her presence. She tells him he was having a nightmare, so she came to-

The rest of the words doesn't make it out of her mouth, because he is latching himself to her, his head coming to rest on her shoulder and his trembling hands wrapping around her waist. Her skin turns feverishly hot, because Eren has never EVER done this before. He never initiated any kind of intimate contact between them. That also is another proof he doesn't have such feelings for her, and she wants more than anything to leave, but he needs her. And so she stays. He goes to sleep soon after, clutching to her tightly, as though she might disappear, if he let her go. Mikasa spends the rest of the night reminiscing about those rare days in their childhood when they were happy.

Slipping into the past memories is far easier than facing the reality of lying with the boy she have loved forever.

Next day, he apologizes for disturbing her, and she tells him it's alright. Even though it isn't. The memory of his strong arms around her torso and his hot breath fanning her ear is etched into her being forever. And she wants to hate herself for feeling this weak and powerless because of him. But it's ok, because it was only a one time thing.

Except that it isn't.

His nightmares plague him constantly, and she always wakes up to the sight of his tear laced face and scared form. It's only when she runs her hands through his hairs, shushes him softly, and wraps her arms around his shoulders that he goes to sleep.

Sometimes she narrates the story of their past, that one year, when she lived at his house, or sometimes she tells him about her own childhood. ANYTHING to make him forget, to distract him!

He apologizes to her ritually in the morning, and she tells him to stop doing that. He doesn't have any control over his sleep demons. It's not his fault.

On seventh night, she decides to sleep in his bed beforehand. Mikasa knows her face is flushed, and her words leave her in stammer, but she doesn't back off.

There is nothing romantic or sexual about their new sleeping condition, but Mikasa still feels tremors rush down her spine, when his hand bumps into hers at night, or when he laces his body around her unconsciously.

This means nothing. It's just to help him. She is just being a good friend. So stop!

Except that it isn't 'nothing'. Because, sometimes when she pretends to sleep, or close her eyes and he is still up, she feels his fingers brush over her scar gently, just a ghost of touch and she shrinks into her being, trying to ignore it. Sometimes he apologizes to her, his words laced with endless remorse and guilt. Sometimes he tells her she should just leave him, go to Hizuru and live a life of a royalty. Sometimes he tells her he is a lowly being. He is *nothing* in front of her. She deserves much MUCH better. But Mikasa never lets him know that she isn't asleep. She can't. She won't.

Coward

Maybe they both are coward in that sense. He doesn't have the guts to say that to her face, and she doesn't have the heart to let him know she is indeed listening. Every single time. Oh yes, she is. Because how can she possibly go to sleep before him? It's not easy. It is *never* easy.

The ache in her heart grows everyday, and when she looks at him in the mornings, doing casual work, she wants to shake him! Yell at him! That she heard. SHE HEARD!

Eren's words grow bolder ever night, she observes. And her heart almost stops when one night he tells her how *beautiful* she is. Her eyelids almost flutter open, and her throat dries up, but...she still doesn't let him know she is up.

Sometimes she wonders, if he actually knows she hears him. Maybe its easier for him to communicate to her that way. But that's a ridiculous thought.

She has been living with him for a month now. And she knows...she knows that the real Eren Yeager is a shy, sometimes insecure boy, no...man. He feels small compared to her. He has told her so. Well to her fake sleeping form that is.

He has also said he feels unworthy and undeserving of her, because of all the things he did. He feels like she is wasting her time on him. But he won't dare tell her that.

Because he has promised himself, he will never NEVER tell Mikasa what to do. He knows the word slave has wounded her deeply, and it will take time to get over it, so he won't tell her that.

She is a grown adult capable of making her own decisions, and he has *no right* to tell her what she should or shouldn't do.

Sometimes when Mikasa talks to him in the mornings, she remembers his soft voice and gentle touch from previous nights, and it *dares* to make her blush.

Because, she is still a young woman by heart, and hearing those sweet words fall from the mouth of the man she is in love with, does make her heart flutter.

At the beginning of next month, Armin and Jean shows up at their place. Their. She has no idea

when it became their place, but it did.

At first, it's a little awkward, as it's not easy to slip into their old habits after everything. But then Jean is cracking a joke, teasing Eren and he retorts back. Because, it's physically impossible for Eren to not answer *horseface*, as he likes to call him. It's amusing to see them bicker like that, as if nothing has changed. But there's a newfound sense of brotherhood and respect between the two, and it makes her happy.

Armin and Eren are different news, on the other hand. Because, there has been a crack in their friendship and she knows they will never get back to their old selves again. But maybe that was always destined. Maybe they were bound to fall apart one day, but that doesn't mean they don't love each other. There is no love lost there, but their dynamic have changed. Just like it changed between her and Eren.

"Have you told him, you love him, yet?"

Jean almost shrivels at the look she throws at him, before she takes a quick peek in the living room to check, if Eren heard him. He didn't. He is engaged in a conversation with Armin.

