

Follow the Sun

Von Findraeth

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Kapitel 1: Never Surrender

04:34 | August 23 - Dylan

Hackett's Quarry Lodge - Kitchen

His heart stopped for a split second as a low growl echoed through the silence of the dark camp kitchen.

That's it... that's the end!

The werewolf scented them and now they are trapped... like a little, fluffy bunny in front of a wily snake.

If he only hadn't put that damn pan back on the counter!

Not that it would've helped him in this predicament, but at least he would've had something to hold onto.

Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit!!

The growling got closer, the scratching sound of the sharp claws on the kitchen floor got louder.

Dylan closed his eyes for a brief moment before holding his breath to steady his heartbeat.

He feared that it would give away his... incredibly clever chosen position...

However, it's too late to change that now.

The next few seconds felt like hours.

Totally normal when you're waiting for your inevitable death.

In his mind, he cursed himself for the hundredth time that night for his stupid suggestion to do 'something else' than what Mr. H. had told them to.

If they only had listened to Ryan and stayed in the Lodge overnight.

Ryan...

Hopefully he's in a less shitty situation right now.

Hopefully he's alive...

A movement out of the corner of his eye made Dylan flinch.

Fortunately, at the exact same moment, the pots on one of the counters clattered, drowning out the high-pitched sound that escaped his lips.

.....

It's just Kaitlyn.

God dammit, this woman was as quiet as a jellyfish gliding through the water.

A brief moment of relief before a low roar kindly reminded him of the situation they were in.

There has to be something they could do! There HAS to!

Dylan saw Kaitlyn's eyes scanning the room frantically, hoping to find something that can help them escape.

So he did the same.

But all he could see was this creepy and tattered stuffed animal... looking almost pitiful at him with its one eye.

Hard to believe that a child would take that thing into bed, but pee his pants because

of the hag of Hackett's Quarry.

Well.. at least if you assume that she doesn't exist.

Damn, Dylan! Focus!!

His eyes continued to wander... but nothing. Just more useless pots, pans and baking trays.

Not even a knife to defend themselves.

Even though he was sure that a knife, if it wasn't silver, could at best tickle that beast to death.

So he turned back to Kaitlyn, hoping she had miraculously come up with an idea.

They're running out of time.

Werewolves weren't exactly the brightest candles on the cake but the kitchen was tiny and their `hiding place` certainly wouldn't win any medals.

If they don't come up with something, they'll end up as dog food, literally.

Then suddenly, Kaitlyn peeked around the corner of her hideout before stealthily tiptoeing over to the freezer.

Dylan's gaze nervously shifted back and forth between her and the deadly predator a few times, while his colleague opened the heavy door as quietly as possible.

What the fuck was she doing?!?

After the door was open, Kaitlyn took another quick glance toward the exit before looking urgently at Dylan... then past him.

So he turned his head in the same direction, only to meet the gaze of that creep ass rabbit again.

His gaze went back to her questioningly before she made a hand gesture.... as if she wanted to start a chainsaw.

Just the brief thought of it made his stomach clench.

Additionally, her lips silently formed the words 'It can talk'

Oh... OH!

It took Dylan a moment to realize what she's trying to say.

Maybe he shouldn't have taken the whole bunch of painkillers back in the pool house, because despite all the adrenaline in his body, his head was completely foggy.

He nodded and took a careful look back before he slipped over to the stuffed bunny as quietly as possible.

Quickly Dylan grabbed for it, jammed it between his left upper and lower arm and pulled the string.

Here it goes... all or nothing.

Either the werewolf would spread them both over every inch of the kitchen or they would make it out of here unharmed.

Well... at least as unharmed as they had entered the room.

Dylan took a swing and threw the shredded piece of cotton with all his might past Kaitlyn, who was back at her hiding place behind the counter, into the freezer.

"Do you wanna play with me?"

The rabbit's distorted, electronic voice sent a shiver down Dylan's spine, making all the hair on the back of his neck stand up.

Then everything happened very quickly.

A loud roar shattered through the kitchen before the werewolf leaped on all fours

after its supposed victim.
Kaytlyn followed closely on its heels.

She forced her slender body with all her strength against the heavy metal door, which slowly moved towards the lock after the werewolf was inside.

Too slowly for Dylan's taste.

