

Wishful Dreaming

Ah, this scene.

I remember it vividly.

It's the forest I once went to with my extended family when I was just a child.

That family trip.

All I can really remember is that awe-inspiring look of the forest. The trees that towered over me, acting as a sort of natural roof to this natural room.

The atmosphere, which was distinctively different compared to the one outside of the forest.

Out there it's more easy-going, more welcoming.

Here, the trees make navigation confusing if you're not experienced or prepared, meaning it's by default a harsher place.

Darker.

Colder.

Alien.

Unwelcoming by its very nature.

Back then, I felt like I'd get used to this scenery very quickly.

The forest's unpredictability appealed to me greatly. A new adventure every time you entered this dimension, this other world hidden in plain sight.

That urge to keep going forward, to see what's around the next corner.

A child's natural instinct to be curious.

That's the drive that kept me going for.... God knows how long.

*For the longest time, I threw myself at everything knowing it will keep me going,
make me finish whatever I committed myself to,
be it exploring a forest,
or a normal everyday task.*

*So how come I'm not feeling that drive right now? The forest is right in front of me,
just within reach.*

Just within reach.

Why aren't I moving forward?

Ah,

this is a dream,

...isn't it?

My eyes slowly flicker open,
and I once again wake up to a world with no meaning.

So, I'm awake again, huh?
8.45AM, huh. Neat.
Why do I still wake up this early?

...

As per routine now, I change into some clothes that lay in some pile, avoid the other piles of mess in my bedroom and proceed to head downstairs to consume food.
Cereal, like always. Why change it when it's good enough as it is?
I mean, if it gets you full, it gets you full. There's no question about it.

Once I'm done, I put on my everyday shoes and backpack.
Then as if it were now my routine,
I lock the door behind me, walk down the usual stairs, exit through the main entrance, and step outside without any direction in mind, hoping I'll just come across something.
Hopefully.

...

Does man change because he is forced to? Or does he make the change because he, himself, decided to?

That question has always been hanging around in my mind, never fading into obscurity like the rest of my pointless thoughts, yet never making it into the forefront. It's weird, how I think about something so worthless. Maybe it's just because this empty environment makes me think this in this sort of weird way.

...Then again, it's not like I have anything better to do than to wonder around the town and ponder philosophically about my existence.

It's been empty for five straight days now. At least that's how many days I have counted. I don't know why, maybe it's just an instinct to keep track of how long everyone has been... well, gone.

Every street is dead. Quite literally. The quiet, cold atmosphere that now exists on main street even during hours when it would have been packed should be enough of an indication to any person that no one is around. Not in this world anyway.

The stores are still open, just unoccupied. Apartment buildings are still closed off like they've always been, only being accessible to the residents, yet they emit no sign of life despite being one of the places made to host it. Pet stores don't hold any pets, yet the pets have their food bowls full. The wind sways the odd garbage along the ground.

Like I said, it's like everyone disappeared. Gone. Without a trace.

Yeah, at first it was indeed shocking to wake up in the morning like usual, only to find out that your family isn't home, neither are any of your neighbours, and that no one is answering their phone. No one is online, and no new... anything has been uploaded to the internet. At least I haven't found anything new.

What's really surprising is that the gas and electricity still work. Even though no one is around, public services are still running normally. Maybe they have backup generators which are running rampant right about now. I wouldn't know though, I haven't travelled to a power plant yet as there aren't any nearby. I haven't even explored my local area to my satisfaction, so that isn't off the table yet.

Supermarkets are also barren of people, just like the outside world. I'd typically enter my local one at around noon. As always, it's empty, just like in the past 5 days. That's consistent at least.

...

I feel sort of guilty when I take food from the stores. I mean, why wouldn't I? I am essentially stealing. It's not like I even have the money to buy anything I take anyways.

