

A Dream of Darkness



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By

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Chapter 1

Outside of the town of Misty Pines, Henry Tucker froze as his foot cracked against a fallen branch. A howl echoed in the night, buried beneath the chirping of insects. Out here there was no glow from the moon, no light from the town. It was all swallowed up by the thick, inky blackness of the woods. To Henry, this kind of darkness felt eternal, like it might never let him go.

He couldn't remember how he entered the woods, and not for the first time, he wondered if he was even awake. There was no path to follow, just the endless forest and the same lingering fog hovering around his feet. Even as he tiptoed cautiously, his mom's voice echoed in the back of his head, warning Henry and his younger brother Keegan about the dangers of the forest. Even though he was already twelve, she still pressed him about it whenever he ventured out. He knew about Stranger Danger and to avoid wild animals, so what was the big deal?

Pausing again, Henry picked up on a sound he didn't recognize. A low thrum rolled across the dead leaves, reverberating through his bones. The sound was a siren's call, beckoning him closer, and as Henry traveled another quarter mile towards the noise, he reached a small clearing through the trees where a sliver of pale blue moonlight revealed the opening of a cave.

Henry was certain he would have remembered any caves nearby, especially with all the exploring he'd done over the years. He knew he was at a pivotal point where he could turn back and find his way home without taking another step closer. The deep hum had only grown more intense. The rough tree bark quivered beneath his palm, and the earth shook through his sneakers. The vibrations were having a deeper effect on him, too, as he grew hard in his jeans.

"Great," he muttered. "Perfect timing."

Erections were a part of everyday life, he knew. Sex-ed had tried to make that abundantly clear, but it didn't help when they actually sprang up.

What they should have taught all the boys, Henry thought, was how to take care of their hard-ons rather than coaching them with useless advice like shoving a hand in your pocket to readjust your penis or wrapping a sweatshirt around your waist to hide the bulge. Thank god he'd figured out the way to handle them on his own. The past couple months had been a game changer since then. If he wasn't creeped the fuck out, he'd probably have taken care of his little problem right away.

Henry tried to pinch his arm as hard as he could. If this was a dream, maybe that would help snap him out of it. He didn't wake up, but more unsettling was how the humming had suddenly stopped. Maybe stopped wasn't the right word. The humming had retreated, and Henry was now certain the noise had originated from the cave, somewhere deep within that darkness.

"Heeeenry...."

Henry gave up on pinching and slapped himself hard in the face. Wake up, he thought. Wake up, wake up, wake up.

"Don't be nervous, Henry."

Fuck this. He was out. He spun on his heels to sprint as far and fast as possible. If he smacked into some trees on his way back to safety, then so be it. He took one step forward when his body betrayed him. He was frozen in place.

"I don't like this!" he called out. "Let me go!"

Henry could no longer see the opening of the cave, but the deep vibrations began again, this time pulsing, growing in strength, as if someone...or something...was stepping closer. The misty fog which had given the town its namesake had thickened like coiling fingertips around his ankles and up his knees. The fog brushed against his skin teasingly, and Henry couldn't stop his teeth from chattering as he nervously licked his lips.

"What do you want from me?" he dared to ask.

"You, Henry," the voice said. It was neither masculine nor feminine. It carried no tone. Its voice was feathers on his skin. "I want to give you a gift."

A hand gripped his shoulder, and though he couldn't see it, he nearly fainted as a tickling pleasure radiated throughout his body. The vellus hairs on his neck and arms raised to attention, and he shuddered as his eyes rolled. If he'd been hard before, he was fucking steel now. Henry tried to shake the pleasure away, because while it felt more incredible than anything he'd experienced before—there was something disturbing about where it was coming from.

"It's okay to relax, Henry," the voice whispered, so close to his ear. It started to coat him like a thick blanket. "It's okay to let go."

"Please don't hurt me," Henry whispered in return.

The voice laughed in a whispering bark as the mist and pleasure swallowed him whole. His lungs had seized up. Tears began to fill his eyes as Henry tried to think of a way to escape, but he couldn't move! Couldn't cry for help! Couldn't take a breath! He thought for certain he was about to explode from the intense feelings rushing through him, that his body would rip into pieces, when—

* * *

"Unnngh..."

Henry's dick was going nuts as his eyes sprang open, sunlight blinding him through his bedroom window. His heart hammered inside his chest, and his sweaty black hair was matted to his head. Sitting up in bed, Henry tore back his covers until his pajamas came into view. A large wet patch was spreading against the cloth where his erection pressed against it, still twitching and incredibly sensitive as his orgasm faded.

Four months ago, Henry's first wet dream hadn't felt nearly as intense as this one. An awkward conversation followed with his dad when Henry was convinced he'd pissed the bed. His dad had been just as embarrassed and tiptoed around a lot of the specifics, which ultimately just meant that Henry had to endure an even longer conversation as his dad tried to re-explain himself several times. To make matters worse, his ten-year-old

brother Keegan kept pestering him multiple times that day about what was going on. He was a good younger brother, but sometimes Henry wished he would mind his own business.

He jumped out of his bed to make sure he hadn't stained his sheets before changing out of his pajama bottoms. The inside of his pants were soaked, and a thin sheen of cum clung to the inside fabric. Henry couldn't remember ever cumming more in the past. He buried his pajama pants beneath several clothes in his hamper. No need to have the cum smell wafting through his bedroom. Before grabbing a fresh pair of boxers, Henry examined his softening penis. It hung about two inches, and the few curly pubes around the outside of his dick seemed to be filling in more. He found it funny that he'd gone his whole life uninterested in his dick, and then all at once, it seemed like he'd grown a dozen hairs without ever spotting the first.

Henry thought back to his dream as he grabbed his shower towel. Only a handful in his life had ever felt so real—this one was so intense, between him walking through the forest, the vibrations tactile across his skin, and that disembodied voice. Even in memory it sent chills down his spine.

By the time Henry stepped into the kitchen after showering, combing his hair, and brushing his teeth, his younger brother had already taken the elementary school bus. His mom was in the kitchen, grabbing her laptop and a few other supplies for work.

"Finally," she said, "Wasn't sure I'd see you before I had to leave."

"Sorry, bad dream," he said with a yawn and grabbed a carton of orange juice from the fridge.

"Well, all better now," she said, only half paying attention as she scrolled through her phone. Once she left for work in the city, she wouldn't be back until nearly six in the evening. Henry's dad worked similar hours, only he had to leave even earlier in the morning. Before leaving, Henry gave her a kiss goodbye and packed his book bag for the day.

Misty Pines was an okay place to live, Henry thought. It was a small town tucked away in a little valley between the Virginian mountains, but that

was part of the charm. The weather was comfortable most months, and they weren't teased with only a few short days of fall and spring. The only problem was that things were a bit...boring. You had to create your own fun. Sometimes that meant pickup games with a few kids down the street, hanging out at the swimming hole on hot days, or exploring through the woods. Except maybe he would hold off on his treks through the forest for the time being.

Sitting on the outskirts of town was Misty Pines Middle, the only feeder school for the surrounding elementary schools. As Henry made his way off the bus, he walked through the common area until he found his best friend Aiden standing alone in the courtyard. They met last year in 6th grade, but already they were tighter than two friends could be. Henry knew he could share anything with Aiden. Well, almost anything.

At the start of their friendship, Henry struggled to understand why Aiden made him feel a little goofy in his chest. Being around his friend was the first time Henry could remember springing a boner out of the blue. It wasn't until a few months later when he started connecting the dots—he was attracted to Aiden. The boy had a scruffy head of unkempt, pale blond hair, was short for his age, and a mischievous smirk lived on his face. He had never gotten into any real trouble, but Henry had always found himself a willing partner-in-crime for a number of Aiden's pranks.

"Dude, you'll never believe this," Aiden said, waving him over as he bounced between feet. "Take a look at what Tyler did to his hair last night."

Aiden pointed at the row of jocks leaning together against the courtyard wall. One of them was Tyler who played on the JV basketball squad for the school. Beside him, Molly Sinclair was practically hanging from his arm to keep his attention. What Aiden wanted Henry to see was Tyler's new haircut, the same mullet he usually wore, but now with the sides completely shaved off.

"No way," Henry said.

"I know. Totally stupid, right? Also, could Molly the Slut be any more obvious today? Her tits are basically hanging out."

Not for the first time, Henry pushed down the pang in his chest. While Henry knew he was 100% undeniably gay, he was also about as sure as you could be that Aiden was straight. It didn't change much at all about their friendship, but a friendship was all it would ever be. That was okay with him. To Henry, their friendship was the most important thing he had. He wouldn't ever want to ruin that.

"Totally," Henry agreed, and the two laughed, hanging out until the first bell echoed across the courtyard.

The start of the day was a breeze but a bore. Math sucked, but what else was new? Algebra always made Henry fuzzy in the head when dealing with numbers and letters together. Several times he tried stealing glances at Suzie Lee's paper, but when she caught him peering over at her paper, she covered it with her hand and turned away from him.

Later on in reading, the class had started their presentations for their book reports. Most of these Henry wanted to doze through, but some of his more attractive classmates, like Max and Asher, would give him plenty to eye-bang when it was their turn.

Henry sighed. Why couldn't any of the crazy hot boys also be gay? He knew Asher played soccer, and even though he wasn't buff in the traditional sense, his arms and legs looked really nice from all the toning and warm sun. Henry wasn't sure if Max played any sports, but he had one of those faces that was pleasing on all sides: full lips, a set of blue eyes with dark hair, along with a smattering of freckles. Oh yeah, he certainly wouldn't mind getting to eye-bang the two of them during their projects. Instead, he had to suffer through stupid not-hot Rachael stumbling over her words at the front of the class.

Henry's stomach was in a nonstop grumble by the time lunch rolled around, and he grabbed an extra snack from the stand to go with his burger. The cafeteria was already a chaotic mess of people narrowly missing each other with their lunch trays as they searched for their friends. Aiden was at the same table they sat at every day, already munching through a plate of salad.

"What is it with you and salad?" Henry asked.

"Hey!" Aiden said through a mouthful of lettuce and ranch. "I gotta maintain alllll this, or I'll never get any before high school!"

Through Aiden's talking, a bit of ranch trickled down his chin, the white smear fueling Henry's imagination enough to burn his cheeks alive.

"You good, dude? Not getting sick, are you?"

Henry blinked out of his fever dream and coughed to clear his throat before opening his milk. "Pssh, as if. May wanna lick your lip, though, you slob."

"Like this?" Aiden asked before excessively licking his tongue around his lips. "Oh Jessica, oh Molly, you turn me on soooo much!"

"Gross!" Henry shouted and laughed at Aiden's sloppy ranch goatee.

After Aiden wiped his lips with his napkin, he gave them a loud smack before eating more salad. "Seriously though, are you good? You seemed a little off when you first got to school. Keegan's not being an asshole, is he?"

Memories of the cave and the shadowy hand on Henry's shoulder flashed through his mind. He shook the thought away before it gave him the heebie jeebies. He considered sharing the dream with his friend, but wasn't sure how much detail he wanted to go in. They were best friends, so of course they had stayed up late talking about personal things like jerking off and sex, and even though they'd never seen each other naked, they both shared when their first pubes started coming in. But the nightmare was different—it disturbed Henry in a way he couldn't explain.

"I'm fine. I just didn't sleep well last night."

There was a small break in Aiden's smile, like he was distracted by something else. The small, blond boy shifted a bit in his seat before grinning in a smirk. Within seconds, Aiden was back to his normal, goofy self. It wasn't long before they were joined by a few of their other lunch mates, and the rest of their time passed talking about baseball, Fortnite, and their lame ass homework they were given that day.

The rest of Henry's classes blurred by, and before he knew it, the school day was done, and he was back on the bus heading home. He plugged in

his earbuds before pulling up his favorite pop station on Spotify. Settling in to his seat, Henry tried to suppress the huge yawn that welled up inside. His eyes fluttered closed as he leaned against the window and drifted off to the sounds of Billie Eilish.

"Heeeenry..." It was the voice. He was back at the cave. Back in the darkness. "Remember, Heeeenry..."

"Yo, Henry!"

Someone slapped his shoulder, and Henry snapped awake as the bus's brakes squealed to a stop at his street corner. A boy from down the street named Ben was standing in the aisle, blocking the path from a smaller sixth grade girl who kept trying to slip around him unsuccessfully.

"Must've fallen asleep," Henry mumbled.

"Yeah, no shit," Ben said. "Time to go."

Henry folded up his headphones and snatched his bag before stepping off the bus. A thick blanket of gray clouds had rolled in overhead as thunder grumbled in the distance. There was little chance of playing outside now, he thought. Instead, he bee-lined for his house, opening the front door with his latchkey. Keegan would have already been home from school, waiting in the house for Henry's return while their parents were at work.

"I'm home!" he called out.

Henry went to his bedroom to drop off his book bag before grabbing a soda on his way past the kitchen and into the living room. He found Keegan in a pair of gym shorts and a loose t-shirt watching an old rerun of Teen Titans as Robin and the gang leapt into action to fight a group of baddies.

"Want some chips?" Keegan asked as Henry took a seat on the far side of the couch.

"Sure!" Henry grabbed a handful from the bag and cracked open the soda he brought with him.

As they watched cartoons, Henry and Keegan talked about their day at school, but it didn't take long for their conversation to die down. Henry's mind was fixated on the dream from the night before. He thought he

remembered watching some Youtube video about dreams being reflections of one's subconscious, but were recurring dreams a thing? And if that was the case, he didn't have any clue how to prevent them from happening.

Dreams couldn't hurt him, he knew that. Maybe there was no harm in enjoying the parts of the dream that had been good. For one, he'd come. Like, a lot. And that had been a pretty awesome feeling. Normally when he came, it was a quick spurt or two, and even then, most of it was pretty watery, although his cum had gotten whiter over the last few weeks. He knew that meant he was making real sperm now.

Beside him, Keegan kept shifting on the couch, moving his bowl of chips to the side, and then shifting again before tucking his feet up underneath himself.

"What's got you all antsy?" Henry asked.

"Nothing, sorry," his brother mumbled, trying to focus on the show.

Thinking about cumming had the inevitable effect of making Henry hard, and he snuck a hand in his pants pocket to adjust himself, pointing his dick towards his stomach. The vibrations from the dream had been the most intense when the creature had its hand on Henry's shoulder. That was when he could feel the pleasure coursing through his entire body, ebbing and flowing like a rolling wave crashing to shore. There was something the voice had said, as well, something about giving Henry a gift.

Henry was just about to excuse himself from the couch so he could take care of Little Henry in the privacy of his bathroom when Keegan let out a soft groan beside him.

"It...oh..." Keegan whispered and stared down at his gym shorts. His brother's face was flushed and his eyes unfocused as he shuddered in place. Henry spotted a small tent poking against his brother's gym shorts that bucked several times against the fabric. Keegan was breathing like he'd just sprinted a marathon as the pulsing in his shorts slowed to a stop.

Holy shit, Henry thought. Did his brother just have an orgasm right beside him?

"Uhh," Henry stuttered, his dick painfully hard in his jeans. "I'll be right back. Need to use the bathroom!"

He leapt from the couch, and the moment he shut the bathroom door behind him, Henry unsnapped his jeans and dropped his pants to his knees. His dick was a leaky mess as a strand of precum dripped from the tip to the bathroom floor. Henry closed a hand around his four-inch cock and nearly came right then. The combination of remembering the dream while his brother had his cum right beside him was too much. Within a quick flurry of strokes, Henry squeezed his eyes shut and groaned as his orgasm struck. He was overcome with the pleasurable thumping happening behind his balls as his watery load jetted from his dick.

With his orgasm dying down, Henry regained his breath as he leaned against the sink counter. He hadn't been awake for the orgasm this morning, but this had been a top 5 explosion for sure. He wiped his cummy hand with a few pieces of tissue paper before flushing them down the toilet.