The beast in the freezer noticed the trap as soon as the door made a loud squeaking noise and again an angry growl started to come out of the werewolf's throat.

Yellow, unnatural eyes flashed at him from the darkness, a second later a loud crash was heard before Kaitlyn's movement stopped immediately and a long arm with sharp claws was about to reach for her from behind the door.

"Fuck, watch out!!"

Without thinking, he rushed forward.

Dylan has never been one of the brave ones, on the contrary, but he can't leave everything to her ... if he didn't do something right now, they would both die.

The werewolf was about to strike when he reached his friend.

It was the smartest thing to concentrate his power on one point of the door, as far out as possible.

So he slammed his remaining hand and forearm against the door above Kaitlyn's head. At the same moment, a sharp pain ran through his entire left arm, making him gasp slightly before a slight dizziness overcame him.

'Don't you dare pass out now, Dylan,' he admonished himself, trying to swallow the pain.

She couldn't do this alone!

Together they pushed with all their remaining strength, and finally the heavy door moved again, inch by inch.

For a few seconds, all that could be heard was their strained gasps and an angry growl, then a pained scream.

Dylan felt razor-sharp claws dig into his back before they tore through the flesh at his side.

"Shit, Dylan!"

"Hnnnggg!!!"

In pain, he clenched his eyes and teeth tightly.

"It's.. it's okay, it's okay....just...keep pushing!"

His breathing grew heavier under the exertion and pain while hearing something quietly drip onto the floor beside him.

Just a little more!

The door stopped again, but they didn't stop pushing against it.

Suddenly, the beast yelped pitifully and very loud as his arm apparently threatened to break under the pressure of the metal door.

It tried to pull his arm back, so Dylan took the chance and loosened his grip for a brief moment.

As soon as the arm disappeared into the freezer, he jammed the door into the lock, which closed with a very satisfying click.

"Hell YES!"

They did it... they really did it!

Completely fatigued, Dylan closed his eyes and, despite the pain, a big, lightened smile began to form on his lips.

He leaned his forehead against the pleasantly cool door, where the werewolf was noticeably rampaging behind.

But it doesn't matter now, they're safe.

As he struggled for breath, Kaitlyn stepped aside, also panting, and a smile formed on her face as well.

But it faded immediately when she saw her colleague's shirt soaked in blood.

"Shit, are you ok? Let me take a look at this."

She moved closer as the taller boy slowly straightened his back, his face contorted in pain.

"Um...it's ok...I think. Just a scratch, really..."

He winced, however, as Kaitlyn pushed his shirt all the way up, to have a proper look.

"Just a scratch, huh?" she asked, raising an eyebrow skeptically before inspecting the wound.

"Yeah....a pretty...painful scratch."

Silently, she looked at the wound before raising her voice a few seconds later in a state of alarm.

"Holy fucking Jesus, Dylan..."

"What?"

The answer came immediately in a somewhat shaky voice as he turned his head to Kaitlyn.

She just stared at his side, wordless.

He tried to look at the wounds, but that proved rather difficult without being in utter pain.

"Am... I going to die? It... it's not that bad, right?"

No response.

"Dammit, Kaitlyn! Say something!"

"What? No dipshit! You're not going to die. You've been through.. much worse tonight"

Her gaze briefly went to his left, non-existent hand and his eyes followed.

Well... she was right.

It was... very strange to have only one hand left, and it will be much more difficult when he's back home.

What should he tell his parents?

"....."

He'll figure something out. But not now.

"The wounds aren't particularly deep. They should be stitched up tho... but..."

For the next, unbearably long seconds, it became silent again.

A very uncomfortable silence, which made him slightly nervous.

"Um..Yeah...? I know my butt is phenom..."

"Oh shut up, dump ass!"

His comment made her eyes roll in annoyance, but he thinks he can spot a tiny smirk at the corners of her mouth.

Either that or he was already hallucinating from blood loss.

"It's just...look."

She raised her hand until it stopped at the end of her forehead and then guided it to the scratches on Dylan's side.

It's about the same height.

"Fuck, if you didn't got my back earlier... literally, my head would look like the fucking watermelons by now, after Jacob's done with them... and believe me, that's nothin` you wanna see..."

"Eww...gross!"

She looked up and gave him a genuine, grateful smile.