The store's emptiness still hasn't loosened their grasp on me yet. It's still kind of scary to walk around, with generic store music still playing around you. There are even occasional beeps that go off at random times at the checkout section, which adds to that unsettling atmosphere.

Leaves you on edge.

It's kind of stressful.

I typically take only milk and cereal, and then try to quietly leave the store, as if I were being watched.

Even in an empty city, I still feel like everyone has their eyes glued on me.

That's enough of me reciting some of my experiences from the past days. What have I been getting up to today?

...

I'm afraid to say, but I haven't been up to much. As some people would say, same old same old. Not much has happened as there isn't much to do, much to happen. I mean, what can actually happen within a city of no civilisation?

Nothing much, exactly.

This stillness is nice though. Even if there is some... uncomfortable situations from this, overall, it's fine. Just fine. I'm contempt.

...

I'm contempt with walking forward aimlessly, living day to day. The absence of long term, far out goals is really liberating. I don't have to achieve anything major in this empty world, just survive till the next day. No one expects anything of me, as nobody is around to expect anything of me.

Like I said, liberating.

Walking around aimlessly is nice.

...

As I'm passing by this new warehouse I found today, during the evening, something obvious finally pops out to me.

Throughout my five days of wandering, I've been seeing something... peculiar. Like it's out of place. Something that shouldn't exist.

There's a blue tint to everything now. Buildings, trees, roads, shadows, like I said, everything. Like a giant sheet of light blue glass has been slapped onto my eyes. Probably because of the constant cloudless sky that we're having every day. I wouldn't know. That sort of effect happens when your eyes adapt to the sunlight outside then go into a darker area, everything then appears to have a blue tint. But it's still there, even when there should be an obvious warmer tint. The evening isn't known for having a blue tint during it, now does it.

Even so,

it's still odd, yet welcoming. Comforting.

The blue tint makes everything feel just a bit less painful than it actually would be. The harsh edge of the world, smoothened. Even if it's a tiny bit.

...

Yet a small pain in my chest remains, even though it feels like I'm progressing, like I'm moving forward.

Is it anxiety, maybe? I wouldn't know.

All I know is that it makes my breathing hurt a tiny bit, and makes my breath feel colder. And that it's a feeling that shouldn't be there.

It doesn't fit with the atmosphere. Blue contrasted with the green of going forward.

Maybe it's time for a change of pace?

...

No, not right now.

Let's stay like this,
for a while longer.

Just a little while longer.

Day ???

Dazed. Confused.

I opened my eyes, and I found out that I'm standing still.

Well, not exactly. It appears I'm bent over, looking down, panting.

From exhaustion, maybe? Why is gravity stronger than usual?

Why does my chest feel like it's going to pop out at any second?

...

I gain the energy to, at the very least, stand up somewhat straight. To get a view of my surroundings. So, I lift myself up.

And what greets me is a very familiar place.

To my left, I see a cliff, and behind it a yellow tinted city that I live in.

To my right, I see nothing but almost tall grass and the backdrop that is the cloudless night sky, backlit by the almost full moon.

...

Up ahead I see a tree. A nicely aged oak tree. In full bloom.

Even if it is night-time and there aren't any unnatural lights around, you can still clearly see the green on its leaves. How they sway proudly in the passing by breeze, never letting go of their parent tree.

Yet they must let go. Eventually.

Ah.

Even in my recovering state, I began comparing myself to nature again.

Self-projection, huh.

Is that what I do now too?

...

It's a way of coping with all of this, I guess.

Not a way of dealing with the problem, but a way to take a bit of the edge off it. So that it hurts less when it eventually comes across to smack you in the face.

...

My body decides to sit down on the gently swaying grass that is by that tree.

Maybe it's the overlooking view of the city at night that I get to see from this cliffside with that tree that just appeals to me. Maybe it's because I can get a clear view of the cloudless night sky from this spot. Maybe because it's so... peaceful here.

I wouldn't know.

I do not know how I got here either. My physical state tells me I ran here, and this painful feeling in my chest tells me that I'm stressing out about something.