Now that the sexual urge ripping through him had faded, Henry wasn't sure what to think. On one hand, he had found it incredibly hot to see another boy in the throes of pleasure, but on the other hand that boy was his ten-year-old brother. There was a guilty part of him wondering if he'd witnessed his brother's first ever orgasm. The last time they'd been naked together was in the bath nearly three years ago. Back then, Henry didn't have the faintest clue of what sex really was or the joys his penis could bring him. There were times Henry's dick had stiffened in front of his brother, but those moments were always embarrassing and made him self-conscious, even though it occasionally happened to Keegan as well.

He doubted Keegan had any clue at all about what just happened to him. Not only that, but there was the incredible coincidence of it all. Was it just by chance that the moment Henry had remembered the words about a gift from his dream, remembered and relived the intense pleasure he'd felt, that his brother had an orgasm? Henry knew that sounded silly, stupid even. His brother had probably just gotten hard and overwhelmed by the feeling of his penis rubbing against the fabric of his gym shorts.

When Henry finally unlocked the door to leave the bathroom, he went to his room for the rest of the afternoon, conflicted with thoughts running through his mind...

Chapter 2

Henry didn't leave his bedroom until his parents called his name for dinner. At the table, he avoided Keegan's eyes at all costs, but if his brother had any worries about the orgasm he had earlier in the day, he didn't show it. Keegan was back to his usual dorky self, telling their mom about the book he had to read for class and how funny it was when his friend Peter pretended to be a t-rex at recess.

After helping to clear the dishes, Henry excused himself to his bedroom to finish up the last of his homework. Outside, the rain had begun, pattering in full force against his window pane as Henry struggled through his math homework. When he decided he couldn't look at his algebra work any longer without his head exploding, Henry changed into his pajama bottoms for the evening and went into the kitchen to grab a glass of water. Along the way, he noticed Keegan's door was cracked. The lamp on his brother's desk illuminated the crack against the door, and Henry heard his dad's muffled voice from the other side.

Inside the kitchen, only the overhead sink light was on, casting a dim, ghostly glow over the faucet as Henry grabbed one of the plastic cups from the cabinet. While he waited for his cup to fill at the sink, a burst of lightning jutted across the sky, lighting the backyard in a pale flash. Henry nearly jumped out of his skin as he glimpsed the blackened silhouette of a person. Someone was standing in his backyard.

Henry ducked down so his eyes were just above the window sill as his cup of water began overflowing. When the next bout of lightning hit, nothing. Just the swing set rocking in the wind and a couple of garden tools left in the grass. Still crouched, Henry slowly turned off the water and dumped a little of the excess before carefully bringing his cup back. He turned on his heels and nearly bumped into his dad.

"What are you doing?" his dad asked.

"I was just getting some water," Henry said, as if that perfectly explained why he was also crab walking across the kitchen floor.

His dad sighed and squeezed a hand over his eyes before muttering something incoherent about having boys.

Back in his room, Henry made sure his blinds were closed tight and positioned himself to where he wouldn't be able to see out of the window even if lightning flared across the sky. Despite his nerves about the storm and what might be lurking outside his home, Henry's body was also used to its nighttime ritual of jacking off before bed.

Beneath the covers, Henry reached under his waistband until his fingers brushed past the few short pubes he had on either side of his penis. Even though this would end up being his third time cumming in twenty four hours, good luck telling his dick that. Henry wrapped his fingers around his rigid pole and shuddered as the pleasure washed over him.

He focused on the same thoughts he had most nights, his best friend Aiden or another of his classmates he found super hot. He liked to imagine them shirtless first, their skin stretched taut over their developing muscles, before imagining them in some lewd position. Jacking off, getting blown, solo or together, it didn't matter. It was all fuel for Henry's fantasies. The best part was when he inserted himself into those fantasies. Then the people he dreamed about were doing those incredible things to him. Of course he'd never actually had anyone give him a hand job or suck his dick, but he could imagine!

The first thing on his mind was Aiden sloppily eating the salad he'd gotten for lunch. The excessive ranch had spilled out from his lips as he talked. Henry imagined it was cum leaking out from the edges of Aiden's lips, his tongue stretching out to catch the bits that dripped out. It was enough to make his penis buck in his hand, but not quite enough to send him over the edge. He imagined Aiden's hand sneaking beneath the lunch table, fiddling with his junk in secret and masturbating himself thinking nobody could see.

As his friend continued stroking, his eyes fluttering in pleasure, Henry found the image of Aiden gradually shifting. His friend's pale blond hair was turning black, his body shifting from the short, stocky build of his friend, to the thin, lanky build of Keegan. Now it was Keegan's face twisted

in pleasure, his brother looking uncertain as the new and intense sensation washed over him.

Henry snapped himself out from his reverie and yanked his hand from his pajama bottoms. His dick yearned to be touched, and the dull ache of blue balls spread through his gut, but he tried to slow his breathing and heart rate and ignore his dick. He brushed the trail of precum stuck to his hand against the top of his blanket. He wasn't about to jack off to the image of his younger brother cumming, even if it had sent a thrill through Henry's entire body. It was wrong; he wouldn't do it!

Despite the urge rushing through him, Henry turned on his side and shoved his hands beneath his pillow while forcing himself to try and sleep.

The rain cleared out overnight, and when the sun's rays woke him the next morning, Henry was surprised he couldn't remember having any dreams. He half-expected to wake up near the cave with that same haunting voice pervading his nightmare. A quick check of his pajamas showed he didn't have a repeat wet dream either, despite pausing in the middle of his wank session. That being said, his typical morning wood was up to say hello, but he figured that had more to do with having to pee than anything.

Rolling out of bed, Henry stole a glance at his alarm to see that it was just past 7. Honestly, he still had plenty of time before he needed to get up for school. Maybe he'd get more sleep after using the bathroom. Henry shuffled over to his door before stepping into the hallway. It was quiet in the house, which was fine with him. He wasn't much of a talker right when he woke up.

The bathroom door was shut, and Henry was about to knock when the door opened, and his brother Keegan stepped out. They stared at each other for a brief moment before Keegan's eyes darted down to Henry's waist. Henry flushed in embarrassment when he saw how obvious his erection was against his pajama bottoms.

"Sorry," Henry said, "I just needed to use the bathroom."

"S'okay," Keegan said, tearing his eyes away from the bulge before not so casually placing his hands in front of his own pajamas.

Keegan left to his room to get ready for school while Henry stepped inside the bathroom. He had to fight against his boner and will it to go down before he could finally pee and get some relief. After what seemed like a solid minute, his erection wilted some, and he could comfortably finish taking care of business. After he was done, he figured he would get back into his bed, but when he opened the bedroom door, he was surprised to see his bed wasn't empty at all. Keegan was sitting on the edge and looked up at Henry sheepishly as he stepped in.

"Dude, get out," Henry said. "You have to get ready to go."

"I know," he said, "I will. It's just..."

"Just what?"

"I wanted to see if you could help me with something."

Henry sighed and walked over to his brother before joining him side by side on the edge of the bed. His brother, despite being lanky and tall, looked so fragile and withdrawn as he sat there. Henry couldn't help but want to protect him. He'd always been that way for his little brother—the person who watched out for him when no one else was around.

"Sure," Henry said. "Tell me what's up."

Keegan's hands covered his lap, and he shifted a bit on the covers. His younger brother refused to make eye contact. "So yesterday, something happened when we were watching TV."

Henry's eyes widened when he realized what his brother was about to share.

"Oh, yeah?" he said, feigning ignorance.

"This morning, I saw your thing sticking up, and mine's done it a lot more too, and at first I thought it was no big deal because it happens sometimes." His brother was talking in a rush now, something he did when he was nervous or uncertain of himself. "Anyway, it happened yesterday when we were watching Teen Titans, but this time something else happened, too. I tried to ignore it, but the more I did, the more it kept tingling, and then this feeling exploded out of my body. I thought I might

have peed at first, but nothing was wet, and it was the most awesomest feeling ever."

Henry couldn't help but smile at his brother's excitement. In some ways he was jealous. He had only discovered masturbation a few months ago. His brother now had a couple years of enjoyment on him. Plenty of time to fine tune the skill.

"Anyway, I didn't want you to think I was a baby, so I asked Dad about it last night, and he said I had orgasms, and that it was a part of growing up, and that it was something that could help my...penis from being hard all the time."

His brother's cheeks were tomato red as he finished talking, and Henry was willing to bet dollars to dicks that his own cheeks matched his brothers.

"I mean, Dad's right," Henry said. "It does help. I don't know why you're telling me though."

"It's just that...Dad didn't really mention how to make the orgasms thing happen again. And I know I've gotta go soon, but when I saw yours sticking up this morning, I..."

"You got hard?"

Keegan lifted his hands away from his lap, and Henry saw where his brother's pajama bottoms had scrunched up around his boner. He felt a stirring in his own groin as he drank in the sight of his brother's tiny erection poking up.

"Can you show me how to fix it? I don't want to have to go to the bus like this."

Keegan finally looked Henry in the face, and tears were brimming in his eyes.

"Look, Keegan," Henry said, "I don't think brothers are supposed to talk about this stuff together. I mean, you can always think of Gran or something. That can help it go away."

Keegan sniffed. "Dad said that too, but Gran, Papa, nothing's working. I even tried doing math in my head."

Henry scratched his head at the idea that his dad had suggested Keegan solve math problems as a cure for boners. Hmm...now that he thought about it, maybe his dad was on to something...

Henry was torn. Clearly his dad had been as unhelpful with Keegan as he was when Henry had his first wet dream. Tiptoeing around the truth had only left Keegan more confused than before. He guessed there was nothing too terrible about showing his brother the basics of jacking off. It was something all boys figured out eventually, and if it would help Keegan avoid an emotional meltdown before the school day, then that was a bonus.

Henry sighed. "Okay, look. I can show you what to do, but you have to swear, and I mean like double pinky swear on mom, dad, and anyone else you love to keep what I show you a secret."

Keegan's eyes perked up. "Yeah, of course! I double pinky swear. I TRIPLE pinky swear!"

Henry rolled his eyes but then stuck out his pinky to Keegan, who immediately locked his own around his brother's. With that done, Henry walked to his bedroom door and stuck his head out. His dad was already gone for the day, that much he knew, but he couldn't hear his mom yet. That either meant she was still asleep or perhaps in the shower. Either way, Henry didn't want to take any chances. He gently pushed his door shut and twisted the lock.

"What'd you do that for?" Keegan asked.

"Because what I'm going to show you is private and isn't something you do where others can see you. Especially not Mom."

"Oh, okay," he said, fixated on Henry like he was about to learn an important lesson. And he was, Henry thought. This would be an incredibly important life lesson.

"First thing you need to do is lower your pants and underwear. It's not something you have to do all the time, but we need to make sure you're doing it right."

Keegan faltered for a moment. "But you'll see my thing...hard."

Henry rolled his eyes again before leaning forward and shucking his pajama bottoms to the floor. As he stood back up, his penis stuck out all four inches, bobbing in time with his heartbeat. A bit of precum trickled at the tip and, Henry knew it wouldn't be long before he started leaking.

"You have hair!?" Keegan shouted.

"Ssh, you idiot," Henry said. "Be quiet so Mom doesn't hear. And yes, I have hair. You get it when you're older. I'll probably have a lot more in a few years. You will, too."

"Wow," his brother said. His eyes were as wide as saucers as he stared at Henry's dick.

Henry snapped his fingers twice. "Eyes up here."

"Why is it sad?"

"What?"

Keegan pointed at Henry's boner and the string of precum drooping from his dick. "Your thing, why is it sad? It looks like it's crying."

Henry slapped his forehead with the palm of his hand.

"Two things," he said, holding up his fingers as he went. "For one, stop calling it a thing. You know it's a penis, I know that. Call it that, or a boner, or a dick. You can call it a cock, too, but that's a pretty bad word so maybe don't go around saying that."

"Isn't dick a bad word?"

"Keegan."

"Sorry."

Henry sighed and continued. "Two, you know that babies come from their Moms. Well, to help make babies, guys put their sperm inside of her. That's part of what this is."

Henry reached down and scooped up the strand of precum that had nearly fallen off the tip of his dick and extended it toward his brother.

"That's not a baby, though," Keegan said.

"No, but it can help make one. Making a baby is supposed to feel really good, and for guys, we can practice feeling good before we meet a girl. Or a boy."

Keegan laughed. "Boys can't make babies with boys."

"No, but it can still feel really good, which is what I'm going to help teach you. Now, drop your pants, and do what I do."

Keegan looked down at the bulge his boner made in his pajamas before closing his eyes and lowering them down to his ankles. Like him, Keegan's penis was on the thin side, giving a three-inch salute as it aimed completely upward. His brother's pubic area was completely bare, his balls only slightly dropped as they rested in their sack.

Henry slowly wrapped his fingers around his boner, feeling the familiar gut-punch of pleasure that spread through him. His nerves must have been on high alert, because the combination of his hand with all the sexy talk with his brother was about to send him over the edge already.

"Now you want to make sure you have a good enough grip because you're going to move your hand up and down like this."

Henry demonstrated as his hand smeared in some of the precum along the head of his dick. His brother's hand was too big to wrap around his penis, so Henry told him to switch to his thumb and two fingers.

"Try to switch it up. You might be able to get a better grip. Once you start going at it, that feeling you had yesterday will start to build up."

"It feels fine, I guess," Keegan said, but Henry could tell his brother was just saying that to seem like he understood.

Henry reluctantly paused his own jerking. "It helps sometimes to think about sexy things."

"What do you think about?" his brother asked.

Henry paused. He wasn't sure this was the right time to explain how he wished he could do X, Y, and Z with his best friend. He doubted Keegan would make any comments about him being gay, but Henry didn't think his brother was ready to learn about the ins and outs of gay sex.

"You know, like people naked and stuff. Haven't you ever wondered what some of your classmates look like?"

Keegan's face turned scarlet, and he shrugged a shoulder as he looked away. "Yeah, I guess."

"Good, think about that, and then concentrate on those things while you're doing it."

This time, as Keegan tugged his boner in a two-finger grip, his eyes widened in realization.

"Oh, it's definitely working better now," he said with a grin.

Henry resumed his own stroking, not sure how much longer he could hold off. Ah, the hell with it. He was here to give his brother a lesson. If he was old enough to learn about cumming, then he could learn about cum too.

"Pretty soon you'll start getting that good feeling, and remember you aren't going to pee even if it feels like it. Older boys like me make more of that stuff you saw earlier though, so don't freak out."

His brother nodded and was staring down at the head of his dick as he kept cranking away. Henry's arousal got the best of him, and he felt that hidden space somewhere between his balls and crack give a spine-tingling throb. With a few final strokes, he stifled a groan as he felt his penis give way.

"Here it comes," he told his brother, as his first blast of cum shot on to the carpet floor. He'd come to spraying his brother's feet, and that thought sent out another quick spurt that fell much closer to his own toes. His orgasm finished with the rest of his cum dribbling out of him like normal.

"It's...I think it's, oh," his brother gasped. His head had rolled back, exposing his flushed neck, and then his brother started shaking in place before falling back on the bed. Keegan's hand fell away, and his little erection twitched as he took a few gasping breaths.

"I think you have it figured out now," Henry said as he wiped his hand against his leg.

"That is...the most amazing thing," Keegan said breathlessly. "Can I do that all the time?"

Henry shrugged. "For now anyway. Although like I said it's pretty private, so maybe wait to be alone before trying it again."

When Keegan got up from the bed, he did something that surprised Henry. He ran over and wrapped his arms around his brother in a hug. Despite the fact that they were both still naked from the waist down with drooping dicks nearly smushed against each other, Henry thought it was the most heart-warming thing his brother had done in a while.

"Thank you for showing me that. WAY more helpful than Dad was."