"So you really saved my ass twice tonight, huh?"

"Well... yeah, I guess... no big deal, I mean...um...."

A little embarrassed, Dylan scratched the back of his head before a small, sheepish chuckle could be heard from him.

"I mean, you saved me more than once tonight, so...um...I thought...I'd return the favor."

He simply kept quiet about the fact that he hadn't thought at all.

Again Kaitlyn rolled her eyes and slightly shakes her head , but the smile on her lips doesn't disappear this time.

"Ok, ok...enough of these sloppy-sloppy feelings. Let's go get Abi and then I'll take

care of your 'scratches', ok?"

The answer was an exhausted nod, before his gaze once again went to the freezer. In the meantime, it was completely quiet in there, no more growling or rumbling.

"We should still check in from time to time.... to... um...see whoever is behind this whole 'all creepy, bloodthirsty and scary' monster. I mean.. it could be Nick or... someone else from the group, you know?"

Kaitlyn thought for a moment before nodding.

"We will. And now get moving, chop, chop!"

She clapped her hands together twice before making a clear gesture toward the exit.

"Ryan will make my head shorter if I let you bleed to death, and no one can want that, right?"

Her words caused a half happy, half worried smile.
He really hoped Ryan was okay... that everyone's okay.
But right now, there's nothing he can do but wait.

"Yeah... Right."

So Dylan started moving, heading for the first aid room and he really hoped that there will be no more bad surprises tonight.

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05:17 | August 23 - Dylan
Hackett's Quarry Lodge - First Aid Room

"Ouch, ouch! Kaitlyn, a little more gentle, please!"

The piece of cotton burned as if Kaitlyn had poured gasoline on it instead of sanitizer. Dylan was lying on his stomach on the hospital bed, his arms crossed so that he could rest his head on them.

Next to him, on a small table, lay a rather large pile of bloody pieces of fabric.

This was... quite a lot of blood.

It's no surprise that he feels so damn dizzy, but that doesn't stop him from complaining vociferously.

"How can you be so small and delicate and have the hands of a butcher at the same time? Those poor kids who were under your treatment."

She then laughed in response before throwing the wet, blood-soaked cotton in Dylan's face.

"I beg you fuckin' pardon? I've had 11-year-olds with lacerations on their heads who whined and cried far less than you. In fact, they didn't even flinch, so put your shit together. I'm almost done."

From the drawer she took out a box, which she dumped on the table and... um... took a funny looking thingy out of its package.

He was about to ask what it was but a sharp scream from outside interrupted him and made them both flinch.

Kaitlyn, immediately on her feet, runs over to the open door, while Dylan straightens up a bit.

"Ahhrg, fuck me..."

Stupid idea... really really stupid idea.

"Abi?!" she yelled outside into the darkness, noticeably nervous.

"I...it's all right, I.... I just wanted to see if...whoever's in the freezer...is still alive and..."

Her shaky voice came closer really fast before she stopped in front of the First Aid Room.

"Yeah...he...she...it...is definitely very alive. It jumped against the door and I... it just gave me a fright."

Kaitlyn exhaled in relief before reaching for the rifle next to the door, shoving it into her hands.

"Take this... just in case. Did you see or hear anything from the others?"

Abi shook her head with a troubled look in her brown eyes.

"Ok... go to the main entrance and keep an eye on the surroundings outside. If there's anything, yell. I'll be with you in a second."

This time a nod came in response, a small sigh before the red-haired girl pressed the rifle to her chest and slowly walked to the entrance of the lodge.

It was a hell of a night for each of them and now that the tension has eased a little, you could clearly see that they are all on edge.

They desperately tried to fool each other with jokes and stupid comments that everything is fine... but it wasn't... not in the slightest.

Silently, Kaitlyn came back and continued where she left off her work.

Nobody said anything... all you could hear is the opening of the plastic wrappings and the quiet gasps of Dylan as she squeezed his wounds again and again to stick something over them every inch.

"Done. Try not to move that much, okay? Those staple plasters don't hold for very long but they should last until the wound can be taken care of properly."

"Yeah...I'll do my best. Thanks Kaitlyn."

Very slowly, Dylan straightened up and reached for his shirt, only to realize again that he had no hand left on his side.

He sighed quietly.