That feeling where breathing is harder, and breath is colder.

Except times that by at least a factor of ten. It's arguably worse than the sting I feel in my somewhat worn-out legs.

I must have really blasted off if my legs are that tired.

...

I remember I came up here to clear my head once. I was in a kind of bad place back then. Borderline losing it. Thankfully, I vaguely remember what happened that day, and the days that proceeded it. Remembering less means less pain to remember.

It still hurts thinking about it now.

It hurts thinking about the state of mind I was in back then. The one I'm in right now.

It hurts to imagine the scenery that I saw back then. The one I'm seeing right now.

It hurts. Just like right now.

...

Am I really here again?

I look down at my watch, only to realise that it's one of my old watches that's on my right wrist. It tells me that it is almost 10pm.

Didn't I go to sleep at 9pm? Don't I use a new watch now?

...

I found myself lying on my back, staring at that cloudless sky. Taking in the view of that starry sky I was so used to seeing. It contrasts well with the warm yellow lighting of the city down below. Just looking at this made me feel anxious. Like I've seen this before. This exact scene.

Deja vú?

No... I am here again.

I really am.

Not again.

...

No...

No... not again...

The pain multiplies, and I am left to lie there, in that field of grass, all alone.

Only I can feel these weights pushing me down into the earth.

I willingly let myself become one with the world.

Just another spec of grass, in a field of it.

Once I remove myself from everything, it'll be only me.

Only me.

I'll fade into obscurity,

But that's ok.

I'll be left behind,

but that's ok.

For I don't want to move from this spot.

Staying here is less painful than going forward.

...

The horrible part is that I can't stay here.

The world will reject me, slap me across the face, and say-

"Of bloody course you'd go here. Fuck, why didn't I come to check here first?"

A voice that I haven't heard in a long, long time derails my train of thought. Shocked, my head twists right to see that familiar figure panting, just like I was. Except he didn't stop. He kept moving forward, in his tired state.

Next thing I know, he yanks my arm and lift me up to my feet.

"Next time tell us where you're running off to before you do... uh... actually run off."

The person says.

"We, and especially I, know you have a lot of places you can escape to because of all your running about and shit. So, you know, keep that in mind next time you do decide to spontaneously run away."

I don't say anything back. I just stand there, looking down. I made him go through something he didn't need to go through, because of me. I caused this.

"C'mon man, say something. At least tell me why you ran off."

I don't look up at him. I can't do that.

I take a breath. Even if I can't look him in the eye, I can tell him.

I can tell him everything.

My mouth opens.

...

So, I told him everything.

At least, that's what it looked like.

During my emotional outpour, I noticed that I wasn't really in control. Words just flowed out. I said things I wouldn't say under... more normal circumstances. It's as if I was in a dream, with my body moving on its own. As if I'm just replaying this memory, and how it played out. Those arm movements. Those look of concern. Those exhales. Those wind ruffles in the clothes. All the detail comes back to me in the moment.

I'm left there astonished at the complete picture. Did the universe just throw me a bone and show me what I chose to bury under 12 feet of dirt?

I don't know. Fate can be a weird thing. Was I fated to have this kind of vision?

That also, I do not know.

All that I can think about is this good outcome.

Someone there for me.

That's what I've secretly longed for, wasn't it?

...

No... that's not it. There is still a core problem unresolved. The warm touch of another does soothe the pain a little, but it doesn't tackle at the source.

"So, what do you plan on doing now?" I'm asked.

...

"I don't know." I mutter out.

"But... I'll go home and think about it. Got to take some steps forward, you know?"

"Right, yeah. That's it buddy, one step at a time." He encourages me as I try to take my first few steps forward. My legs were still weak and wobbly after all of that.

I was still managing to take steps forward.

I just had to keep going forward.

But as I took those steps forward, I was embraced by a warm feeling of numbness.