Henry hugged him back before ruffling his messy hair. "I know. Now go finish getting ready."

"You too, huh?" his mom said about an hour later when Henry was getting the last of his things ready for the school day. "You and Keegan both seem to be in a really good mood."

Henry laughed and shrugged. "Must be because it's Friday."

When he arrived at school, Henry was looking forward to seeing Aiden. His best friend and crush was usually there before him, waiting in the courtyard for Henry before they headed inside, but today he seemed to be running behind. Henry waited alone on one of the stone benches while other buses arrived and dumped off their students next to the car riders. He greeted a few of his other friends as they passed, but it wasn't long before most of the student body had shown.

Looking around, Henry noticed two people sitting across from him on the stone benches. One was a blonde girl from his science class he'd never spoken to before but knew to be Lexie. She was one of those casually popular types, making friends in whatever social circle she found herself in. The boy beside her Henry didn't recognize, but he was pretty adorable with his gelled brown hair swooped to one side. His eyes were a lovely shade of brown that reminded Henry of warm chocolate.

As puberty grabbed Henry in its clutches more and more, he'd lately found himself wondering about the sexual development of his peers around him. He'd stolen quick glances at a few of his classmates in the gym's changing rooms before they wrapped themselves in towels and hit the showers. He

found it fascinating how different each person in his seventh grade class could be. Some had pubic regions that were completely bare, while others already had thick nests of hair. Most were somewhere in between like him. He knew their dick sizes varied as well, some growers and others showers. Every week since the start of the school year it seemed at least one boy boned up in the locker rooms or showers. Most of the times, Henry had to turn away since he knew he'd spring up in a matter of seconds if he kept staring.

Even though he'd cummed only a couple hours before, Henry felt the blooming feeling of arousal spread through his chest as he wondered about the cute boy sitting across from him. More interestingly, the moment that had begun to happen, Henry noticed the boy had stopped smiling and chatting so freely and started to fidget a bit on the bench.

Henry's mind flashed to the events with his brother the day before, remembering the spontaneous orgasm that had happened just as he'd been about to have his own. Keegan, too, had been restless moments before he'd cum. The faint voice from the cave whispered across his consciousness about the gift once again. It was impossible, it was stupid, but what if...

Once again Henry focused on his arousal and ignored his hardening dick. His jeans were loose enough that he wasn't in immediate discomfort. As he placed his attention on the cute boy sitting across from him, the kid continued to fidget while he talked to Lexie. Eventually the boy placed his book bag in his lap and leaned against it. Henry's mind drifted to the mutual jerk session he shared with Keegan this morning, seeing his brother grip his little boner while he got lost in the delicious sensations.

Across from him, the boy lowered his head on his book bag, but before Henry could tease his thoughts any further, the morning bell blared above their heads, interrupting his thoughts. Immediately the boy snapped his head forward, and Lexie stood, oblivious to her friend's condition as he remained crouched over his backpack. When he finally stood, a small, dark spot spread out from the telltale sign of where his boner pressed against his khaki shorts.

Henry made eye contact with the boy who blushed hard before turning away and hunching over while he caught up with Lexie.

Holy shit, Henry thought, breaking out of his own state of arousal as he felt his dick soften. Of course it could have just been coincidence again. Boys got unwanted erections pretty much every day. Hell, they happened to him all the freakin' time. Henry couldn't help but get the feeling that somehow, in some way, he was connecting himself to the people around him.

There was one way to find out for sure. He had several classes throughout the day where he could test his theory. If it failed, then no skin off his bones, he figured it would be a nice way to pass the time. But if it was real, if he really could affect people's horniness somehow, then middle school was about to get a whole lot more interesting...

Chapter 3

Okay, so math class was still boring as hell. In fact, Henry had been struggled so much during the lesson that he'd nearly forgotten about the incident outside with the cute preteen boy. The potential power to give people boners and make them cum was cool, but nothing killed a boner more to Henry than math. $A + B$ did not equal sexy time.

After giving up hope of ever learning algebra before he was feeble-minded, Henry made his way to his reading class, something he was actually good at. Not only that, but they were still in the middle of giving their projects. Normally, Henry would've thought this the worst, but now he figured it was the perfect time to test his new theory.

He sat in one of the back rows as his classmates filled in around him. After Ms. Jackson finished with roll call, Henry stole a quick glance around the room. About half of the class were boys, but not all of them were what Henry would call attractive. Some were a bit overweight, some just had uninteresting faces, and others were spotted with bad bouts of acne, but there were a few standouts, Asher and Max among the top of his mental list. He'd already spent a number of nights pounding his meat at the thought of these boys, Asher in his soccer uniform, all hot and sweaty after an intense practice; Max, stripped down to his underwear as he teased himself to a shuddering, blissful cum, his angelic face rolling in bliss. Both were sexy in their own ways.

If he really had the ability to affect peoples' arousal, Henry had every intention of seeing just how far he could push these two.

"Remember," Ms. Jackson called out to the class, "we are respectful while people are sharing. You will lose points from your grade if this becomes a problem."

"Yes, Ms. Jackson," the class halfheartedly answered.

"Myra, come on up, dear," Ms. Jackson said.

As Myra went to the large flat screen at the front of the class to present her project, Henry tried to remember all the similarities between what happened between Keegan and the boy from outside. It seemed like the effects began each time Henry was turned on in some way. That was easy enough to do. Even a gentle touch, whether sexual or not, was enough to chub him up sometimes.

Henry leaned over his desk and trailed his fingers lightly across his nipples through his shirt. Within seconds, the little nub stiffened and pressed back against him, and Henry's dick soon twitched to life.

At his house, he hadn't intentionally been focusing on Keegan the first time, so maybe the feeling had naturally bled out of him. This morning, however, he knew he'd been targeting the boy outside. Maybe the same would happen if he focused on one of his classmates.

Two rows ahead of him was gorgeous Max Stanfield, a boy he had zero trouble fantasizing about at home. It was simple enough for Henry to maintain eye contact without being too obvious since most people were looking at Myra. In his mind, Henry imagined Max's blue eyes and freckled face. Having spent every day of the school year in class together, Henry knew Max's voice hadn't yet broken. He'd be shocked if Max had any pubes at all, or if he did, there couldn't have been much, similar to his own. Henry felt his arousal increase and directed those thoughts toward his classmate.

Almost immediately, Henry noticed a flush creep onto Max's face as his hands shifted toward his pockets. As Max reached inside to adjust himself, Henry thought it incredibly obvious what he was doing. Thankfully for the two of them, no one seemed to pay any attention. Myra rambled on about Hatchet as Max fiddled with himself, independent of any encouragement from Henry, but he couldn't say he was disappointed to see the cute, horny boy touching himself, even if clothed. That thought gave him a different idea, however.

Henry concentrated on Max again and willed the boy to snap his fingers. Nothing. Hmm...maybe if he added something dirty to his thoughts.

He tried again while imagining Max resting on his knees while giving Henry a blowjob, and still nothing. Maybe the ability didn't involve any kind of

mind control, but it was clear Henry was having some kind of effect on the preteen ahead of him. Inside his pants, precum leaked through his dick, and Henry hoped he wouldn't stain through his clothes.

As Myra finished her project, the class politely clapped as she sat back down. Ms. Jackson looked at her clipboard before saying, "Max, you're up."

The boy's shocked expression told Henry everything he needed to know. It was the dreaded feeling every boy faced when dealing with a hard-on at the worst possible time. His hands were still stuffed in his shorts pockets.

The boy's treble voice asked, "Could I actually go after a few more people?"

"What?" Ms. Jackson asked. "There's no need to be nervous. Everybody's got to share eventually."

"It's just..." He faltered for a moment. "I've got a really bad stomach ache, and I was hoping to use the bathroom first."

Ms. Jackson sighed. "Fine, go on. You'll present when you're back."

Max stood up to leave, but before Henry could seal the deal, Ms. Jackson surprised him by calling up Asher instead.

The soccer player stepped confidently to the front of the room. Asher was someone he had seen naked on the way to the gym showers, and even though the glances had been brief, Asher was smokin' hot. He was tall, lean, and had the perfect amount of bulk to Henry. He had the type of haircut that was shaved on the edges but kept a little long on top. He also seemed to be a little further into puberty than Henry would have guessed, with a small stripe of pubes above his dick. Asher's voice was like his own, definitely starting to drop, but it still carried a husky tone that made Henry's heart flutter. Asher's skin was beautifully sun-kissed as well, and he had an effortless tan that only stopped at his groin before running down his smooth, bronze legs. Henry would have done anything to spend time alone with this Adonis of a boy, but this might be just as good.

Asher started talking to the class about his project on Maniac Magee while Henry fixed his thoughts on his own arousal. He chanced a hand down between his legs and gave himself a soft squeeze, hoping nobody would

notice. His eyes rolled as he steeled up inside his pants again, directing those thoughts toward the dream of a boy at the front of the class.

Asher paused mid-sentence and briefly cast his eyes down as a bulge began to take shape. His penis must have already been pointed at an angle, because as Asher continued to lengthen, his erection stretched diagonally in his jeans, at least four-and-a-half inches, Henry guessed. It looked thicker than expected, too. Henry thought he heard a snicker from a boy somewhere behind him, but a quick, terse cough from Ms. Jackson silenced him. At the front of the class, Asher tried to pivot his body away from their view.

Henry felt like he'd been close with Max, but now it was time to see how far he could push someone. Asher started speaking faster as his discomfort grew, and Henry let his thoughts trail to the boy god's naked torso. He imagined Asher having just the tiniest tufts of armpit hair and imagined what it would be like to stick his nose in there, to take a sniff before running his tongue along Asher's chest and teasing the boy's nipples.

A painful swelling grew in Henry's dick. He would need to get relief soon if he didn't hurry this along.

Asher started to breathe heavily as he spoke, and Henry knew he was so close. Just another little push. In his mind, he grabbed Asher on either side of his face before smashing his lips against the boy's, sliding his tongue between his lips to meet Asher's own. Frenching was something he had fantasized about often, and it seemed the mental kiss was enough to push Asher over the edge.

The preteen's eyes fluttered closed, and he gasped as he shook in place. Henry watched as the obvious bulge pressing against Asher's pants began to twitch.

The class stared on in shock, some realizing right away what happened, while others looked on in concern and confusion.

"Are you alright?" Ms. Jackson asked, her cheeks tinged through her makeup.

"I...I made a mess," Asher confessed. He reached down and pressed a palm against the front of his pants, shuddering again as he did so. When he pulled away, there was a growing wet spot spreading against the front.

Ms. Jackson stammered a few times before clearing her throat. "It's perfectly alright. It's a natural reaction. Just excuse yourself to the bathroom, and clean yourself up."

Henry couldn't believe it. He'd nearly creamed his own pants just watching the ordeal take place. If he had any doubts before, they were 100%, absolutely gone. He really could turn people on enough to make them cum, but how? He pinched himself on the arm to make sure he wasn't somehow dreaming. If this was real, did that mean the voice from his dream was somehow real? What was going on?

By the time Max came back in, he ducked his reddened cheeks down as he headed back to his desk. It was clear he'd crossed Asher's path in the hallway. Henry could only imagine what Max thought after seeing the wetness on Asher's pants. The rest of the class passed by in awkward silence, save for the few presenters left to go. When Asher returned nearly forty minutes later in a different set of jeans, Henry guessed he had to call and wait on one of his family members to bail him out. He ended up giving the class a guilty smile and a half shrug, which Henry was certain only raised Asher's cool factor by 100.

Later when Henry walked into the lunch room, he was surprised to see his friend Aiden had shown up to school after all. He was already seated next to their buddy Cody. Although Aiden was in a different set of classes than Henry, it was clear that word had spread about Asher's accident.

"Sorry I missed you earlier," Aiden said, "Dentist appointment. Is it true Asher straight up jizzed his pants?"

Henry nodded, feeling a bit of the same naughtiness from earlier creep into him.

"I would die if that ever happened to me," Cody said.

"Are you kidding?" Aiden asked. "He got to cum in school and didn't get in trouble! I bet he thought it was great."

"I heard he ran out of the classroom in tears," Cody said.

"Not true," Henry said and explained what happened to Asher, minus all the sex urges he'd directed Asher's way.

After he'd finished explaining, Aiden had a smirk on his face. "I'll tell you what, all this talk has me boned up for sure."

"Dude! TMI," Cody said in mock disgust, but he briefly shifted his eyes to Aiden's crotch.

Henry could tell by the way Cody reacted that he might have been horny as well. It occurred to Henry that he might have unintentionally affected his two friends with his arousal when going through the details. He'd have to be careful if that was the case.

"What?" Aiden protested. "Don't lie and say you don't want to spank it after hearing that story."

Cody said nothing but was instead very interested in stuffing his face with his burger and not adding to the conversation.

"It was hard not to," Henry confessed. "After Asher came, I think every boy in there who knows about jacking off needed to take care of things."

"Who doesn't know about jacking off?" Aiden blurted loud enough to draw a few glances his way.

"Can we stop talking about this?" Cody said through a mouth full of burger. "It's ruining my appetite."

"Clearly," Aiden said.

Henry laughed, and pretty soon the lunch period had ended. Henry found he didn't have much of a chance to test any more of his power during the day, and before he knew it, he was back on the bus, taking his usual seat at the window halfway back. He wondered if he might even be able to use his power on some of the cute boys there, but it was tough to concentrate with all the commotion and the bumpy ride back. Instead, Henry resigned himself to listening to his music until the bus squealed to a stop on his street.

When Henry got home, he came into the house to hear the familiar sound of the television. It was blaring a little louder than usual, so after dropping off his book bag, Henry went to go admonish his younger brother. In the living room, a blanket was thrown over Keegan's midsection as his hand bopped up and down beneath the blanket. Keegan stared at the TV, his face a concentrated mix of pain and pleasure.

"You keep cranking it like that, and you'll rip it off," Henry joked.

Keegan jumped in surprise, snatching his hand out from underneath the blanket. Keegan's little boner still made a tent against the cloth material. When Keegan saw it was Henry, he relaxed and gave a nervous laugh.

"You said make sure I do it in private, right?"

"You're right," Henry said. "I'll give you some space." He was about to step away when a thought entered his mind. "How long have you been jacking off?"

"Pretty much right after I got home. I'm getting MUCH better at orgasms." Keegan wiggled his eyebrows at Henry, who laughed at his brother's cute dorkiness.

"Just be sure to give it a rest from time to time. And keep an eye on the clock!"

"Kay," his brother called back, already slipping his hand back beneath the blanket, and Henry retreated to his room.

Ahh, the weekend, Henry thought. There was nothing like two whole days off from the slave institution of school. With the weather outside being so nice, Henry considered going to the swimming hole out in the woods over the weekend. He hadn't decided whether he might go alone or take Keegan with him. If he took his brother, he'd end up having to play babysitter rather than enjoy his time there. Maybe he could sneak away without Keegan even realizing he was gone. Henry had a feeling his brother would have enough fun playing with himself for the foreseeable future.

That night, Henry once again had a dreamless sleep. He still couldn't shake the feeling he was being watched, but anytime he glanced out the window, nothing would ever be there. He knew he must be imagining things, but

then again, something had awakened this power within him. Henry had started cooking up some shenanigans he might be able to pull off. He was only partly concerned by the possible ethics of what he was doing. If he wasn't really hurting anybody or making them do anything against their will, then what was the big deal?

Misty Pines was filled with a plethora of hot boys, and even though most of them had to be straight, his ability would give him the chance to at least continue fueling his own fantasies for months, if not years to come.

Saturday morning rolled around, and the day promised to be a scorcher. A trickle of sweat ran down Henry's neck as he took out the trash to the can at the end of their driveway. A couple of the neighborhood kids rode past on their bikes, shirtless and in their bathing suits, presumably on their way to the swimming hole. That settled it. He had to get down there.