Before he could reach for the bloody piece of what was his shirt not so long ago, Kaitlyn did and handed it to him.

"Thanks..."

"Do you want me to... take a look at that too?"

Dylan looked up, only to take a glance at the stump of his arm a moment later.

"No, I...this will do until I get to the hospital."

Silence.

"Do you want to talk abo..."

"No! No, I...don't want to talk about it right now....um.... thanks for the offer, though. I just need... I just need some rest, that's all."

Worried, his colleague nodded before placing a hand on his shoulder comfortingly.

"All right, I'll leave you alone now. And in case you need painkillers..."

She reached into the medicine cabinet, pulled out a tin and set it on the small table.

"I'll be outside if you need me."

With these words she left the room and closed the door behind her.

It was deadly silent... for the first time that cursed night and the longer he sat here, the more oppressive his thoughts became.

His eyes rested on the bandaged stump where... his hand should be.

Dylan tried to make the familiar motion that formed a fist, but all he got was a wrenching pain.

"Fuck..."

He covered his eyes with his remaining hand before a few tears ran down his cheek.

For the last few hours, he's been able to pretend it wasn't so bad ... But now he was alone.

At this point, there was no longer any reason to pretend.

Kapitel 2: Breath

04:42 | August 23 - Ryan
Woods - Silas Lair

The tension in the air was so dense that you probably could've cut it with a knife. Motionless, Ryan stared at the curled-up beast, which lay quietly whimpering in its destroyed cage in the forest.

The white wolf... which had brought so much misfortune and suffering to the Hackett family and had probably given them the most terrible night of their lives.

In the light of the full moon the light skin, which has given him his name, was clearly visible... It was the same werewolf that had attacked him and Dylan at the Radio Hut. The reason why he had to cut off Dylan's hand.

It left an entirely bitter taste now that they were able to solve the original problem. He had disabled him for nothing.

Seconds passed, but nothing happened, which caused Ryan's dark eyes to detach from the werewolf and roam over to Laura.

The blonde girl had the rifle pressed close to her chest, the weapon's barrel aimed at the white wolf but.... nothing happened.

"Laura! What the hell are you waitin' for!?! Shoot!"

She started to open her mouth to say something, but no words came out of her lips. What the hell was going on?

Since Laura had appeared, she was determined to put an end to all of this... she wanted Chris' head at all costs, she shot Kaylee without batting an eye.

Why the fuck would she hesitate now?!

Again he wanted to shout her name, but a faint, crying voice stopped him immediately.

No.. Not my boy!

It was her... the Hag of Hackett's Quarry. Or Eliza, as this Travis guy had called her.

Tragic story with an even more tragic ending but they couldn't take that into consideration, they were here to save those who could still be saved... they have to end this for good.

Absolutely no idea why the white wolf turned into a werewolf and they had no time to find out.

The sun would rise in less than two hours and according to Chris' brother, it had taken them over 6 years to track down Silas.

It was too dangerous to change their mind now.

"NOW SHOOT, YOU STUPID GIRL!"

Trevi's voice echoed through the otherwise silent forest and seemed to bring Laura out of some kind of trance.

Instantly she placed the rifle more firmly against her chest, but again she did not fire.

"He... he's just a boy!"

She sounded trembling, and briefly she dared a glance over at Travis, who threatened to lose his temper at any moment.

But before he could do anything, Ryan stepped between them.

"Are you out of your fuckin' mind? That ain't no boy, remember?"

"But..."

She wanted to respond, but Silas' low growl interrupted her before the white wolf rose to shaky paws before their eyes.

FUCK!

Ryan reached for the gun in Laura's hands, but for some reason she pulled it back forcefully.

He gave her a 'what the fuck, dude' look before, out of reflex, he swept her leg, grabbed the gun and snatched it from her as she fell.

This was no time for a discussion.

Turning on his heel, he put the rifle to his chest and turned it on the werewolf, which stood before him now in full size.

His finger positioned itself on the trigger and pulled it.

At least that's what Ryan intended to do but.... he couldn't move.

What the...?!

NO! Don't do it, he's all I have!

Silas roared loudly, Travis yelled something at him from the side, but he couldn't make out what.... everything blurred into a low beeping sound.

Suddenly everything was happening in slow motion, like playing a video at half speed, while Eliza's crying rumbled louder and louder in his ears.