"Sorry. I think I crossed a line there." He is scratching his head, as Mikasa sighs. It's not his fault. It's not that easy. Plus, there is no point, is it? She is taking care of Eren like she always did, and trying her best not to decipher the meaning behind Eren's late night rambling.

"He loves you too, you know. He has loved you for a while now."

She freezes. Her leg refusing to move, and her muscle frosting in the middle of summer, at Jean's words. No. He doesn't.

He doesn't.

He doesn't. He can't

Eren appreciates her as his friend, but that's it. Mikasa tries to tune out and ignore the voice in her head which is screaming at her. Telling her, that maybe she is the oblivious one.

Beautiful.

He has called her that, and many other endearing words past few weeks. Is it normal for a friend to say that? Does she even know what are society's norms of words when it comes to a romantic bond.

Because, Mikasa is clueless in that department. Because to her, loving Eren comes as naturally as breathing air.

"He doesn't." She answers Jean in a snippy tone, refusing to accept such atrocity. Refusing to give herself hope. Jean is an idiot. He knows nothing. Nothing about their relationship!

"I may not know what the deal is with the two of you right now...but I know, how a man looks like when he is in love. I have seen that face in the mirror quite a few times." Oh.

Well...this is awkward.

Mikasa isn't ignorant of Jean's feelings for her, but it is the last thing she wants to do right now. Because he is still her friend, and it will be weird rejecting him like that. She hears a chuckle then and looks up to find him amused at her predicament. Mikasa isn't amused in the least, as she

throws him an irritated look.

“Seriously, what?”

He is raising his hand in defense then, “Don’t worry, I am not here to put us both in an uncomfortable situation. It’s in the past now. I am not an idiot, Mikasa, I was just giving you an example. But yeah, I know what a man in love looks like. And you can too...if you just turn your head. And I mean right *now!*”

Her head snaps sideways almost immediately, and she catches Eren’s eyes on them. On *her*. He looks away the very next moment, as her throat clogs up in the worst way possible. Because it was only for a split second, but she did see the glimpse of a strange emotion in his eyes. Longing and...*no* she won’t say it.

And then she remembers. She remembers vaguely how she has received the same look in the past as well. Many times. Oh god.

No.

Was it?

No. it can’t be.

And then Jean is giving her a *'I told you so'* smug look, and she wants to hit him but she is feeling too euphoric and light-headed at that moment. So she gives him a pass.

Eren and love? For her?

It’s ridiculous. Right?

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“You and Jean seem to have gotten closer.” She pauses in between chopping vegetables, and looks up at Eren. His face is as passive as it can be, but she sees a bit of discomfort on his face.

What does he mean by that?

“It’s good. He is a good guy. I mean...” She keeps the knife down, assessing him closely, as his body language becomes more and more tense. She doesn’t like the implication behind his words, but chooses to ignore it regardless. It’s pointless anyways.

“I am not telling you what to do. Don’t take me wrong I-“

“I chose to be here, didn’t I?” She tells him quickly, before going back to chopping once again.

Shit. Shit. Shit!

Did she just indirectly confess to him? No.

It’s not like he understood the implication, behind her words. Right?

But when she chances a glance at him, and finds a ghost of smile and a tint of red on his nose, she knows. She knows, that he caught onto her meaning to some extent, but this time Mikasa doesn't feel as flustered as she used to before.

Because a part of her wanted him to know, that her feelings haven't changed at all. If anything they have gotten stronger, and it's hard to bottle it up every day. It's hard to pretend they are somewhere between *nothing* and *something*, when they both sleep together every night. It's hard to pretend, when she catches him staring at her, once in a while in daze. It's hard to pretend, she doesn't get lost in his silhouette too, and wishes to hold him close in morning as well. So, letting him know that *does* relieve her a bit.

"There's nowhere else, I will rather be too."

For a moment she is confused what he is talking about, but then realizes. Oh. OH.

He means...Oh.

And the strong implication behind those few words makes her cheeks burn and the butterflies in her stomach only increases in capacity, and it's late at night after he have fallen asleep that Mikasa wonders,

Did he indirectly confess to her too?

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She feels a ghost of breath on her nape, and involuntarily shivers, refusing to open her eyes, as it's still too early. She is ready to go back to sleep, but then she hears little murmurs. Getting alert, she tries to come out of her sleep induced haze, eager to catch onto whatever it is that Eren is saying.

"-not fair to you. How can you still love me after all that? And I hate that I enjoy being with you like this."

Thump Thump. He enjoys being with her?

"Taking advantage of your feelings, even though a scum like me doesn't deserve to be within a ten feet distance from you."

NO! He is wrong. He isn't a scum. He is her...everything. Oh god, it hurts.

"And I know it's selfish...but I love you an-"

Her eyes snap open in a flash. And he stops.