On his way back in, Henry found his mom working on her laptop at the island in the kitchen. His dad was busy mowing the grass in the backyard as a bit of grass and gravel sprayed against the side of the house.

"Mom, is Keegan around?"

She shrugged. "I think he's been in his room most of the morning. Why, you need him?"

"Not really," he said. "I was just hoping to go swimming."

"It is hot," she said and cast a glance out the backdoor window to where his dad was. "You'll be back when?"

"Uhh...I don't know," he answered honestly.

"I don't want you getting burned. At least grab some sunscreen before you go. A few hours at most, okay?"

"Okay, got it." He had already started to walk away when she called him back.

"And Henry?"

"I know, Mom," he said. "Don't wander off alone."

After putting on his swimsuit, Henry found his dad in the backyard and told him where he was going. He unlocked the gate at the fence, grabbed his bike from the side of the house, and pedaled out towards the swimming hole. The local spot was a hub for all kids in the area, not just the ones from his neighborhood. Some went to his middle school, but there were just as many elementary kids or even high schoolers, although they seemed drop off the older they got. Henry couldn't remember the last time he'd seen a senior show up at the swimming hole. He knew that's what happened when you got older, though. Little kid stuff was in the past, and you moved on to more mature activities. What those mature activities were, Henry couldn't say, but like all mysteries of life, they were sure to be revealed one day.

When he reached the familiar dead-end side street, Henry pulled the bike off the curb and continued pedaling through the tire-tracked mud leading into the woods. The shade loomed over him, offering a slight reprieve from the sun as Henry led his bike along the familiar path down to the swimming hole. The joyous sounds of squealing and laughter and party music blared from several Bluetooth speakers as Henry broke through the treeline.

Although referred to as the swimming hole, in truth, it was more like a miniature rock quarry, surrounded on several sides by jutting slabs of stone where people jumped from different heights. Henry propped his bike against a tree at the top of the hill and walked down to the gritty sand beach. Up on the diving rock, a string of boys and girls waited their turn to leap into the waters. A few others waded in the lake, splashing each other or talking while they drifted along. And then there were the handful of early high school girls in their skimpy bathing suits, stretched out on their towels while soaking in the sun. More than a few boys perved on their barely covered breasts and tanned thighs.

Henry was ready to leap into the water when he locked eyes with a shirtless boy further down the quarry. Standing by himself, the boy gave him a charming smile before waving at Henry and walking over. The kid wore a pair of dark, navy blue swim trunks which contrasted against his milky, pale skin. Henry thought this boy must get sunburned like crazy.

"Hey," the kid greeted him. "I'm new around here. You hanging out with anyone?"

I am now, he thought. Henry was immediately smitten with how the sun highlighted the boy's blue eyes. His dirty blonde hair was stylishly messy, and he swept it over to one side using his fingers as a comb.

"Uh, umm, yes," Henry stammered and cleared his throat. "Actually, no. I'm here by myself. I'm Henry."

"Aleks," the boy said, "with a k."

"Dude, that's so," Henry said and shook his head, annoyed at his loss for words.

"Lame?" he offered.

"What!? No! I was gonna say cool."

The pale boy shrugged once but smiled. "I've gotten used to it. I like the name Henry. Its nice to say."

Standing about half a foot shorter than Henry, the boy posed with his hands on his hips, giving Henry the opportunity to check him out in full. He lacked a defined chest or any noticeable abs, but he wasn't skinny to the point of being all ribs. Despite his lack of muscles, Aleks presented himself with utter confidence. Henry sensed his penis was about to betray him and chub up. He gestured to the lake as one of the older boys performed a can-opener splash in the water.

"Do you, uhh, want to go swim?" Henry asked. "With me?"

"I thought you'd never ask. I'm burning up out here!"

His new friend sprinted off toward the murky lake waters, and after ditching his t-shirt on the sand by his feet, Henry followed after Aleks.

The two boys waded through the water, splashing each other as they swam to the base of the diving rock. They pulled themselves out of the lake and waited at the back of the line for their turn to jump, cheering for the people who made the most impressive jumps. When they reached the

front, the two boys stuck their heads over the twenty-foot plunge, and Henry's palms grew clammy as the drop loomed before him.

"It's uhh, a little higher than it looks," Aleks said. Even his new friend had goosebumps on his arms.

"You've done this before, right?" Henry asked, raising an eyebrow toward the gorgeous boy beside him.

"Yeah, duh, of course I have," Aleks said, but Henry noticed the way Aleks cradled his arms across his chest.

"Well..." Henry started, "I've always heard that jumping with someone at the same time is way more fun."

Behind them, a boy from his gym class shouted, "Let's move it, Tucker, before we're all grandparents here!"

"Can it, Charlie!" Henry shot back. To Aleks, Henry asked, "Well, how about it? Jump at the same time?"

"I guess that'd be alright."

"On three?"

Aleks paled as he peered over the water's edge, but he gave a wobbly smile and nodded.

"One," Henry said.

In a shaky breath, Aleks said, "Two."

"Three!" they both shouted together and leapt forward into the sunlight.

The world slowed around Henry as he flew through the air. He caught a glimpse of Aleks in free fall behind him, sporting a gleefully terrified face. He had just enough time to squeeze his nose shut and close his eyes before crashing into the dark water below. The shock against his skin nearly took Henry's breath away as he sank. A heartbeat later, another body entered the water beside him in a muffled whoosh before Aleks's arm flailed against Henry's side. Aleks bumped him again as he tried to reorient himself, and Henry felt the boy take his hand in his own, interlacing their fingers together.

Despite the chill, Henry's heart did a few loop-de-loops, and his penis sprang from 0 to 60 in under three seconds. When they broke the surface of the water, Aleks released Henry's hand and sputtered out some of the lake water before giving him a sheepish smile.

"Confession time," Aleks said as he wiped the water from his eyes. "That might have been my first time jumping."

"Duh, you think?" Henry jested, and they both cracked up. Even Alek's laugh was soft bells ringing in Henry's ears.

Aleks dove forward and started wrestling Henry, who grabbed the boy by the wrists as they tugged and flopped around in the water. Henry tried to will his erection away, but the cold water had no effect. He didn't want to have an embarrassing brush up with his new friend and have him think he was a pervert. Actually, he didn't mind the first part, but Henry didn't want it to come across the wrong way. Instead, he thought it would be better to excuse himself for a few minutes and relieve himself privately instead.

"Hey, uhh, I'll be right back," Henry said. He reached down to angle himself upward in his swimming trunks and hoped they wouldn't stick out too much.

"You taking a piss? I could go, too."

"No, no," Henry said quickly. "Not exactly. It's fine, I'll be back in like five minutes."

"Okay..." Aleks said, shrugging as he floated in the water as Henry departed for the shore.

There was a secluded spot off the main trail where Henry had spent plenty of private time in the past. A few dead twigs snapped under his bare feet as he climbed the bank away from the swimming hole. Over the hill, the ground became layered with thick moss, and the gritty soil gave way to smooth rock bed. His feet thanked him as he walked across the smooth ground.

Two minutes later, he reached the familiar stone ledge. From his vantage point, he'd have plenty of warning should anyone unwelcome wander along. Reaching inside his trunks, Henry grabbed his erection in his fist and

nearly groaned out loud when something or someone shuffled underneath the rock ledge where he stood. His heart hammered in his chest as he let go of his dick, worried that someone was watching him. Henry dropped to his knees and crept towards the edge of the drop off. Chancing a peek over the top, his jaw dropped wide open.

Scotched back against the stone wall with his legs spread open was an eighth grader he recognized from the school's basketball team. Jake Anderson had short, curly red hair both on top and below, with a thick-looking dick curving upward at least five-and-a-half inches and a heavy ball sack that hung much lower than Henry's. The freckles that littered his face also covered his arms and chest, sweeping down to the top of his coppery pubic patch. His swimsuit lay to the side as Jake squeezed the cock in his hand. The head was already an angry purple, but Henry wasn't sure if that was because of Jake's skin tone or his horniness.

In his free hand, Jake scrolled through pictures of naked women as he steadily pumped his cock. Henry never saw the appeal. There was a time when he tried looking at different breasts and pussies, but nothing ever did it for him—there was nothing mysterious about a girl's vagina or boobs to him...they were just there. Plain. Henry decided dicks were just way more interesting to him.

Jake switched apps to the familiar yellow bell of Snapchat, while Henry stuck his hand past the waistband of his swim trunks to grab his cock. Even though his dick was nowhere near as big as Jake's, he didn't care as desire flooded his body, and he shuddered. God, he needed to cum so bad. Regular porn had nothing on the hot teen wanking in front of him.

Jake started making a video to one of his contacts as he stroked up and down his long cock, twisting his palm over the top to rub in whatever precum was there before working his way back down. Memo to me, Henry thought, try that out later. Feeling safe in the seclusion of the forest, Jake let out a long groan as he continued filming.

Henry wanted desperately to see Jake cum. He was certain the older boy's cum would be that thicker, pearly white he'd seen in porn videos. He'd never had the chance to see it in real life, and he was finally about to. He

wondered whether Jake was more of a shooter or dribbler, and he nearly burst out laughing at the unintended basketball pun.

A soft crackle behind Henry made his insides crawl.

"What're you doing?"

Aleks was there, his eyebrow raised with his hands on his hips. A teal, sleeveless t-shirt hugged his damp torso.

Henry cocked his head forward and raised a finger to his lips as Aleks slid in beside him. The small boy peered over the ledge.

"Oh," he whispered knowingly, "He's masturbating."

Well la-di-fucking-da, Henry thought.

"I didn't think you knew what it was," Henry whispered back.

Aleks rested a hand on Henry's shoulder, who had to force himself to break eye contact below. Henry raised an eyebrow in confusion.

"We should go," Aleks said, holding Henry's gaze. "It's private."

The sounds of sex from Jake were unmistakable in the quiet of the woods. The two could clearly make out Jake's pants and groans. Despite wanting to see the older boy finish, Henry felt a flicker of guilt run through him. Aleks was right. Stumbling upon Jake in the woods might have been an accident, but that didn't mean Henry had to stick around. Wouldn't Henry want the same courtesy if he thought he was alone?

"Come with me?" Aleks asked, and without waiting for Henry's response he crawled quietly away.

Henry followed and watched how Aleks's swim trunks clung to his ass as he moved along. This was doing nothing for his boner.

After they'd gotten back to the part of the woods with fallen leaves and branches, Henry cleared his throat to speak.

"Just so you know, I wasn't trying to spy on him. I guess I just got caught up in it."

Aleks looked back with what Henry could only describe as an understanding and sympathetic smile. "I know."

Amazingly, whether from the embarrassment of getting caught or feeling guilty, Henry's dick softened. He wasn't even concerned that Aleks might have noticed him being hard until long after the fact.

When they returned to the swimming hole, some of the kids from before had left, while others had filled in. Henry noticed Molly, the presumed school slut, laying across her towel as she made sure to stick her bikini-covered ass out a little extra for all the boys around her to suffer through. Henry and Aleks spent time together diving into the waters while applauding some of the more daring and advanced divers who leapt like madmen off the edge. It was there that Henry learned how Aleks was new to the area, having only recently enrolled in one of the 6th grade classes at Misty Pines Middle. Henry promised he would introduce Aleks to his friend Aiden on Monday, as well as a few others he thought were fun to hang around.

While waiting their turn for the next jump, Jake emerged from the woods. There was no denying the lopsided smile plastered on the copper-haired boy's face or the way the front of his shorts ballooned out. Aleks shot Henry a knowing smile before diving off the rock with a yelp.

This boy, Henry thought. The day wasn't even over, and already he had Henry in his clutches. Before then, Henry would have never passed on the opportunity to watch someone like Jake cum. Better yet, it hadn't even occurred to Henry to use his new abilities on the eighth grader. He probably could have forced Jake to jizz right away, but he guessed that would have sapped some of the fun from it. As he stared at the top of Aleks's blonde head below him, Henry couldn't help but acknowledge the fuzzy feeling blooming in his chest. Even if Aleks didn't turn out to be gay—and Henry genuinely believed Aleks might be—then this was still a pretty amazing day in his life.

Chapter 4

The day was one of the best Henry could remember having in a long time. On top of staying cool from the heat at the swimming hole, Henry had met Aleks, a boy who'd taken him so completely by surprise that he remained in Henry's thoughts long after they'd split and returned to their own homes.

When Henry asked if Aleks wanted to spend the night, he shook his head and said he already had plans early the next day. He promised instead to find Henry first thing at school on Monday. How strange that he'd never noticed Aleks in the hallways or school courtyard before, Henry thought, but then again, 7th graders didn't really pay much attention to 6th graders. They were in a totally different social class altogether.

As soon as Henry made it home, he checked in with his parents before rushing off to the bathroom and dropping his pants. He thought back to when Aleks took his hand underwater after their first jump together. It was his first real piece of intimacy with a boy, not just another fantasy he'd cooked up in his mind. Aleks's smooth skin against his own had been like a jolt of electricity, and even now Henry's penis lifted from his balls and pulsed straight out in front of him.

He grabbed his erection and gave it a few slow tugs as he appreciated the tingling in his balls and lower stomach. Part of him wished he had the chance to cum earlier while watching Jake beat his meat, but he knew Aleks was right to pull him away. Friends looked out for each other, even if they had only just met.

Henry fixed his imagination on Aleks's torso and bare armpits, envisioning the boy's wavy blond hair and charming smile as he began stroking his dick. He stuck a finger in his mouth to wet it before reaching beneath his shirt and gently teasing his nipple. It hardened beneath his touch and made him shiver.

Outside of the bathroom, Henry heard a bedroom door shut, and soon after the jiggling of the bathroom door handle.

An urgent banging came from outside the door.

"I'm in here," Henry called out.

"I gotta go! Real bad!"

Henry rolled his eyes at Keegan though he knew he couldn't see. He was probably in the middle of some stupid game of his and waited until the last minute to use the bathroom.

"Well, go use mom and dad's bathroom," Henry shouted. "I'm busy!"

His brother's footsteps faded away as he ran to the other end of the house, and Henry reunited his penis with the palm of his hand. He stuck his finger back into his mouth, this time teasing it back and forth in smooth, slow motions as he wrapped his tongue around the digit, imagining what Aleks might look like naked.

He assumed the boy would be cut like most of the boys he'd seen in the gym showers, but there was always the chance that Aleks still had his foreskin. Henry hoped so. Maybe Aleks's family were from a different country because of the unusual spelling of his name. He remembered hearing how European boys were more likely to be uncircumcised. The fantasy of his new friend hard, with his possible foreskin peeling back and forth over his mushroom head made Henry groan.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Come on, Henry! Dad's shaving or something stupid like that."

"No, I said go. I'm pooping!"

There was a pause before Keegan dropped his voice and said, "I heard you a second ago. You're trying to get the feeling, aren't you? I don't care, I just need to pee, or I'm going to pee my pants, and it'll be your fault!"

Henry growled in frustration as he stood from his seat and twisted the lock on the door. He was reaching down to pull his pants up when Keegan busted into the bathroom. There was a brief moment when his little brother paused to eye the head of Henry's bobbing, dripping dick sticking straight out, but he moved to the toilet before lowering the front of his

pants and hosing the inside of the bowl with an admittedly powerful stream of pee.

As his brother finished, Keegan's penis begin to inflate as he shook himself dry. The tip looked a little red like he'd been assaulting his dick most of the day, which was probably true, Henry thought. When he first discovered masturbation a few months back, nothing stopped Henry from taking every free chance he got to chase after the sensation of cumming. Even after growing soft because he could squirt, his dick was constantly vying for his attention.

Henry coughed as his brother was about to snap his pants up.

"Erm...maybe you should try spit."

Keegan looked at Henry like he was insane. "You want me to spit in the toilet bowl?"

"What? No, you idiot. Your dick is red from all the jacking off you've been doing. You should use spit so it doesn't chafe. It's kind of like the precum I make."