In the moment, I accepted this act of kindness and fell onto the soft ground.

It felt like pillows. Had my senses really gone that numb?

It doesn't matter, as I can rest now.
Yet I heard some faint shouting.
Why is that, I wonder?
Why am I now...
seeing red?

...

I then woke up to a scene of red.

I wake up in a cold sweat.
My chest hurts again. Why this early?
Why did I have that odd dream?

...

I don't think anything of it, and I proceed with the same empty morning routine.
Well, it wasn't the same.

I kept hearing my heart throbbing and that beeping noise I'd hear in the store I usually visit. It's a tiny bit annoying, sure. I don't even know where it could be even coming from.

But I dealt with things tougher than such a minor problem, so like always I side-step the issue, and continue on autopilot.

I once again leave my apartment, this time to a scene in the morning.

...

Everything has a red tint to it. Naturally, since it's 7 in the morning. I can't remember the last time I've been out this early. Morning's aren't my thing, you know? Sure, it's pretty and all. But sleeping in is generally the better option. Why would I want to experience this kind of eery atmosphere every morning? With all the shadows being tinted red, the streets being tinted red, the trees and leaf's being tinted red even though they're green, the windows reflecting red, just generally everything being red.

...

This isn't supposed to be like this. I've been walking around for a good half an hour now, so why is it only hitting me now?

Everything is off.

Me waking up way to early. Everything being painted red.

That damn beeping noise following me. It's getting harder and harder to ignore it by the minute with how it keeps on getting louder and louder.

Frustrated, I decide to go to that store I'd usually visit at noon early. Maybe the beeping would stop if I went inside. Plus, I'd have that task off my head. Simple enough.

And so, I take my steps forward towards the store.

Once I arrive, it's further in the morning. A glance at my watch tells me it's 8:15am. Looking at it reminds me of that 'dream' I had. Why did I have it? Why did I have my older watch on?

Why did it feel so real?

I push the thoughts aside as I enter the store. It's best to leave them outside.

...

I wonder around the store, naturally. I have a set amount of things I want to get, just like yesterday. The only thing preventing me from getting the stuff is, oddly enough, my curiosity.

The shelves in the back of the store haven't been restocked. There are still holes where I left them yesterday. They'd be full. Why aren't they full yet?

Immediately questions fill my head. All I could think of was how the shelf isn't full, and what that could imply.

It could mean that some people could be still around. It could mean that I'm not actually dreaming and that this is real. There are people. This is real.

I can see everyone again.

I hear a harmony of beeps from the checkouts suddenly ring out. They came spontaneously out of nowhere. The rings are so loud that I had to cover my ears. They even made me duck they were that loud. It might have lasted a second or two. That doesn't make it sound any less ear piercing.

Once I recovered from the shock of such a sound, I stood up slowly again. I still could hear a bit of ringing, but it was at least bearable. More tolerable than that beeping noise that followed me earlier.

Actually, it kind of stopped now that I think about it.

I instinctively look around, just to make sure the sound isn't about.

To the back is the double-sided door to the staff area. Nothing's there.

To the right is just the bread wall. Nothing special there.

To the left is a full shelf-

A full shelf? But that had holes just before the sound...

...

I looked down at my watch.

8:45am.

The time I'd wake up by an alarm.

By a loud noise.

I kept staring at that shelf, now full.

I felt my heart shaking as I stood there.

Nothing is right here.

I spun around and dashed to the exit. Home was the destination.

Why didn't I notice it sooner?

I sprinted through the red soaked streets. The noise followed me again, this time even louder than before, and different. It echoed.

It was so obvious, right from the start.

The beeping was in sync with my heartbeat. With my footsteps. With the world. It's as if everything were one with it. The trees, the lamps, the benches, walls, cars, concrete fences buildings signs trash doors everything. Everything is a device for the noise.

I just need to check. Just to be sure.