In a crack of a second, half of the night passed before his mind's eye.

How he shot Chris, Kaylee's dead body in the pool, how he almost died, the chainsaw, and then.... Dylan's stupid smile after he told a fuckin' silly joke.

A loud bang rang through the silence of the forest, everything went silent, and the white wolf collapsed right in front of him with a pain-distorted howl.

NOOOOO!

A crying scream sent an ice-cold shiver down the spines of everyone who was present.

You'll regret this, you little brat! I swear, I'll be your worst nightmare... for the rest of your life..

Her voice faded away, as well as the whimpering of the white wolf at his feet, and everything around him fell silent.

Ryan felt all the tension, all the fear suddenly dropped from his shoulders.. this night of horror was as good as over.

The only fear that remained was what he would find when they returned to Hackett's

Quarry.

A bloodbath? A pile of corpses? Fuck, is...he still..

A slight shaking befell his hands, causing Ryan to clench them into fists.

All he could do for now was hoping for the best.. hoping that he doesn't find his friends bodies all torn up by a fuckin' werewolf.

He was startled out of his thoughts only when a hand placed itself on his shoulders and made him look up.

Travis, with a proud look and a barely visible smile on his face, gave him an acknowledging nod.

"You did the right thing, son."

Ryan nodded, then tossed the rifle to the forest floor before turning with a questioning look to Laura, who was still lying on the ground behind him.

He knew he had done the right thing...and yet he felt like a piece of fuckin' trash for taking another life.

Laura's eyes stared at the lifeless body, who had turned into its human form again before slowly looking up at him.

"I... shit, Ryan... I'm so sorry. I.. don't know what happened, I just couldn't move and... her crying.."

"I know.." he simply replied, then reached out to help her back onto her feet.

It was over... Fuck any explanations, he was too tired and exhausted for that kinda shit right now, but Ryan couldn't quite hide the trace of disappointment.

"Let's..just go back to the camp."

He pulled Laura to her feet before the small group made their way back to the car on the road.

For the first time in this shitty night, he heard birds chirping and crickets chirping again... a good sign that there was no more danger nearby.

At least that's what Ryan thought.

Also the huge full moon slowly shifted behind the treetops, proclaiming that the night was about to end.

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05:01 | August 23 - Ryan

Route 919

With his eyes closed, his head rested against the pleasantly cool window of the car while listening to the song that was playing silently on the radio.

I will follow the sun, till I see you again. Until the dust fills my lungs, I'll keep driving till the end, until my broken heart will mend

The closer they got to Hackett's Quarry, the more nervous Ryan became.... he would probably only find his peace when he finally found out about the others' situation. So he sat up again, sighed quietly, and began to play anxiously with his fingers in his lap.

Laura sat next to him in the back seat, her worried gaze resting on him, but Ryan ignored her completely.

A conversation was the last thing he wanted right now, no 'how are you doing', no 'don't worry, everything will be fine' so he just kept staring at his hands.

"You're pissed at me, aren't you?"

Although he really wanted to disregard any mention of her, this one took him by surprise.

"What? No, I'm..."

"...just disappointed, yeah yeah..." she finished his sentence with a contemptuous smile.

"You looked at me like my grandma after I accidentally broke her favorite ugly ass vintage vase..."

Confused, he opened his mouth to say something, but he didn't know what to say in response, so he closed his mouth again and just looked at her interrogatively.

There was absolute silence for a moment until she turned her head to him and continued speaking.

"Listen...I just want to say that I'm sorry, ok? I wanted to pull the trigger, I really did."

Ryan could see that Laura was completely confused and felt guilty, so he just swallowed the sharp words that were lying on his tongue.

"And this 'he's just a boy' crap? Goddammit, I didn't mean to say that bull shit, it just... came over my lips. It was scary.. I felt like... I had no control over my body."

Silence fell again as Ryan contemplated her words... and the longer he thought about it, the more aware he became of the fact that for a brief moment, he felt exactly the same. Like.. possessed.

With a heavy sigh, he leaned forward and drove a hand through his hair.

"Maybe it was her.."

"What?"

"The hag of... Eliza, I mean. I'm pretty sure she tried to stop us from killin' her baby boy."

Laura's head visibly seemed to be working as she put two and two together.