Keegan's eyes dropped to Henry's penis head again as he squinted. "So what does that stuff even feel like anyway?"

Henry's cheeks flushed in embarrassment. "I don't know, slimy, I guess. Kind of sticky."

He jumped backward as Keegan reached out a finger towards his dick.

"Hey, hey, hey. What're you doing?"

"Seeing what it feels like," Keegan answered like it was obvious. "How else am I supposed to know?"

He smacked his brother's hand away. "You don't just go around touching people's dicks. You have to ask permission. Even if it's your brother. Here."

Henry dragged his finger along the end of his dick to scoop some of the precum off before extending it to Keegan. The strand pulled from his fingertip about half an inch before Keegan reached with his index finger to catch it. He rolled it around between his thumb and index finger before a look of realization struck him. Keegan's penis was now its full three inches

as he spread the little bit of precum around the head of his dick. His brother shuddered in place as he did so.

"Can I finish now?" Henry asked in a bit of a whine. Being denied cumming twice already today on top of seeing his brother make himself feel good was giving him a serious case of blue balls.

"I wanna watch you make sperm again," Keegan said, grinning as he sat back down on the toilet seat.

"No, dude, what if mom and dad hear?"

Keegan shrugged before spitting in the palm of his hand. He cupped the spit before wrapping it around his tiny erection. Squelching sounds filled the bathroom, only drowned out by Keegan's high-pitched whine as his hand slid up and down.

"Oh, yeah..." his brother sighed as his eyes fluttered shut. "This is better."

Oh, fuck it, Henry thought before spitting in his own hand and adding to the wet sex sounds in the air. He'd already been close to the edge before, and within a few seconds, Henry felt like a hammer was thumping him between his balls and anus.

"Oh god," he whispered as his dick bucked in his hands. His eyes grew wide as his first blast of cum shot out across the bathroom and hit the floor with a plop. Henry couldn't ever remember reaching that kind of distance. It probably had a lot to do with the buildup throughout the day. His second burst reached half as far, and the rest smeared along his cummy hand as he continued stroking. Keegan watched him cum with laser focus before doubling down on his own dick.

"I can feel it...so good," Keegan panted before lifting his ass off the toilet seat and removing his hand. His penis, shiny with spit, was twitching rapidly against his groin as he came down from his orgasm. With a final shiver, Keegan dropped back on the toilet seat and blew out the air he'd been holding.

"Oh my god, it's literally the best feeling ever," Keegan said before pulling up his pants. "Thanks for letting me see your sperm again. I can't wait to make it one day."

Henry broke off a few pieces of toilet paper before wiping away the clear goo from the bathroom floor. He didn't need his mom or dad questioning the droplets if they discovered them later on.

"It's fine. Just don't make watching me a habit," Henry said before flushing the toilet paper down the drain along with Keegan's pee.

The rest of the afternoon passed without incident. Henry got roped into helping with the dishes while his mom prepared supper. The smell of sauteed onions filled the kitchen as his mom padded out burger meat for the stove pan. Henry scrubbed the set of dirty plates sitting in the soapy sink water while telling his mom about Aleks and the time they'd spent at the swimming hole.

"He seems like a nice boy," his mother agreed.

"Do you think he could come over some time?"

"Yeah, I don't see why not. I'm sure we can work something out with his family when it's time."

After finishing dinner, they all sat down together to play a few rounds of Phase 10. Despite his best efforts, Henry started to fall behind after a few rounds while Keegan shot ahead. His dad, too, was also doing increasingly worse, but unlike Henry, he was an enormous sore loser.

"I swear to god, I will flip this entire table," his dad said.

"You will do no such thing," his mom answered calmly and raised an eyebrow. "Simon."

"What? I was kidding! Can't a man tell a joke?"

Two turns later, Keegan made his big play. He drew his card before laying down seven cards of the same color. Smiling angelically up at his father, he then played out the rest of his cards before discarding his last and ending the round once again.

"I'm disowning you!" His dad slammed the table with the palm of his hand before storming off to the kitchen fridge for a drink.

"It's your deal," his mom shouted back.

They never finished the game.

That night, Henry was drained from the events of the day and passed out moments after his head hit the pillow.

Keegan was, in fact, not disowned, and Sunday morning soon graced the household with the smell of warm pancakes. Henry stretched in his bed and peered out his window. It was another overcast day, and a low fog hovered over the grass. Most of the morning was spent with Henry helping his dad complete chores around the house and the yard while his mom took Keegan to run some errands and shop for groceries.

His dad was quiet as they spread mulch together around the garden beds. Henry figured he was having a pity party from last night's Phase 10 game, but once they'd emptied the first bag, his dad kept shooting him glances and looking away when Henry would make eye contact.

It wasn't until they paused to grab some lemonade from inside that his dad spoke up.

"So, uhh, your classes going alright so far?"

"Yes?"

"Math still giving you trouble?"

"A little," Henry answered. "A lot. What is this?"

"What is what?"

"This conversation. You're being weird."

His dad walked over to one of the patio chairs and turned it outward before dragging a second one nearby. He patted the seat and called Henry to sit with him.

"Son, I think it's time you and I had another talk, you know...man to man."

Henry's cheeks burned red. "You mean, like a sex talk? Now?"

His dad shrugged and seemed very interested in one of the small weeds growing between a crack in the patio.

"It's just, you and your brother are getting older. I know we had the talk about wet dreams a few months back, but I figured it was time to really get into it. You know, talk about your body's changes, things you might be feeling, how to deal with those feelings—"

"Dad, I know about puberty and sex already."

His dad gulped down his glass of lemonade.

"Mhmm. Right, well, that's great to hear, of course. It's just that I wanted to make sure you didn't have any questions. Soon you'll be interested in girls, and I didn't want you to think you couldn't ask your old man about anything."

It was Henry's turn to look away. He scraped the patio with the sole of his shoe as his dad talked.

"I may not look it much now," his dad went on, "but before your mother, hooooo boy, was I in the game. Never had much of a relationship with my father about these kinds of things, but there's no need to go your own way if you ever want a little advice from someone who's been around the block."

"Maybe I do have one question," Henry said quietly.

He couldn't bring himself to make eye contact with his dad. Several trickles of sweat climbed down the back of his neck.

"What if...what if I wasn't into girls...as much...or at all?"

Henry kept his gaze on the patio for several long moments, but when he finally turned his head up, his dad stared back at him. Henry couldn't read his dad's expression. He worried it was a look of shame and disappointment.

"You think you might be gay?" His dad asked softly.

Henry started to answer, but his voice betrayed him. He was comfortable with the notion of being gay—plenty comfortable, actually—but this was the first time he was sharing those thoughts with anyone he knew. His parents, his brother, his best friend, Aiden. No one knew. Henry nodded his

head instead, his throat too tight to speak. He was cracking under the secret of it all.

"Son, listen." His dad placed a firm hand on Henry's shoulder. "You have nothing to be ashamed about. Don't think for a second that I won't love you just as much as I did before. Me or your mother."

Henry was surprised at the tears welling in his eyes. He blinked them away as a few teardrops fell to the patio. "You mean it?"

His dad immediately pulled him into a hug, and Henry felt the stress melt away from his muscles in an instant. "Of course. You are my son. How about this...how about for now you don't worry about whether or not you're straight, gay, or whatever other letters that BBQ abbreviation stands for? You may find that after a year or two, you might think differently about girls, too."

Henry dragged his forearm to clear some of the snot from his nose and chuckled. "I don't think that's going to happen, but thank you."

His dad smiled and took another sip of the remaining lemonade in his cup. "So, when did you know? Was this a recent thing, or have you always felt this way?"

Henry shrugged and considered. "I guess I knew for sure when I kept jacking off to all the naked boys in my class."

His dad sputtered on his lemonade, his face redder than Henry could ever remember. Suddenly the lemonade break was over, and his dad was back to spreading mulch around the yard.

"Was it something I said?"

Oh, Sunday nights. The last bit of respite before heading back into the tortures of middle school. This time, things were a bit different though. Henry was always happy to run into Aiden, but now he had another friend to look forward to in Aleks. He wanted to introduce the two boys as soon as possible so Henry would have every excuse to spend time with them both. He had every confidence that they would hit it off.

It was with this thought that Henry happily brushed his teeth before slipping on his pajamas for the night and tucking himself under the covers. Like the night before, he hit the pillow with a massive yawn, and a few brief moments later, sleep took him.

Henry never understood why he could never immediately tell when he was in a dream. His conscious mind knew he was about to sleep, and his dreams were almost always some absurd, ridiculous scenario, but in the dream, somehow the craziness all felt normalized. It was only when he woke up and reflected back that he could understand the nonsense of it all.

That was most dreams.

When Henry's eyes snapped open, and he once again stood planted at the edge of the forest outside of Misty Pines, he understood with 100% clarity that this was simultaneously all dream and all real. Like the time before, the gaping mouth of the cave spewed a thrumming darkness that pulsed across the land beneath his feet.

"Come," a voice whispered to him from everywhere and nowhere.

The last time Henry was in this place, he'd been terrified. The darkness and eerie presence had paralyzed him in fear. With it had come a strange and wonderful gift, even if he was still exploring what all it could allow him to do. He'd awoken before ever getting the chance to step inside the cave, but now, Henry felt a curiosity welling up inside of him. If this place lived somewhere between the real and unreal, he wanted the chance to see it for himself.

With each step across the stony ground he took, the faint pulse from the depths of the cave traveled through his toes and into his feet, creeping up his legs higher and higher. The darkness of the cave swallowed him up entirely, folding over him as he stepped into its threshold.

Somehow Henry sensed in his being that he wouldn't smash his face against the cave wall. The way was clear; he just had to keep going.

"Henry?"

Another voice called out to him from beyond the darkness. Still faint, still a whisper, but different than the shadowy voice that beckoned him forward. He hesitated for only a brief moment before the phantom voice called out again.

"Step forward, child."

The shroud of black fog began to fade with each new step, and the features of a bedroom began to form around him. Details of a bed with a blue quilt cover materialized from the darkness. Soon other objects melted into place: a nightstand with a lamp, lavender walls, a lounge chair next to a small book shelf, and finally, Aiden.

He was in his best friend's room, although his friend didn't see or recognize him at all. Looking around, Henry could detect traces of a black mist hugging the edges of the room, and the ground still reverberated against his bare feet. Despite its hyper-realism, Henry figured the place to be an illusion of his friend's bedroom.

"You've come to know my power," the voice whispered beside him, although Henry could sense its presence in every direction around him. He was enveloped by it. "But you only know a taste."

"Aiden?" Henry called out, wondering if his voice could even be heard. It echoed out in front of him as if he stood in a wide, open space. Aiden ignored him, moving around his bedroom as if getting ready for sleep. His friend sat on the mattress and pulled his white socks from his feet.

Something touched against his chest, over his heart, but no one was there.

"I see inside you, Henry. I see what you desire."

Henry grew uncomfortable as the being articulated his thoughts.

"It doesn't matter," Henry answered. "Aiden's not like me."

"Desires are fluid," the voice drawled. "What was impossible before is now in your control. All you have to do is...push."

There was a knock on Aiden's bedroom door. Henry wasn't even sure there had been a door until the knock happened. After a small turning of the doorknob, the door swung open to reveal his brother Keegan standing in

the doorway in just his night clothes. He shuffled over beside Aiden and joined him on the bed.

"What is this?" Henry asked. "Why is Keegan here?"

Henry watched as Aiden reached for his waistband to unbutton his jeans before unzipping and shimmying them down his legs. His boxer briefs were pale blue and bulging at the front. Keegan's eyes seemed locked on to the bulge.

This isn't real, Henry thought. It's only a dream.

"It can be," the voice answered over Henry's thoughts.

When Aiden pulled the front of his briefs down to his ankles, Henry's breath caught in his chest, and he took a step forward to get a better look. He had so desperately wanted this moment with his best friend, to see him naked, to spend a night with him in this vulnerable state. And though it was merely a dream, he watched on as Keegan was about to live out Henry's fantasy.

His best friend's penis was already ballooning out with a slight upward curve to its three-and-a-half inches. How he possessed a mental image of his best friend when he had never seen him naked before, Henry wasn't certain, but at this point, he could care less. His package matched his friend's small scrappiness. Henry thought it looked beautiful. Just above Aiden's penis was a small tuft of faint, blond pubic hairs. His balls looked more like marbles rather than eggs inside their sack.

Henry watched as Keegan reached out to gently run a finger along the underside of Aiden's penis. The thrumming and pulsing around Henry increased as he tried to keep himself from feeling so dizzy. This was all wrong. He didn't want to see his kid brother having sex with his best friend. At least, he didn't think so. Three days ago, he would have thought the idea of his brother having orgasms nearly impossible, but then he'd been the one to accidentally give Keegan his first. Not only that, but he'd followed it up by teaching him how to masturbate to the point of even showing Keegan what jizz looked like. Maybe Henry was more perverse than he wanted to admit.

Aiden smiled at the touch and spread his legs a little wider, giving his sack room to breathe. Henry shivered despite the warmth in his chest as Keegan slid from the bed and positioned himself between Aiden's legs. Henry's legs moved independent of his own thoughts, moving toward the edge of the bed to get a better vantage point.

His blonde friend smirked as he flexed his penis once, making it spring upward. Keegan reached out a hand to steady it before leaning forward and swiping a tongue across the tip. The light, sensual moan that escaped Aiden's lips was nearly enough to make Henry cream his pants—or maybe it would be in real life, back in his bed. He wasn't sure how it worked in this in-between place.

Keegan seemed encouraged by the sound and proceeded to lick again before lowering his lips around the tip of Aiden's shaft. His friend clutched the edges of his blanket around him as he kept his hips from driving upward. It wasn't long before Keegan's nose brushed against Aiden's scant pubes.

"Keegan," Aiden hissed out. "Please don't stop."

Keegan nodded and gave a muffled mmph before increasing his tempo as he bobbed up and down. There was a slick squelch each time Keegan slid across Aiden's boner. The sound was driving Henry wild. He tried reaching a hand to his own dick, but the contact didn't seem to give him any immediate pleasure or relief. By this point, one of Aiden's hands now rested on Keegan's head, stroking his fingers through his brother's dark hair.

"Uggh, gonna cum soon...you might wanna move your mouth," Aiden warned.

Keegan lifted his head from Aiden's groin.

"I want to taste it," he said simply, and returned back to the prize in front of him.

Henry wasn't sure what to feel. He wanted this to end. He wanted this to go on forever. He wanted to jump in and have an orgy with both of them. There was no making heads or tails to how he was feeling in that moment,

completely and utterly consumed by lust, torn between protecting his brother and satiating the urges coursing through him.

"Henry, fight it!"

Henry turned his head to the inky black of the bedroom window. He wasn't crazy. A voice clear as day had called out to him, different again from the darkness. Fight it? Fight what?

Aiden pinched off a high-pitched whine as his muscles tensed, drawing Henry's attention back toward his best friend. Henry could see the boy's vein throbbing at his neck and wanted desperately to reach out and connect his lips to the boy's throat.

"Okay, it's...oh, here I go," Aiden moaned and bent forward over Keegan's head as his orgasm hit. Aiden's little body shivered as Henry imagined his friend blasting whatever meager, watery cum he could make into his brother's mouth.

All too soon, Aiden's body relaxed, and Keegan pulled his mouth from the end of Aiden's penis.

Keegan ran his tongue once across his teeth. "I can feel it in my mouth. It's different than I would have thought. Bitter, but sweet kinda."

Aiden smiled once before pulling Keegan to his feet. His little boner pushed against his pajama bottoms, and Aiden went to his knees while lowering the front end of Keegan's waistband. Out popped Keegan's penis, standing to attention straight toward the ceiling.