Love

Love

Mikasa doesn't know who looks more horrified at the moment.

Eren or her?

I love you

I love you

I love you

His skin turns pale, as his mouth opens and closes, showing his shocked state. No one speaks for a long LONG time! Their eyes locked on each other, and Mikasa is afraid that if she will look away, the spell will be broken.

I love you.

She feels the light touch of his thumb over her cheek, and realises: She is crying. *No*. She is hysteric. Her tears are falling like a waterfall down her irises, as he wipes them away.

I love you

“Mikasa, I...didn't know you were up. I should have-I me-“

“I was always up. I heard *everything*.” If it were any other day and any other circumstance, Mikasa would have laughed at the horror that flashes his eyes. It's comical almost. His face turns a bright shade of red, as he tries to form words, but he is unable to.

But she doesn't feel apologetic in any sense, because they have been dancing around their feelings for too long now. FAR TOO LONG.

What am I to you?

“But... I am a monster...” He whispers in a small voice, and she shakes her head fiercely.

“No, you are not. Not to me. You are...you are Eren. You are a human, who did everything he could in order to save his people. So, please. Please! Stop saying that.”

His eyes are welled up too, and she can see the myriad of emotions passing through his face.

"I always hurt you." He is almost pleading, sadness blanket over his eyes in a thick mist, as her vision goes blurry. Stupid tears! Stupid Eren!

"Eren, I have been fighting for long *long* time now. I hated that. It was not the life I wanted. Please, let me be selfish for once."

He seems a little flabbergasted, as she continues. There is no going back now. "If you don't want to hurt me anymore...then stop saying that."

Mikasa waits for a while, and his response comes in form of a small nod. She places her hand on his chest, slowly and cautiously and leans just a little bit forward. She can hear his heartbeat, as loud as hers, feel it against her palm, throbbing, and she realises the effect she have on him. Who would have ever thought? It almost feels too good to be true, and Mikasa wonders if it's all a dream. But she knows it isn't, as his warm breath fans her face. And it's then she realises how close their faces are.

Her eyes unconsciously drift to his lips, as her heart starts hammering loudly.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

She has always wondered how his lips will feel like pressed against hers. They are a perfect shape of cupid bow. His lower lips slightly full than the upper. He have beautiful lips. She knows, she has been staring at them for too long, but there is no going back now. That train have already passed.

Her eyes flicker back to his green orbs, and she realises he is staring at her lips as well.

And then his eyes fall back on hers

And it's like an explosion deep within her abyss, when emerald meets grey. This is it.

She wants to pour out all her love for him. She wants to shower him with kisses, and soft touch and romantic words.

She is feeling too much at once. Her heart couldn't withstand all the flurry of emotions which passes through her.

And so, she decides to do the first thing that comes to her mind.

His lips are chapped, dried up and so are hers. It's nothing like those romance novels told her. Her lips are closed shut, and pressed against his none too gently. He seems to hesitate at first before slightly parting his own, and moving against her. It's not a perfect kiss she has read of, but it's still the best feeling she can ever experience.

She feels jittery, ecstatic and somewhere close to heaven in that moment.

And then they are parting apart and just staring at each other, as her hand comes to rest on his cheek. Their noses brushing against each other, and it's such an intimate moment, that she wants to frame it over the wall, and wake up to it daily. If that statement even *makes sense*. Because nothing is making sense to her now.

She just kissed Eren. Something she has wanted to do for years.

"I am sorry for everything. I am so *so* sorry. I don't know how to make it right..." He confesses to her, and she shakes her head, leaning her forehead against him. This idiot. Giant idiot! Oh she wants to slap him, and shout how much she loves him. How much she has loved him, all this while!

"Be with me. Stay with me always. And it will be alright, I promise." She tells him then. Her true sentiments, that is. Because her only wish have been to stay by his side.

Now and forever

He promised her forever once. And she wants him to stay true to his words now.

"Okay..." He answers slowly, and she realises he is trembling slightly. Is he feeling too overwhelmed by the situation? She grasps his hand, rubbing soothing circles over it to calm him down, and lets out a smile, well she hopes it is a smile, because she is too high on love to think properly right now.

But it's fine. Because there is no need to think right now. She just needs to feel. NO, they just need to feel.

And so her lips are on his once again. This time a little more deeper, more desperate and passionate and a less hesitant. Their teeth keep clashing every once in a while, and the movement is very messy but she doesn't mind. The kiss is sloppy and probably bad when compared to the ones in cliché novels, but it's still the best for her because it's *them*. It's *theirs*. It's Eren and Mikasa's. They both are imperfect individuals so it's only fair their first kiss will be that as well.

And it's okay, because they have rest of their lives ahead to perfect it.

The end

Chapter End Notes

I left it kinda on a cliffhanger-ish note, without showing a future because it seemed fitting with the tone of the story. Let me know what you guys think.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!