"So you felt it too, didn't you...that rigidity?"

He nodded before he took a look at her.

"Yup... Couldn't move a damn finger for a moment."

The blonde girl looked a bit astonished before nodding her head appreciatively. Besides, Ryan saw the relief that flitted across her face and encouragingly he forced himself to a small smile, even though he didn't feel like it. He could have guessed that Laura hadn't chickened out of anxiety.... and apparently... his motivation had been greater than hers.

"Well~ that's impressive."

She smiled before the car sharply bucked to the side and they both latched onto the seat in front of them.

Ryan knew that bump, they were almost there.

His heart began to race again, his mouth started to dry as his gaze went rigidly forward through the windscreen.

And after the next turn, the lodge lying in the twilight came into view.

It was still dark but the day was near, maybe an hour away.

The car's headlights swept across the parking lot and the lodge's porch, revealing 4 figures in the dimness of the sinking moon.

A huge wave of relief washed over Ryan, a wide smile appeared on his lips and he didn't even wait for the car to stop to jump outside.

He never thought he would be so glad to see his work colleagues, but a night like this probably changed a lot.

"No fucking way! Ryan and his little buddy In Charge made it out of that creepy ass house of horror!"

Jacob's voice and his stupid guffaw reached his ears first and, for the first time in his life, he was glad to hear it.

"Ever doubt it, cage boy?"

Thank God everyone here was okay.

The group met him halfway up the stairs, Jacob leading who, completely by surprise, wrapped his brawny arms around him and squeezed so tightly that Ryan almost couldn't breathe.

"I'll let this one slide, ok? Only because you gave me back my fucking freedom, though."

"Jeez, Hurricane Jacob in action. Let the poor guy down before you squash him."

Emma slapped him on the shoulder, whereupon the grip finally loosened and Ryan audibly and somewhat overdramatically gasped for air.

"I knew you'd do it...otherwise I would've gone there with her instead.", he heard Kaitlyn's voice from the head of the stairs, before she flashed him a smile, the rifle firmly in her hands.

Meanwhile, Laura was back beside him, waving once to the group.

"I'm going to go get Max, maybe someone has clothes for him?" she asked before her gaze lingered on Jacob and she raised an eyebrow.

"Mmm, apparently clothes are rather in short supply."

Ryan's gaze slid through his friends' faces before he noticed that one was missing.

"Where's Dylan?"

The lot, who had just been talking about Jacob's missing clothes, fell silent all at once. All faces suddenly flushed with concern, Emma and Abi exchanged brief glances while Ryan's heart stopped beating for a second.

No...

Kaitlyn took the floor again.

"He... defended me when that fucking werewolf tried to maul me to death and..."

When she paused, he thought he was going to throw up at any moment.

Fuck no...

The silence felt like an eternity.

"...he took quite a blow, but he's okay. He's in the first aid room."

A load fell off his mind, apparently visible to all, because a small grin formed on Kaitlyn's lips.

She really was the devil's impersonation... and he didn't exactly feel like laughing, so he just pushed his way through the others and headed for the entrance of the lodge with quick steps.

"I don't know, maybe neither." he could hear Laura's low voice imitating his words he said to her earlier that night

"Shut the fuck up, Laura!", he just fired back before Ryan opened the door and disappeared into the front room of the lodge

He heard the rest of the group giggling guardedly....damn idiots.

His path led him directly to the right, where the first aid room was and without knocking he opened the door and stepped inside.

Even though he knew Dylan was okay, now that he saw him, alive and breathing, the last of the tension dropped off of him.

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05:25 | August 23 - Dylan
Hackett's Quarry Lodge - First Aid Room

Dylan couldn't quite tell if he should classify the quiet as pleasant or frightening. For the last two months, being alone was a luxury they rarely had... unless they snuck outside at night.

The attempt to sleep had failed miserably, so he tried to distract himself with more pleasant thoughts.

And lo and behold... it even worked.

He remembered the one night he and Ryan had snuck away from the monthly sleepover party after everyone was asleep.

Which in retrospect was a really foolish idea, because as he now realized, the sleepovers at the lodge were always during a full moon.

Jeez, that could have turned out very very badly, but the night seemed like any other, and nonetheless, it had been really nice.