With no fanfare, Aiden swooped in and took Keegan's penis to the hilt. Based on the flexing around his cheeks, Aiden was running his tongue all along Keegan's length, and his younger brother was absolutely loving it. Keegan's head tilted back with eyes closed.

"Oh fuck, oh fuck," his brother said lowly to himself. It was less than thirty seconds before Keegan shook out, "Getting my orgasm."

When Aiden pulled off, Keegan's bare penis was once again dancing wildly against his groin.

Aiden stood again, and this time, he pulled Keegan in for a kiss. With Aiden being a bit short for his age, and Keegan taller than average, the two stood at roughly the same height. They turned their heads as their lips met and opened their mouths against each other. The images of Aiden's bedroom began dissolving around him until the last thing Henry saw was his brother and friend interlocked in each other's arms.

Henry shivered in place, surrounded by darkness once again.

"It can be yours," the whispers said. "All you have to do is push forward into the mind."

With a gasp, Henry snapped from the dream, struck once again by a nocturnal emission as semen gushed out from the end of his dick, soaking the inside of his pajama bottoms. Outside, the cicadas and crickets sang together, and a glance at his alarm clock showed it was only 2 am. Still five hours left of sleep. Henry groaned as he turned over on his side. He knew he was leaving a drippy mess inside his clothes he'd have to deal with later, but his need for sleep took the best of him.

His last thoughts before drifting back into a dreamless sleep were his brother and Aiden in the throes of their orgasms together...

Chapter 5

Blame it on the broken sleep, or blame it on the morning grogginess, but Henry had at first forgotten about his dream from the night before. He slept through the blaring of his alarm and was barely aware of the fact that his pajamas had dried cum on the inside as he stripped them off in a hurry. Showering and brushing his teeth in time for the bus was damn near impossible, but he had somehow managed with a breathless goodbye to his mom as he sped out the front door.

The bus ride to school was pretty boring, but it was made better by the fact that Henry would soon be seeing Aleks. Stepping off the bus, he spotted Aiden first. His best friend had his book bag slung over his shoulder as he leaned against the wall, staring out at the popular kids across the courtyard with a look of longing.

"Hey, dude," Henry called and gave Aiden a fist bump.

Aiden stared for a moment longer before turning toward Henry. His hair was messy with bedhead, and his eyes had dark bags underneath. It was clear Henry wasn't the only one to get a bad night's sleep. Aiden offered a meek smile.

"Monday blues or were you up all night playing games?" Henry asked.

"Something like that," Aiden muttered. He fixed his gaze back on the popular kids as they watched videos on their phones. Asher from his reading class was with them, as confident as ever despite his 'accident' from the previous week, and Molly was right to his side, already on to the next guy. Asher fed her a lot of extra attention and laughed extra hard whenever she said anything remotely funny. Jake was there, too, and Henry was reminded about catching him whack it at the swimming hole.

Henry leaned over to whisper into Aiden's ear. "You are never going to believe what I saw this weekend."

Before Aiden could ask, Henry heard his name shouted from somewhere off to his side. He and Aiden both turned to see Aleks bounding up to them

wearing dark pants and a blue jean jacket over a black t-shirt. His hair looked freshly washed and styled in the same messy way he'd seen at the swimming hole. The shaded courtyard made Alek's pale skin stand out even more.

"Woah, this kid is like pasty white," Aiden said before Henry smacked him lightly with the back of his hand.

"Be nice, he's cool. You'll like him."

Henry waved as Aleks ran up to them. Aleks wore his backpack across both shoulders, which Henry would have normally thought made someone look dorky, but on Aleks, he thought it was cute, especially with the way the small boy stood with his hands on both hips.

"I was hoping to see you today," Aleks said as he looked up at Henry.

"Me too," Henry said. "This is my best friend—"

"Aiden, right?" Aleks answered to Henry's surprise. The boy shrugged. "I've seen you around."

"Sup, man?"

"Aiden, this is Aleks," Henry said. "He's new here. I met him down at the swimming hole over the weekend."

It was Aiden's turn to smack him in the shoulder.

"You asshole, you didn't invite me!?" Aiden shot back. "It was like a million degrees out!"

Henry gave an embarrassed laugh. "Sorry about that. It was kind of last minute, and next thing I knew the whole day was gone."

"It was awesome, too!" Aleks said. "That crazy big jump into the water is so cool!"

"Meh, that jump's alright," Aiden said, crossing his arms. Henry wondered if he'd hurt Aiden's feelings somehow. He hadn't meant to NOT invite him...it just didn't occur to him. But maybe that was the point.

The school bell rang, and Aiden immediately ditched the courtyard without Henry. He looked after his best friend in concern until he felt a tug on his sleeve from Aleks.

"Hey, Henry," the 6th grader said, "I know we couldn't over the weekend, but did you want to try and do more today?"

Do more? Henry wondered as his penis tingled a bit inside his shorts.

"Oh, you mean, like after school?"

"Sure!" the boy smiled brightly. "But I mean...only if you want to."

"No, I do," Henry said quickly, trying to stop his fluttering heart. He needed to be reasonable. Aleks probably didn't mean anything more than hang out. "It's cool. We can hang at my place if you want."

The two agreed to meet up at the woods near the swimming hole before heading back to Henry's house. They waved goodbye after heading inside the doors. Misty Pines Middle was a two story building with a separate wing for its 6th graders, and before long, Henry was off to his homeroom class.

Later on at lunchtime, Henry grabbed lunch from the quickest line so he could have a few extra moments alone with Aiden. His friend hadn't touched his plate of salad, and his head was buried in his hands. Henry set his tray at the table as a loud fart blasted out from a couple tables down followed by a roar of laughter from the boys there.

"Hey, Aiden?" Henry asked when he sat down. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," his friend muttered.

"It's just, this morning you seemed a little off—"

"Henry—"

"It's not something I did, is it?"

"I said, I'm fine, Henry!"

Henry felt like the two of them were in a bubble without air. The clamor from the cafeteria faded in the distance as he looked into Aiden's eyes

brimming with tears. His friend blinked and shook his head.

"Sorry, no, it's not you. It's...me. I'm sorry for losing my cool. I just can't really talk about it right now."

"Okay..."

Henry didn't know what to do for his friend other than to be there for him.

"You know I'm always here if you need to talk...right?" Henry asked.

Aiden nodded but wouldn't meet his eyes. He brushed his hand across his nose, and Henry heard the sound of sniffing. Aiden grabbed one of the napkins beside his tray and blew his nose as discreetly as someone can do such a thing.

"Thanks, Henry," he said when he was done. "You're a good friend."

"You are, too. My best friend."

By the time the rest of their table mates joined them, Aiden seemed to be a little back to his normal self, but Henry had spent enough time with Aiden to realize when something was still nagging his thoughts. His smile wasn't quite as wide, his laugh wasn't as full. It was like someone had poured out a piece of him over the weekend.

After the lunch with Aiden, Henry's thoughts were clouded throughout most of his classes, and soon he found himself in the gym locker rooms without realizing most of the day had passed. Around him metal doors clanged as kids opened their lockers and put their day clothes and deodorant next to their towels. Henry managed to catch a glimpse of Asher shirtless, revealing a beautiful set of toned abs. Henry thought Asher must work out several hours a day. How else could he get a killer body like that?

"Hello? Henry?" Asher asked, waving a hand across Henry's eyes. Henry blushed when he realized he was busted, but Asher only laughed at Henry's expression. "You're a funny guy, Henry." Asher soon slipped on his gym shirt and exited to the main gym.

Darting his eyes around the locker room, Henry made sure no one had seen him eye-banging the hot preteen just moments ago. All seemed to be clear, and Henry escaped the locker room to start his laps around the gym.

Henry was panting for breath by the time their mile lap had finished. Shortly after the run, Coach Lang made them all divide up into two teams to play Capture the Flag, which to Henry, only sounded like more running. At least the competitive element would take his mind from the pain shooting through his lungs.

During the game, Henry tagged out a few runners as they tried to snatch his team's flag, including a time where he managed to tag out a larger 7th grader named Tom just before he'd gotten one of the flags safely to the other side

Ignoring Henry's touch, Tom tried to keep going until Coach Lang blew his whistle loudly over the chaos.

"That's you, Tom," Coach Lang shouted, "Hustle to the other side."

"Fucking loser," Tom muttered under his breath before heading to the jail with the other players who'd been tagged out during the game.

Henry's team ended up winning the first game but lost the next two, and before long, he and the other boys and girls were drenched in their gray, sweaty gym shirts. After Coach Lang's final whistle blew, Henry made his way back inside the guys' locker room where he could rinse the sweat from his body in the showers.

Already a few boys had towels wrapped around their waists as they moved into the connected shower area. Henry often tried to make a casual sweep of the boys as they hosed themselves down. Most just gave themselves a quick rinse before grabbing their towels, but a glimpse was all Henry ever needed in terms of eye candy. Too much candy overload would lead to the wrong kind of sugar rush.

Henry shucked his shoes, gym shorts, and underwear before quickly wrapping a towel around his waist. Someone shoved Henry hard from behind, and he slammed his shoulder into the metal door of the locker. He spun to see a very unpleasant looking Tom, nostrils flaring like a bull who'd been duped by a matador for the last time.

"Next time something like that happens, you're gonna tell Coach that he made a mistake, you got it?"

Tom jabbed a meaty finger into Henry's chest.

Henry tried to look brave, hoping he could fake it long enough to get out of the situation. A couple of the boys nearby traded nervous glances but didn't intervene. Henry didn't blame them. Tom was a bully through and through. It didn't help that he probably snorted HGH based on his freakish size for his age.

"It's just a game, Tom," Henry said with his best nonchalance. "No one really cares who wins or loses."

"What'd you say, Tucker?" Tom said, bending down so he was eye level with Henry. Puberty had made a mack truck out of Tom, and he towered over Henry both in height and bulk. Henry didn't really consider himself to be a shrimp, but he had no doubts about how a one-on-one would go between the two of them. Coach Lang always came to monitor the lockers after class, but he hadn't shown up yet. Henry had to hold the bully at bay until then.

He remembered a nature documentary he'd seen once about a hiker who came upon a brown bear. Even though the bear could have shredded him apart, the man stuck his arms high in the air to look more threatening and shouted above the bear's roar to scare it off. Henry steeled himself and forced himself to stand straighter in the face of the bully. A dam broke within Henry's mind as his resolve settled.

"I said, it's just a game, so why don't you just beat it and leave things be?"

This was it. Henry's eyes squeezed shut as he prepared to get decked in the face by Tom's meaty fist. When it didn't come, Henry cracked an eye open to see Tom on his way to the showers.

The few boys surrounding Henry didn't move, didn't take a breath. Henry was pretty sure one of the boys' jaws was open in disbelief. Tom had never been known for his patience or easy-mannered nature. Someone to his left whistled in surprise as Tom turned the knob on his shower and began rinsing off.

"Damn, Henry. That's a big set of balls."

"Dude, how are you not eating through a straw right now?"

"It's like he just forgot about the whole thing. Freakin' psycho."

It did seem odd, Henry thought; like Tom had just taken his command at face value. Tom had been so willing to create a scene in front of the whole locker room, so why had he abandoned the fight so suddenly?

A voice whispered to him at the end of the thoughts, subtle and soft, but clear as it called to him.

Henry had broken through Tom's mind.

In a dizzy haze, Henry remembered the voice from his dream offering him more power. What had it said, something about his desires being realized if he pushed through? So had he overpowered Tom's mind in that moment? And more importantly, could he do it again?

Henry stared at the bully as he began scrubbing his hair beneath the hot shower water and considered what he could push Tom to do. Punch the wall and hurt his fist? Maybe, but Henry figured that might be something Tom would do on a regular pissed off day.

He let his mind relax as he willed his thoughts across the locker room.

Stop, he commanded.

It was subtle, but Tom's body had definitely stilled beneath the water. Here goes nothing, Henry thought.

Scratch your ass, Henry commanded, and at once Tom reached a hand back to dig his fingers into his butt cheek which drew a few snickers from a few of the boys nearby.

Henry wanted to push the bully even farther, force him to do something that would be truly humiliating so he could have a taste of his own medicine, but before he could make him do something completely stupid like pretending to be a baboon around the locker room, Coach Lang finally arrived and blew his whistle.

The sharp, piercing screech broke Henry's concentration, and he knew he only had a few minutes to rinse himself off in the shower. It hardly mattered, though. He'd made a new breakthrough in his power, and quite honestly, it was an intoxicating feeling. Henry wondered if his ability to

control others' actions was possible with anyone he came across or if it required a certain battle of wills like with Tom moments before.

He got to test his theory on the bus ride home. Henry searched out an open seat near the back until he found a spot across from a brother and sister who lived in the neighborhood adjacent to his own. Henry already knew he could use his own arousal as a fuel to raise the horniness of other people, but this was merely a test to see how well he could influence direct control on another person he didn't have any connection with. He wasn't even sure of their names and hadn't had any reason to ever talk with the two before. They would be the perfect candidates.

When the bus got rolling, Henry kept his body turned so he could naturally face the two without drawing extra attention to himself. If needed, his head was tilted so he could pretend to look away at a moment's notice.

The sister looked a bit older, possibly in 8th grade, not only because she was a good head taller than her brother, but she seemed much further along in her adolescence. Despite the sweater she wore over her body, her breasts were clearly pushing up against the front of her top. She had honey-brown hair with strands of highlights that complemented the glasses she wore. Henry figured there were definitely some other guys who would find the girl reasonably attractive, but she didn't check any boxes for him.

Her brother, however, was cute. Not particularly stunning, but adorable in his own way with a head of low, slightly curling dark hair. His ears stuck out from his head, and he had both a tiny nose and eyes. That was the thing about attraction; sometimes it didn't always matter that someone ranked high in the looks department. You liked what you liked, period. The kid was still young and would likely grow into some of his more awkward features as he entered puberty over the next couple years.

The two chatted back and forth, but Henry could barely hear them over the regular commotion from inside the bus. Now was a good a time as any, he figured, and he started to set his mind on the two. He wouldn't have a whole lot of time before his stop, so anything he tried would have to be quick and relatively tame.

Henry cleared his mind and imagined a connection forming with the girl. He wasn't exactly sure what it was supposed to feel like. With Tom, the mental link had been sudden and instinctual. He hadn't even known he was affecting him at first. Henry continued concentrating his will, hurling parts of his consciousness across the bus aisle.

Tickle your brother, he commanded.

The younger boy suddenly squealed in laughter as his sister dug her fingers into his sides. He pressed himself into the seat to escape her moving fingers, but she persisted and followed him. It was working perfectly, Henry thought.

Stop.

Just like that, the girl ceased her tickling and sat up with a bemused look on her face that she tried to cover with a smile.

"Sorry," she said loud enough for Henry to hear. "Don't know what came over me."

Kiss your brother in the ear, Henry suggested next, and after only a moment's consideration, the girl leaned forward like she was about to whisper something, but instead pressed her lips against the boy's inner ear. He pulled away a moment later before shoving his book bag between the two of them.

"You're being weird, Kelsey," he complained, rubbing the wet spot at his ear with his sleeve.

Henry decided to end things there. The beginning of a migraine was starting to creep in, but also his bus stop was only a few brief stops away. There was no reason to get too carried away. He'd have plenty of time and chances to explore things further.

When he first stepped off the bus, Henry immediately started making his way toward the back of the neighborhood where he and Aleks planned to meet up. Taking the dirt path through the forest, Henry walked along under the shade of the branches before spotting his new friend walking his direction from the far end of the tree-covered path. When Aleks spotted

him, Henry saw the boy smile and sprint the rest of the way, his book bag bouncing hectically with every step.

“Dude, I thought this day would never end,” Henry said after giving Aleks a fist bump.

“I know, right? Way too boring of a day.”

“Hey, so your mom and dad cool with you coming over?”

“Oh, them? Yeah, nothing to worry about. It’s all good.”

“Cool. So you ready to go? My place isn’t too far.”