It kept hurling itself at me as I ran. With every turn I took it just got louder. I didn't mind it though. I was more focused on my legs not tiring out than on how loud the noise is.

I need to be sure.

Almost there, I stop around the corner to catch my breath.
The beeping still echoes.
By the third beep I'm already on my feet again.
On the final sprint home.
Through the entrance, and up the stairs.

The second I arrive I bust the red door open, shoulder first.
I don't care about the damage. The door probably isn't real anyways.
I dash into the red kitchen to check on the supplies I bought yesterday.

...

They're gone.
They're no longer there. The cereal is open, half empty.
I didn't leave it half empty last night.

Why haven't I noticed it in the morning. Was I really that sunk into autopilot?
I really was that complacent with everything.

...

I need to climb the stairs.
I need to get up onto the roof.
I haven't been there before. I want to see what is up there.
I take my steps forward, out the broken door, and slowly progress up the stairs.
I reached the door. The red door on top of the red stairs.
I clamp down lightly on the door handle.
It effortlessly pushes down, and I lightly swing it forward.
What I see in front of me is another scene of red.

The cloudless sky is fully enveloped in the colour, no longer radiating that warm hopeful colour you'd usually see in the morning. The sun is behind me, casting a front facing shadow to all I can see before me.

The typically white plastic chairs, brown wooden tables, black lamp poles and black railings on the edges of the building, silver spoons and forks, blue plates, green plants.

All of it, reduced to shades of red.

It's sort of calming, in a way.

That brief second of peace.

No wind. No cloud. No people.

No noise.

I'd be okay with everything staying that way. That peaceful way.

But the noise rips that vision away from me. When I thought that I had a moment to myself again, that damn heartbeat noise came back.

And so suddenly too. It startled me, making me shift forward. That's how I stepped out onto the stage.

The beeping took a backstage role as I continued forward now that I was in motion. The chairs are dispersed, as if the people eating here recently left and no one tidied up the place. The scattered dirty cutlery left behind also suggests that.

...

People really were here once.

I didn't even know people gathered here. What else have I missed out on then? For all I know there could be even more places like this. Hidden in plain sight, that are *just* there.

It's all too much.

One step. I move past the tables and chairs.

Beep

Two steps. I move past all the reminders of others.

Beep

Three steps. I move forward with my head held down.

Beep

Four steps. I move forward seeing my shadow in front of me.

Beep

Five steps. I try move past it.

Beep

Six steps. I try move past it.

Beep

Seven steps. I try move past it.

Beep

Eight steps. I reach the edge, bumping into the red shaded railing.

What lays before me is an eight-story drop, and no shadow.

If I turn back now, it'll come back. I'll return to my old self again. I will once again turn my back on all of this, going slowly but surly mad.

That would be hell.

...Isn't this technically hell too?

...

I don't know why I asked that.

The shadow is still there. The temptation to go back, to ignore all of this.

It's still there.

It's not sustainable.

...

I need to change.

I need to take that final step forward. It's right there. Just beyond this railing.

A place where the shadow in front will no longer be ahead.

I place my trembling hand onto the railing, and it falls forward.

It fell apart, just like that?

That easily? That effortlessly?

...

Can I do that too?

Like I said, it's just one more step.

One more step forward.

And all of this will be over.

No more having to walk the streets alone.

No more repeating the same tasks every day.

Everyday will be different.

I will make sure of that. Why would I want to return to that old self of mine?

Doing the same shit day by day. Almost never taking the chance when it's there to further... well... *something*. Anything.

I will face everything. No exception.

This situation here? It's nothing. All the scary atmospheric shit is just here to scare me off. To avoid it.

I can overcome it, like that.

I know I can do it. The edge is right there.

Right in front of me.

All I need to do is go over it

So why haven't I come over it?

...

I'm still... me.

...

I catch a sigh leaving my mouth.

One beep. I regain my composure. Two beeps. I put my left foot back, dead focused.

If I miss it, I will never get to catch it again.