They just sat on the shore of the lake, between the boathouse and the fire pit and talked, watching the still surface of the water and the moon, which always seemed much bigger and brighter in this place.... and...well... then there was this..

The next thought made his heart beat a little faster, but it ended abruptly when Dylan heard the door open.... surely for the 4th time in the last half an hour.

He had a new shirt, still enough water and painkillers in case the pain got stronger... what the fuck could she want now?

Unintentionally, a slight, annoyed sigh escaped him.

"For the thousandth time, Kaitlyn, I'm fine.... it's really heartwarming that you're worried about me but you don't have to..."

In the middle of the sentence, his arm, used to shield the dim light from the couple of candles, slid down from his eyes, and the rest of his words probably got stuck immediately in his throat somewhere.

At once Dylan was on his feet, his brown eyes blinking a few times to adjust them to the light and in... disbelief, as if he were seeing a ghost.

He's alive... or had he fallen asleep? As a child he often had dreams that felt incredibly real but at this time he hoped it wasn't.

For half of the night he had accepted the fact that he maybe would never see Ryan again and now he was standing there, only a few meters away from him.

"Ryan..."

A wide smile spread across his face as he began to move closer, his steps getting faster and faster.

"Yup, it's me... In..."

But Ryan's voice dropped as Dylan put his arms around him and pulled him a bit closer, afraid it might be a dream after all, but.... it felt quite real and so did the quite familiar scent.

"Man, I'm really glad you're ok..."

You could briefly hear a soft chuff from the other but Dylan clearly hear that little smile in it... as so often when he said something stupid in Ryan's eyes and very lightly a hand put itself onto his side.
Thankfully the uninjured one.

"Yeah... likewise. But...dude? You can let go of me again."

Immediately, Dylan backed away from him and raised his arms apologetically.
He admonished himself in his mind to get a grip.... no one liked clingy people.

"Sorry, sorry... I'm just...um...really...really glad to see you..."

A little abashed, his eyes drifted to the floor before his remaining hand stroked the back of his neck, which he regretted on the spot.
The movement dragged painfully through his right side, whereupon he quickly lowered his arm again.

"You're okay?"

Ryan's question made Dylan look up before he nodded it off.

"Yeah, yeah... sure. Just a... um... another souvenir from this incredibly shitty night."

Apart from the exhaustion, the pain, the dizziness, the lack of a hand, the slight nausea and all the other shit that had happened overnight, he was perfectly fine.
He saw Ryan take a small step to the side and examine the spot where his injury was.

"Actually... 4 souvenirs."

"Um...yeah? How do you..?"

The other pointed at his shirt, which made Dylan follow his gaze and instantly he groaned in annoyance.
Quite clear, 4 traces of blood marked the gray fabric, but he had hardly moved at all.
Great, that was his last clean shirt...and one of his favorites. God how he longed for a shower right now.
The metallic smell of blood was slowly becoming unbearable.

"Kaitlyn already told me you took a good one for the team. Shall I help you swab off the blood?"

"Yeah? Did she also tell you how heroically I saved her life at the scrap yard? I'm pretty sure they're going to do a movie on that one."

Ryan rolled his eyes slightly with a small smirk on his lips, which also made him smile slightly.

He really loved it when the other smiled.

Ryan looked really cute but sadly it was seen way too little, which is probably the reason why Dylan took every opportunity to invoke one, no matter how idiotic he has to be for it.

Just as sweet was the irritation such words provoked in Ryan, as they just did.

"Ehm..not really? I mean... I haven't had much time to talk to her yet, I just made it back.

"Just made it back, huh? And you were so worried that you wanted to check on me right away?", Dylan replied playfully, unable to help but grin slightly.

"That's..really sweet of you."

"What? No... maybe... just.. shut up, dude."

He couldn't help it and started laughing and for a short moment he could swear that Ryan's face got a little darker.

It was really hard to tell in the dim light of the candles, though.

"Just... let me help you with this mess and better tell me what you guys were doin' at the scrap yard."

Ryan walked aimlessly over to the hospital bed and grabbed a clean piece of cloth before his eyes fell on the bloody pile of fabric Kaitlyn had left behind.

"Wow, that's a pretty big amount of blood...you sure you're okay?"

Dylan followed him and sat back down on the rather uncomfortable hospital bed before turning his head towards him to answer.