They walked side by side as they headed back through the forest together. The shade offered them both a reprieve from the hot sun. Soon, Henry started quizzing Aleks about some of his interests, like favorite superheroes and TV shows.

“I think I like Batman or Spiderman the best,” Aleks said after some consideration.

“What? But they’re like total opposites of one another!”

“So? Who’s your favorite, then?”

Tom Holland was pretty hot, Henry figured, but that didn’t really seem like the best way to explain his superhero crushes. Instead, Henry answered with Iron Man because he thought Tony Stark was the cooler, less brooding Batman.

“Hmm, okay,” Aleks said. “Favorite music artist?”

“Easy. Billie Eilish.”

They broke through the edge of the forest, and Henry’s migraine flared up again in the bright sun. He massaged his temples while they finished the last leg of the walk home. When they arrived at Henry’s house, Aleks paused to tie his shoe just off the doorstep.

“Oh, just so you know,” Henry said. “My little brother Keegan’s home, too, but he’s pretty chill so we won’t have to worry about him.”

Aleks shrugged coolly in his jean jacket. "I'm not worried. I'm sure if he's anything like you, he's pretty awesome."

Henry blushed and led the way to the front door. After using his latchkey to open the front door, the noise from the TV immediately filled the air, doing nothing for his headache. He knew there was Tylenol in the cabinet he could take if the pain continued.

"Keegan! I'm home and have a friend, so I hope you're not doing anything weird!"

Message received, Henry guessed, because immediately the TV volume blissfully dropped down and soon his brother slid around the corner in his socks across the hardwood floor. He'd already changed from his school clothes for the day and was stripped down to his usual t-shirt and shorts.

"Who's this?" Keegan asked.

"Dude, manners. This is my friend, Aleks. He's new here, so I figured I'd invite him over."

"Does mom know?" Keegan asked.

"No. And it's fine. She doesn't need to."

Keegan rolled his eyes and turned to face Aleks. He stuck a thumb out at Henry. "He thinks he can do whatever he wants because he's older than me."

"I can, and actually, I just got done telling Aleks how cool I thought you were."

Keegan's eyes brightened. "You said I was cool!? Have I mentioned today how great of a brother you've been lately?"

"Mhmm. Buh-bye, now," Henry said, and pushed his way past Keegan.

Henry led Aleks to his bedroom and locked the door behind them despite Keegan's attempts at barging in. He stood there awkwardly for a second while Aleks checked his room out, taking in the poster of his favorite Porsche model, some of the school trophies he'd won when he was much

younger, and the picture of him and Aiden at Henry's twelfth birthday party last year.

"So you guys are pretty close?"

"Oh, me and Aiden?" he asked. "Yeah, he's probably my best friend. I'm sorry about the way he was acting today. He's not normally like that."

Aleks nodded. "Seemed like he had a lot on his mind."

Henry couldn't have agreed more, but it was obvious Aiden didn't want to talk to him about it, so what was there to do? If he kept pestering his friend about what was up, he'd only manage to make him more upset, and what good was that?

"Hey, so how about we listen to some music?"

Even though Aleks had heard of Billie Eilish, it was his first time listening to more than just Bad Guy on the radio. He wasn't impressed beyond the occasional song or two, so they switched up to other pop music, and soon they were both bopping their heads along to the music. After listening through some of Henry's favorites, they decided to go catch something on the television and hang out together in the living room.

They found Keegan watching another episode of Teen Titans, but the boy perked up when they plopped down on the wrap-around sofa.

"You guys wanna do something outside?" Keegan asked.

Henry shook his head. "Maybe in a bit. We're gonna hang here for a bit."

"I love Teen Titans!" Aleks said. "Who's your favorite?"

"Oh, Beast Boy, for sure," Keegan answered. "You?"

"Beast Boy's pretty great," Aleks agreed. He shrugged off his blue jean jacket and set it on the arm of the couch, leaving the pale boy in just a black t-shirt that accentuated the tone of his pale skin even more.

Henry was partial to Robin personally, loving the way the leader flipped through the air in his green spandex uniform. For a cartoon, Henry thought Robin was pretty hot. He could only imagine what all the Titans got up to "off air" so to speak. A bunch of horny teenagers unregulated could only

lead to one thing in the end. Henry started to chub up a little inside his shorts.

As discreetly as he could, he reached down to adjust himself on the couch, giving himself a gentle squeeze. He cast a glance to his side and caught Aleks watching him with a blush across his pale cheeks. The boy quickly turned his head away when he saw Henry had seen him. Aleks's curiosity gave Henry an idea that he wanted to try out. But first, maybe it was time to tease his younger brother a bit.

Keegan had missed the brief exchange between he and Aleks, and Henry turned his focus on his brother. If Aleks wanted a show, Henry would help give him one.

"Keegan, wanna do something fun?" Henry prodded.

"This is fun," he said. "But sure, like what?"

"I think you should show Aleks your new favorite hobby that you learned lately."

Keegan went wide-eyed as recognition crossed his face. He finally broke eye contact from the TV.

"What do you mean?" he stammered.

"Henry?" Aleks's voice was a little shaky, but Henry ignored him.

"You know," Henry said, "the hobby you've been getting really good practice with lately."

Keegan's face was like a doe in the face of headlights, uncertain whether to panic and flee or stay rooted. Henry felt gutted like he was somehow betraying Keegan's trust, but he figured his brother would enjoy the pleasure that came out of it in the end. A voice trickled like water in the back of his mind. Use it, Henry. Push.

"B-but, you said, it was private," Keegan whispered.

"Henry," Aleks said again, more firmly.

"It's okay," Henry told his brother. He directed his will toward Keegan and bridged the connection between their minds before giving Keegan the

command. Make yourself cum—you'll enjoy it.

It was like a rubber band had snapped after being taut for so long. The resistance Henry felt from Keegan melted away, and at once his brother went to work. He grabbed the edges of his shorts and underwear together before sliding them halfway down his thighs, leaving all three inches of his bare penis standing at attention. Keegan kept his attention straight down as he grabbed his erection with his thumb and index finger, immediately sliding the skin up to the head and back. One of his feet gave a little twitch.

Henry's headache was back, throbbing as he chanced a look at Aleks. He expected his friend to have the same look of embarrassed curiosity he had shown just moments before, but Aleks refused to look at Keegan. His eyes were fixed in a chilly stare against the wall, his jaw clenching and releasing every few seconds.

"Stop this, Henry," Aleks finally said.

Stop it? Why would he want to stop what was going on?

Already, Keegan's breath was growing more ragged and his eyes unfocused. If he kept going a little longer, he'd have his orgasm and feel good. Maybe then, he could convince Aleks to join in, and the three of them could have an afternoon to remember.

A tear streamed down Aleks's face as his friend stood from the couch. He gave Henry a pitying glance before striding over to the couch in front of Keegan, who acted like Aleks wasn't even there as he masturbated on the cushions. Henry felt like he was living in a surreal head space. Maybe it was the migraine, but it was like the same fog that covered their town was now swallowing his mind.

"Keegan," Aleks said, his voice cracking with emotion. "Keegan."

His brother didn't break his concentration. Aleks gave a few slow, steady breaths before stretching out a hand towards Keegan's forehead, gently pressing his pale thumb against it. Aleks closed his eyes and exhaled. A moment later, Keegan's eyes fluttered shut, and his hand fell away from his groin as his body went limp on the couch. His dick, which had been rock hard a second ago, immediately started to wane.

Henry was shaking and hadn't realized when he'd crawled away to the far edge of the couch.

"W-what did you do?" he asked. "What was that? Keegan!"

Aleks pulled the throw from the top of the couch and placed it across Keegan's lap to give him privacy. It was only then that Aleks turned back to Henry. Aleks's eyes were like deep, blue wells stuffed with knowledge and memory and wisdom.

"I think it's time we talk."

Chapter 6

Aleks stood over Keegan's limp body.

From the moment he'd stood from the couch, it was like a switch had flipped in his new friend—like he'd shut off a part of himself entirely. Aleks's cold, blue eyes locked on to his, refusing to break.

"What did you say?" Henry asked. He was pinned against the edge of the couch, terrified to move, but desperate to run.

"I said we need to talk. It's best if we do this in your room."

There was no misunderstanding Aleks's tone. Henry would be going one way or another.

Flicking his eyes over to Keegan, Henry tried to search for any signs of life. A moment before, his brother had been jacking off under Henry's compulsion, and his body had fallen unconscious the instant Aleks placed a finger against his brother's forehead. The light snoring coming from his brother was the only thing giving him any remote sense of comfort.

"He's fine, Henry," Aleks said. "He'll be asleep for a few hours. He's fine."

Aleks took a few steps toward him, but Henry held up a palm in fear.

"Don't come near me! What did you do to him?"

A pained expression crossed Aleks's face, but Henry didn't care. Something bizarre was going on, and he needed answers right then.

"I didn't do anything different than what you did just a few minutes ago."

"I-I don't understand," Henry said.

"You do, Henry. The dreams you've been having. The arousal you make people feel. That voice you've heard whisper in your mind."

When Aleks approached again, his hands raised in surrender, Henry didn't squirm away. No, if anything, he felt like he'd been busted for a secret he'd been keeping inside.

“Take my hand, Henry. I don’t want to force you. This has to be something you decide for yourself.”

Aleks extended a pale palm out toward Henry, pleading silently with him. Henry still wasn’t sure. He was trying to process everything he was experiencing, but his mind couldn’t make heads or tails out of it.

“It has to be you, Henry. You can say no, and I’ll walk right out that door. I’m just asking you to trust me.”

Henry felt tears well up in his eyes. “What are you?”

Aleks smiled, his own tears brimming. He said softly, “I’m just like you.”

Henry took his hand.

Aleks helped him from the couch, and though his knees trembled, Henry led the two back into his bedroom where Aleks sat on the bed covers. He patted the space beside him, and Henry joined him. He didn’t know what he was supposed to be doing as he waited for Aleks to speak. The boy seemed just as lost in his own thoughts.

“I want to show you something, Henry. I could try and explain it, but I don’t think it’ll make much sense if I do.”

“Okay...”

Aleks turned to face Henry on the bed and gestured for him to do the same. Taking Aleks’s open hand in his own, a comforting warmth spread from the boy’s palm and began to wash over Henry. If he had to search for a word to use, safe was what came to mind. He was safe here with Aleks.

“Close your eyes, Henry.”

Henry did, and Aleks’s forehead pressed against his own. The darkness behind his eyelids began melting away, and Henry found himself standing on cobblestone streets surrounded by high stone buildings bathed in soft sunlight. Aleks was to his left, his hand still clasped in Henry’s. Around them, the structures were painted in variations of pale yellow and beige, each complete with tall windows on every floor. They were alike, with subtle differences distinguishing them from the buildings beside them, yet they were all utterly unfamiliar to Henry as he spun around. It was all so

different than anything he had seen; even the air was significantly cooler than what he was used to this time of year.

“My home,” Aleks whispered.

A basset hound huffed its way up the hill and sniffed the ground as it veered into a narrow alley. Henry took in the people strolling up and down the streets. They seemed out of place compared to the people of Misty Pines, but Henry couldn't say exactly why that was. It was almost like they moved slower, without the hustle of people he saw at school or in town. And their clothes were old; clean and well-kept, but old.

“How are we here? Are we really here?”

Aleks shook his head. “This place is only a memory of mine. One of the last times I was here.” He squeezed Henry's hand tighter as he took a breath. “It's been nearly fifty years.”

Henry laughed hollowly beside him. “Fifty years...there's no way. That's actually insane.”

Aleks shrugged and nodded his head. “About as insane as being here with me in this moment. Seeing all this. Experiencing all that you have over the past few days.”

Henry listened close as two women passed by carrying small woven baskets stuffed with what smelled like warm, fresh bread. Their words were foreign to him, but the accent he thought he recognized.

“Are we in France?”

“Not too far from a city known as Marseille. These streets were my childhood. The first part of it, anyway.”

Off in the distance, the deep toll of a bell rolled down the street four different times.

“Henry,” Aleks said. “What I'm going to show you is not pleasant. I'm sorry for that. But for you to understand what I'm going to ask you, there can't be anything hidden from you.”

Henry swallowed as his hands grew clammy in Aleks's grasp.

"I trust you," he said.

Aleks gave the saddest smile Henry'd ever seen.

In front of them, the front door to the building clattered open, and out stepped a small pale boy with wavy, blonde hair smushed under a cap. Apart from the styled hair and the modern clothes he now wore beside him, this boy was Aleks in every way. Behind him the boy shouted, "À bientôt, maman!" before pulling the door shut and waltzing down the wide, stone steps.

"My father was killed when I was young, and my mother had cancer, though I didn't know it until after she had passed."

Henry and Aleks walked together as they followed the memory of Aleks down the steep road. He leaned in to sniff a bed of pink and yellow flowers. Several shops down, Henry couldn't read the sign, but the air smelled of brine and fish. The younger Aleks checked his reflection in the shop window. He pulled off his cap to adjust his hair before situating it back on his head in a way that Henry thought made him look dashing.

It was another several blocks of sloping streets before the two of them finished their journey. Another boy with a thick head of brown hair played with a rubber ball, bouncing it against the wall until he spotted Aleks. The two of them struck up an effortless conversation, the way only people in a deep friendship can. Beside him, the current Aleks smiled fondly, although Henry could feel a tremble in his grip.

"Nicolas," Aleks said.

The two younger boys raced inside before Aleks closed his eyes and breathed in.

"It's okay," Henry said. "You don't have to show me whatever this is if you'd rather just tell me."

"Just don't let go," he warned, and the world evaporated in an instant, the vivid French town dissolving away before reshaping into a tiny bedroom with dark stained wooden floors. A thin brown curtain covered the window, blocking some of the fading sunlight. The room was mostly bare, save for a few scattered pieces of clothing, a nightstand with penciled

sketch drawings on top, a single, twin bed, and the shirtless forms of Aleks and Nicolas as they held each other's faces in a passionate kiss.

"By this time, I had been having the dreams for several weeks. In each of them, I stood alone outside of town, facing a darkness I didn't know could exist. It kept telling me to do things, pushing me to give in to desires I barely had names for."

Henry was struck with chills as he recalled his own encounters in the woods outside of Misty Pines.

"There was a priest in town who told me that demons worked in many forms to try and take my soul. He thought the voice was some kind of djinn, a dark genie that would give the illusion of wishes. I didn't know what it was I was saying yes, too."

The two on the bed continued kissing, but the younger Aleks began moving on down to Nicolas's neck, and Henry noticed the blank expression on Nicolas's face, like he was disconnected emotionally from his body's feelings.

"It started innocently enough. I was eleven and didn't have much of a wicked side. But after feeling some of the things boys do, I was hooked. And naturally I wanted to bring those same feelings to my closest friend. This is the day that it all changed."

On the bed, Aleks continued exploring Nicolas's body, kissing his undefined chest before pausing to take one of the boy's small pink nipples in his mouth. His friend panted through that same horrifying empty expression that made Henry want to flee the room altogether.

"The djinn kept pushing me further, promising more, but of course there was a cost. I was too naive to understand that there might be someone out there that wanted to hurt me."

On the bed, the younger Aleks began unbuttoning his pants and wiggling out of them. Henry heard Aleks whisper something in French to Nicolas who seemed to come back to himself a bit. When Aleks repeated the command, his friend turned to face him and briefly shook his head, a look of confusion and wariness on his face. Nicolas cast his glance down at the

tiny bulge pressing up against Aleks's underpants before retreating across the bed.

The next bit Aleks explained in bitter, icy tones as it played out in front of them.

"I thought if I broke the trance and suggested taking things further, he'd be up for it, especially after he felt how good the kissing was. He was my friend, so I'm sure it was hurtful and confusing for Nicolas. At the time, I was only thinking about myself, and so I broke through his mind. Forced him to do what I wanted.