Three beeps. Nine steps. I leap over the edge.

I've done it now. There's no backing out of this choice now.

...so that's how life is. You make choices and hope you don't make a bad one.

... yeah. That sounds about right.

The flight down takes longer than expected, to be honest. It feels like it just started.

I kind of thought that I would just... hit the ground and that that'll be it.

I can just about make out every little detail on the apartment windows. The reflections, what's inside, everything.

What I notice also, is the world coming back to its normal colours.

The red fades away. Slowly but surely.

Will people come back to this abandoned world now that I'll be gone?

...

That, I do not know.

Frankly speaking, I don't care about this world that much. I didn't really in the first place.

... actually, I do care about it a little bit.

It's the thing that made me take this leap of fate in the first place.

This wouldn't have happened if I never got here.

But just like with my old self, it is time to say goodbye to it.

I approach the ground. The last thing I see is a ray of yellow sunlight beaming over the very edge that I leaped off and its reflections of the windows from the surrounding apartments, making it look somewhat...
alive.

The world is becoming colourful again.

Getting back what it once lost.

Satisfied with what I saw, I let out one last sigh.

I close my eyes and wait for the ground to embrace me yet again.

The pulsating beeping still echoes around me, but at a much calmer pace.

The wind doesn't block it out.

The wind is surprisingly absent.

All that remains is the pulsating beeps and my feeling of numbness.

I decided to count the last beeps that hear before my end.

One beep.

Two beeps.

Three beeps.

My thoughts are empty, as all will be disregarded once I hit the end.

And so, I do.

The ground is hit without an impact, the finish line is crossed with a soundless landing, and I sink into the earth.

Epilogue.

The beeping of an alarm wakes me up... yet again.

I gain a faint, rare strength in my eyes.

Spontaneously, I open them with all I got.

It takes them quite a while to open

It feels like I'm ungluing a sticker.

...

When I do open them, I am greeted to a world full of... a white blurriness.

Everything is out of focus. Everything is covered in a white haze.

I slowly close and open my eyes to try wash that haze away, somehow. That in itself takes a lot of effort to do. I don't know where all my energy has gone to, that blinking my eyes is a struggle.

Blink after blink, the image gets clearer. Wide dots convert into points of light, then into comprehensible shapes and colours.

By the 25th slow blink, I can almost make out in what sort of room I woke up.

In front of me were clean white sheets. I am lying in a white bedframe with white metal looking pipes sticking out in a grid at the end of the bedframe.

Glancing right, I see a plastic looking door. Maybe it's the light green paint that makes it look plasticky. I catch something else further right, but I couldn't make out what it was.

Glancing left I see a window covered in white curtains. From glancing around, I can tell that's the main light source of the room, every slight shadow coming from the filtered rays that came through those fluttering curtains. It makes the room contrast really well.

There are also things on my left that are just out of sight, just like on my right.

I try to move my head in both directions to try and catch at least a glimpse of what's there.

...

It won't budge. My neck refuses to move. Seriously?

It's right there. And I'm unable to see it.

My attention is then moved to my entire body. It too will not budge. Not even my fingers can move a single muscle, let alone my arms and legs.

I try desperately to move anything besides my eyes. Anything. Anything at all.

Nothing moves.

I stop trying. It's clear that nothing will move.

My eyes rest, and I stare at the barren ceiling populated only by one light. What did I even go through, then. Was it all worth it? Was that apparent dream that happened worth it? Was it really worth it trying to end my life to start another? This is what it got me. A body and place where I can't do anything.

...maybe I should just close my eyes again. Maybe that'll be for the better. Wake up somewhere better.

...

I catch an arm moving upwards on my right, not my own. Someone is there.

The arm disappears from my vision as I hear a drawn-out yawn coming from its direction. The arm then drops suddenly onto the bed frame. That's what I assume anyways. I definitely felt the impact of it through the bed.