But his attention was captured by an extended hole in the fabric of Ryan's shirt, and now up close he saw it... an even darker, massive stain on the black fabric.

Was that... Blood?

"Holy Mother of... speaking of a rather big amount of blood... what the hell happened there? Is that yours?!"

The other didn't look like he was hurt at all but this... this definitely looked like an injury.

Even his pants were drenched in it, nearly down to his knee.

"Huh?"

Ryan didn't seem to catch what he meant at first, before looking down at himself.

"Oh that... yeah, that's mine. And I swear, you'll never gonna believe this shit."

Now Dylan was confused, but Ryan first soaked the piece of fabric with disinfectant before moving his hand to the hem of his shirt, pulling it up.

"There's nothing."

What? Indeed there was nothing...

Without thinking, Dylan lifted his hand and touched the warm skin where he had suspected a really nasty wound...nothing.. not even a damn scratch.

He finally caught up to the 'joke', he gave an amused huff.

"Hardy, har har...thanks for the payback but... what the fuck, dude?"

His brown eyes looked a little concerned and Ryan, who lowered his shirt again, sat down behind the taller boy and carefully pulled his shirt up to gently wipe off the fresh blood.

"It's... a long story, kinda."

"Well, we just happen to have time right now. Or...give me the short version at least."

Ryan seemed to consider whether to speak up now, because there was silence for a short amount of time.

Was it so bad that he didn't want to talk about it? Or did he just not want to tell him? Again, his gaze went down to his hand.... well... he didn't want to talk about that either and he was damn thankful Ryan hadn't brought it up yet.

"I mean... you don't have to..."

"I got stabbed... pretty badly, actually. After the knife was pulled out of my side, I almost bled to death...but Laura saved me, long story short."

Dylan turned his head back as far as he could to at least look at the other out of the corner of his eye.

He tried to process what Ryan was saying but it made absolutely no sense in his head. In the half-dark he could see that the other was fully focused on his wounds.

But no matter from which perspective he looked at it...how could Laura heal such a severe wound?"

"Ryan...you know that can't be, do you?"

"I know... but Laura..."

He stopped speaking and Dylan saw from the corner of his eye how Ryan lightly bit his bottom lip.

Why wouldn't he say what happened? Was Laura a motherfucking magical healer or...? Then the realization struck him like a lightning bolt and in a flash Dylan turned around to look at Ryan properly.

Somewhat irritated, he returned the gaze.

" She... bit you, didn't she?"

Before Ryan and Laura had left to look for Chris, she had shown the bite her boyfriend

had given her.

That was the only explanation of how a deadly knife thrust could suddenly disappear into thin air.

But that meant... fuck, please don't.

The other's nod made Dylan jump to his feet in an instant, and in utter disbelief he ran a hand through his still bloodied, half-wet hair.

"Are you telling me you're infected? Fuck Ryan...that's...that's why you didn't want to say anything..."

"Dylan..."

But he completely ignored his name, as well as his hurting back.

"What the heck are you gonna do now? Are you gonna lock yourself away somewhere every full moon now? Shit, I... I thought all that bullshit was...."

"DYLAN!"

The loud voice snapped him out of his muddled and spinning thoughts.

Ryan was only inches away from him.

He... hadn't seen him stand up at all.

In the next moment, Dylan felt two warm hands on each of his cheeks before soft lips met his.

All of a sudden, his thoughts were completely quiet... almost blank.

This was unexpected...but still very enjoyable.

He simply remained in his position until Ryan gently broke the kiss.

"Calm down, okay? I'm not infected anymore, we killed the first one.... it's over, ok?"

Dylan could still feel the light pressure of the foreign lips on his before heat shot to his face causing his cheeks to flush visibly..

The goofy grin was just about to settle on his lips, but Dylan once cleared his throat briefly before looking to the side, feeling slightly sheepish.

"Um...sorry, I guess I was a bit...um.. overdramatic...."

And the most important thing was that Ryan was alive.... fuck, he didn't even want to imagine that he really could have been dead.

Ryan gave him a very gentle smile before they were interrupted by a door suddenly opening.

Both looked up at the same time and spotted Kaitlyn with an incredibly worried expression on her face.

"I really hate to disturb you guys but we really, really have massive shit on our hands."

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