The gasp following the drop does make me question the motivation behind it though.

Did the person there drop their arm like that because of me? I don't know.

How long was I asleep for? Well, clearly a while, considering that this person had such a reaction to me opening my eyes, just my eyes.

"... worked." I hear the person whisper. I didn't catch what he said because it said it that quietly.

The person then shoots into my field of vision probably to confirm I am alive. My eyes widen and I jump inside when I recognise who the person is.

It's him.

"God, don't tell me you were about to close your eye's again. That would have been horrible if you would had waken up on me and left for god knows how long, you know?"

He's by my side again. He stuck there with me for... an amount of time.

"Why... are you... here...?" I catch myself saying. Seems my mouth can move somewhat. Or is it because he's here?

The face he's showing turns from one of astonishment to clear confusion.

"What do you mean why? Do you not remember what happened that made you be here in the first place?"

I avert my gaze from his eyes to the ceiling when he asked that. It's because I collapsed by the tree, right? That's what that one dream showed me. I had a dream within a dream?

"Was it... that I fell... by the tree?"

He shakes his head in dissatisfaction.

"That was a different incident. I'll give you a hint. It happened a week after that. A straight week."

I don't take my eyes off the ceiling. I don't want to face him directly. Mainly because I really don't remember anything happening after that. Everything during that period is a blank period to me. I only know of what happened that one night because of the dream. Maybe I shouldn't have said that.

"I... don't know..." is my reply.

A brief pause occurs, and what I get is a sigh and a very light knock on the head.

"A car accident Andrew. A car accident. After another one of your runaway moments. Genuinely don't remember?"

I don't reply as I know I don't.

I catch another sigh coming out of his mouth.

"But how? You even shrugged the impact at first. Like if I didn't call an ambulance, you'd have limped off to somewhere with that major injury to your waist. Do you know how stressful it was, seeing you in that way? Just shrugging off the car? Even the driver was absolutely bewildered by how you just waved him away."

I don't recall anything of that.

I glance down and see him nearly teared up and visibly upset.
I manage to move my neck to the left to further avoid his face. I can't look at it. I might as well close my eyes again to avoid him.
"...Sorry..." is all I can mutter out before I close out.

Next thing I know, my hand is quickly grabbed. The suddenness to it makes me jerk right, onto his eyes.

They are now locked on. I can't avoid what comes next.

His mouth whips open, but no words come out at first. A nod comes at the outset.
"Frankly, I do not care if you are sorry or not. What I do care about is you avoiding everything. You're even avoiding me now. I don't like it. I don't know for sure, but that's what made you run aimlessly and get you hit by a bloody car, right? That's what I really care about. You constantly avoiding everything. You can't keep doing that."

I try to open my mouth to speak, but he stops me before anything comes out.

"That's why I've had enough. You know you can face everything head on. Hell, if you can even shrug off a car impact, even at first, then you can face anything life has to throw at you, right? You can do it. I know you can. And I'll be there to support you if anything bad does happen."

The room magically becomes brighter, more white light filling the background. His presence dominates my vision.

He takes a deep breath, and states

"Honestly, I do not get why you still did that, even when you did open up to me by that tree. You should have seen then that people are out there for you. Not just me, you know? I might have been the only one there for you, but your other friends were mad concerned about you. Who wouldn't be after what happened. So, I'm telling you this now. Drill this into your head and don't forget it. I can't save you, only you can save yourself. But I can help you get up from the fall."

The room is now soaked with a hopeful glow. Everything now radiates a soft white light, even his serious looking face.

I catch myself releasing a chuckle out of me.

"But you did save me... you idiot."

His serious expression is wiped off instantly and the room begins echoing a soft, light-hearted laughter from two friends.

We both know I can bounce back from this.

I will leave this room stronger than before, and with a close friend and others that'll help soften the fall, if I do come across one.

I've finally got my wish.

The dream can finally end.

And thus, the book comes to a close.