"The only problem was that it was far from the first time I'd used that dark power. There is a limit to what each mind can sustain. I learned that the hard way."

On the bed, Aleks gripped Nicolas by the shoulders and growled something in French at his friend. There was a brief, pained look of confusion and concentration before Nicolas's eyes rolled in the back of his head. He began seizing and foaming at the mouth as his body broke out in a sweat all over. Aleks scrambled off the bed, his body striking the floor with a loud thump as he stared on in horror. Beside him, Henry's Aleks was painfully quiet as he squeezed his eyes shut.

The shouts of panic that came next hurt Henry's heart as presumably Nicolas's family burst through the bedroom door. There was a flurry of scrambled words as the father went to scoop his son in his arms, and the mother fled for help through her sobbing.

"Je regrette, Je regrette, Je regrette," the younger Aleks cried as he hugged his knees to his chest.

"Take me back," Henry whispered, trying to stifle his own emotion. "Aleks."

His friend was squeezing his chest with his free hand as the tears spilled through his closed eyelids. Henry broke the hand contact between them as he turned to embrace Aleks in a hug. Around him, the chaos of the bedroom dissolved, first Nicolas, then his father, then the room, and finally Aleks.

They were still sitting on the comforter in Henry's bedroom, and Henry held Aleks tight in a hug as his friend sobbed and let his emotions go. Ignoring the snot drooling on his sleeve, Henry gave up on holding his own tears back. It was okay to grieve with his friend; for his friend.

It was some time before Aleks calmed down enough, and through it, Henry couldn't help but think how utterly alone Aleks must have felt. Even though he had lived dozens of years, he was still a hurting eleven-year-old boy.

"I'm sorry I had to show you that, Henry," Aleks eventually said, wiping some of the lingering snot with the back of his arm.

"Hey, you know it's not your fault, right? What happened with Nicolas, you couldn't have known."

Aleks was still in his movements, and Henry could see that his words in that moment weren't going to wipe away decades of self-inflicted torment.

"Everyone deserves to make choices for themselves, Henry," he said with a meek smile. "Everyone."

Henry reflected on all the people he'd manipulated with his power over the past week, most of all his younger brother. Had they been in just as much danger as Aleks's best friend this whole time? Henry wasn't sure how he would have managed to deal with the guilt Aleks had faced.

"But I've already taken that choice from so many," Henry said.

Aleks shook his head and took Henry's hands again in his own, this time for comfort. "You haven't. Trust me. It's not too late. For you. For them."

Henry watched as Aleks's blue eyes hardened. "I've spent a long time trying to hunt this monster down, Henry. It's ancient, but it's not immortal. It can't be."

"Wait, what? You're trying to stop this thing?"

"From the moment I completely gave in, I was connected with it. I don't have all the answers, but I can only guess it's the reason why I'm still...like this. I think it wanted others like me to live continuously in exchange for destroying the minds of others. It feeds on the broken, Henry, like a psychic parasite. I thought maybe if I could find and kill it, I could free those who'd

suffered like Nicolas. It's how I found you...I'd been watching you before we met."

"You were stalking me?"

Aleks had the decency to look guilty. "I wanted to see the type of person you were. Not everyone who has this power is worth saving, Henry. There are people I've come across that have done some truly horrific things. They crave the adrenaline and pleasure this power gives them no matter the cost."

Henry chewed on what Aleks told him. He was afraid to ask Aleks what had happened to those people. The possibilities made him shiver.

"But what if this thing kills you once you finally find it?"

The emptiness behind Aleks's gaze sent chills running down Henry's spine.

"It wouldn't matter. No one's around to miss me."

Henry's heart hurt again as he shook his head. No, it wasn't right. None of it. Not what was happening to Henry, not what was happening to Aleks, nor any person who had been affected.

"Would you shut up already?" Henry blurted out.

Aleks blinked a few times. "What?"

"I said, shut up. You keep talking like you're some worthless piece of shit. Like no one could ever possibly care for you. If you say something like that again, I swear to god, I'm going to punch you!"

"But I—"

Thwack.

Henry wasn't terribly strong, but he didn't hold back as he struck Aleks's shoulder.

"You really hit me?"

"If you weren't being so stupid right now, you would realize how much I care for you. You made a mistake, man! We all do. You learn from it, and

you grow. This monster was the reason Nicolas suffered, not you, and if you don't see that, then you're the dumbest person on the whole planet!"

Aleks held a hand to his shoulder, wincing at what Henry hoped would be a lasting bruise to help remind his friend how ridiculous he was being.

Henry half-expected Aleks to punch him back or tackle him off the edge of his bed, but instead he laughed. Laughed harder than Henry had ever heard before. For a few brief moments, the Aleks he was used to seeing was back as he rubbed his shoulder.

"Okay," he said. "Okay. I get it."

"Do you?" Henry readied another fist just in case.

"I do. It's going to take some time, really, but I'll try to remember what you said."

Henry's stomach growled noisily and he rubbed his stomach to try and ease the discomfort.

"You want a PB&J?"

It was a surprisingly normal thing for them to do considering the surreal experience Henry had just gone through with his pseudo-immortal friend. While they slapped together their sandwiches, Henry asked Aleks what came next.

"That...kind of depends on you."

"What do you mean?" Henry asked.

Aleks shrugged and spread jelly across his bread. "I can take your power. I can take all the memory you've had with it so it'd be like you're back to your normal life. Once I do that, it severs the connection between you and the darkness."

"Have...have you done it before? On others?"

Aleks nodded and bit into the top corner of his sandwich. "It's painless, if that's what you're worried about. I made sure of it. In return, it helps me get stronger. I'm not stupid enough to think I can win yet, but I know every person I take from the djinn weakens it just a little bit more. It gives, but it

can't take. That's how I'll stop it. The choice has to be yours, though. I can't take it by force."

Despite all of Aleks's warnings and the memories he had shown him, Henry was torn. Not over the morality of the decision. He knew it was right to relinquish every bit of the dark power he had to his friend. At least then it could be darkness molded for good. No, what he would miss was what the power offered him: the chance to explore his sexuality without fear of rejection. Without the hurt that came from how cruel people could be. It wasn't fair.

But everyone deserved a choice. That's what Aleks had said. Even now, his friend was giving him a choice.

"I'm scared," Henry admitted.

"I know," Aleks said in a way that Henry understood now to be filled with the wisdom only many years can bring.

"I want you to have it," Henry finally said, "but on one condition."

"What's that?"

"I want to remember you."

Not too long after the sandwiches, Henry noticed the time on the clock. His mom would be home in a matter of minutes. Aleks promised to return that night and told Henry to stay awake. Dreams were where the djinn prowled on its victims.

When Keegan awoke on the couch, he was confused as to when he had even fallen asleep. He didn't appear to remember Aleks ever being at the house, nor the brief masturbation session Henry had forced him to have. It seemed Aleks had wiped his brother's memory to protect him—perhaps to sever the connection to the djinn. After all, Henry still held that dark power for a few more hours yet. He wouldn't use it. No matter what.

It was just past eleven that night when Henry heard a rustling from the shrub outside his bedroom window and the sharp tap of a fingernail on the glass. He peeked out the sides of the blinds and saw Aleks's pale face smiling back at him. Henry raised the blinds, unlatched the window, and

helped pull while Aleks pushed up. On his way inside, Aleks dragged in a few prickly leaves stuck to his blue jean jacket.

“Sorry,” he said as he brushed off the leaves.

“It’s fine, I’ll clean it all up later.”

Henry’s bedroom was on the opposite side of the house from his parents, but he still felt like they should be quiet in case Keegan woke up from the next room over. They sat together on Henry’s bed, facing each other with their legs crossed like they had that afternoon.

“So, listen,” Henry said in a low voice. “I was thinking about what you said earlier. I know you should take this power, but I want to help you somehow. Two of us together would be much stronger, right?”

Aleks sighed. “Henry...”

“You shouldn’t have to do this alone,” Henry said, his voice cracking in betrayal.

“I’m not alone. There are others like you who believe in me. A part of them is always with me.”

Henry lunged forward and wrapped his arms around his friend in a hug, squeezing him for all he was worth. There was only a brief hesitation before he felt Aleks’s arms hug him back.

“I don’t want you to go,” Henry said softly.

“I know. Me either. You helped me remember what having a friend was like. But if I stayed—anywhere—then nobody would be there to fight for the innocent. More people would be lost. I have to go.”

Henry pulled back from the hug and hovered inches from Aleks’s face. The boy’s blue eyes were like a well into infinity, and before he knew what came over him, Henry ignored the heavy thump in his heart as he leaned in to kiss Aleks on the lips. It was his first kiss and all too quick as he mashed his lips against the boy, but it was spectacular.

“I—I’m sorry,” Henry said in a rush. “I should have asked first if you were —”

Aleks kissed him this time, his technique much softer, and the boy gently guided Henry back against the bed. Henry wasn't sure if this was a normal thing guys felt when kissing, but he had sprung rock hard inside his pajamas almost instantly. He was just about to reach down to adjust himself into a more comfortable position when he felt Aleks's hand squeezing his cloth-covered erection instead.

Henry gasped far louder than he intended as the kiss continued. Aleks broke it off only to ask if should continue.

"Oh, hell yes," Henry answered as he began to let his own hands explore.

He helped remove Aleks's jacket from his body, leaving him in his black t-shirt. Aleks let go of Henry's penis and leaned back so he could pull his shirt over his head. The boy's pale chest and torso were bathed in the warm light of Henry's table lamp. Henry ditched his own white t-shirt and threw it on the floor.

There was a momentary pause as Aleks considered what to say.

"Henry, I don't want to push things too far. If you're not ready for anything, just tell me. It won't hurt my feelings at all."

"I'm ready," he told him. "I trust you."

Henry grabbed the waistband of his pajamas before shoving them down to his ankles. He kicked off the first leg, and had to pull the second one away, leaving him completely exposed to his friend. Aleks drank him in from head to toe before unsnapping his own jeans. There was no denying the tent pressing against Aleks's briefs, and Aleks pulled them down his legs, his erection slapping back against his stomach. It was everything Henry could have hoped for; perfection on a human body.

Aleks's foreskin was slightly peeled back, the head of his penis a dark shade of pink. His balls were tiny in their sack, with only the slightest droop to them. The lamplight showed no pubes that Henry could see, though this wasn't much of a surprise based on everything else he knew about him.

With their clothes removed, Aleks swung a leg over Henry's midsection and straddled his waist. Henry could feel his friend's lean ass as he rested on top of him. Their erections nearly touched, Aleks's thin four inches

standing straight up while Henry's fell against his body, bobbing in time with his heartbeat. He'd already started to pool a small strand of precum down to his pubic area.

"I've always wanted...to do something like this," Aleks whispered.

Henry was stunned. "You haven't? But you've lived so long..."

"I didn't want to get too close or hurt anyone again. I didn't think I deserved it."

"How do you feel now?"

Aleks didn't answer but smiled and leaned forward to kiss Henry again. This time, the boy's boner pressed against his stomach while Aleks rested his weight on top of him.

Henry chanced sticking his tongue between his lips to see how Aleks would respond. Immediately he felt the strangest sensation of another tongue against his own, firm but pliable as they twisted and danced together. They held the kiss another minute before Henry was forced to break for air with a heavy gasp.

"You're supposed to breathe through your nose," Aleks said with a laugh.

"Well how was I supposed to know?" His chest heaved up and down, and Aleks took the chance to explore Henry's chest. There was little definition to it, but Aleks appeared satisfied as he brushed a thumb over one of Henry's nipples, making it harden under his touch.

Before long, Aleks spread his hand out and ran it down Henry's stomach, stopping once he reached the few pubes Henry had growing on either side. He teased a few between his fingers, smiling.

"I always wondered what these felt like. Mine never got to come in. Obviously."

"They're cool," Henry said. "Kind of itchy, sometimes, though."

Henry gasped again as Aleks wrapped his fingers around the base of Henry's erection. The nerves on his cock felt like they were being charged

with electricity. He hoped he wouldn't cum right away, but he knew it wouldn't take much at all to reach his trigger point.

When Aleks lifted Henry's penis, another bead of precum burped out and drooled down to his stomach.

"I can make a little," Aleks said. "But only when I cum. Not like this."

"Can I see?" Henry asked.

"I'll do you one better."

Aleks shifted his hips again and leaned forward so the underside their erections connected. He couldn't quite reach all the way around with one hand, but he had enough of a grip to hold them in place. If Aleks's hand on his penis was electricity, then feeling both of them together was lightning from heaven. Henry loved feeling the weight of another person's body against his own.

Henry ground his hips against Aleks's boner, feeling his velvety skin slide back in response. They started to hit a rhythm, a couple times snagging a bit of precum as they leaned back in together. The sliding feeling of dick on dick was too much for Henry. He'd never imagined being able to have a moment like this with another boy so soon in his life. And this put his fantasies to shame. This was tactile. This was real. And this was sending him to the edge quicker than he'd ever felt.

"Aleks, I'm close," he breathed out, feeling a tightness in his balls as Aleks rocked again.

"Me, too," Aleks said, squeezing his eyes shut while his mouth hung open in pleasure as he rocked against Henry.

Seeing Aleks's face twist in bliss along with the rolling sensation across his dick was enough to do it. Henry squeezed Aleks's thighs as he felt his orgasm strike. Unlike the previous times he'd cum, this wasn't the typical burps of cum that shot from his dick but rather a sprinkler of watery jizz that arced up his torso and neck. He wasn't even sure he'd seen it shoot out of him, it had been so fast.

“Oh, yes, yes, yes,” Aleks whined and trembled as his pale skin became blotchy and red. Aleks’s boner twitched against his own as he had his own orgasm. His penis streamed out a single, tiny jet of clear cum while the rest of his pulses were dry.

“So good,” Aleks sighed and fell on Henry. Their warm cum squished between them, and even though Henry knew they’d have to clean themselves later, right now he couldn’t give two shits.

“That was...” Henry said at a total loss for words.

“Fucking awesome?” Aleks suggested with his face buried in Henry’s shoulder.

Henry laughed. “Yeah, that’ll do it. Fucking awesome.”

They stayed together at each other’s side, neither wanting to move as they talked to each other about random little nonsense. Words that meant nothing. Words that meant everything. In that time, Henry asked whether or not Aleks was sure the djinn, or whatever darkness haunted him, would truly leave him be.

“That seems to be how it’s worked in the past. You and anyone else he’s bridged a connection to while he’s been tempting you.”

“Others I’m connected to?”

“Your friend, Aiden,” Aleks said. “People tend to use their abilities on those closest to them. For you, that’s your brother and Aiden. This will sever their connection as well.”

“But they don’t know about the monster, right?” Henry pointed out.

Aleks had his head propped up on his arm as he teased a few fingers across Henry’s chest.

“You’re right,” Aleks agreed, “but...”

“But what?”

Aleks darted his eyes away as if he were considering what to say, or whether to say anything at all.

"It's fine," Henry said, "You can tell me."

"Last night you had a dream where the djinn took you into Aiden's bedroom and Keegan showed up, yes?"

"How did...you were there?"

Aleks shook his head. "Not in the same way you were. I can't break through directly, not yet, but I can still experience them. The thing is, it wasn't your own dream the djinn used to tempt you, it was Aiden's."

Henry sat up and looked down at Aleks. "But that doesn't make any sense at all. Aiden's not gay. Why would he have a dream like that about Keegan?"

And more importantly, Henry thought, why was the dream about Keegan and not him?

Aleks seemed to read the same question from his facial expressions, because he said, "You know people don't have control over what they dream, right? It was the same for Aiden."

"You were connected to his thoughts?"

"His thoughts. His mind. His personality. Even his desires." Aleks let the last suggestion hang in the air for Henry to interpret.

"His desires?"

"Your friend needs your support, Henry. You may have things figured out for yourself, but we all accept who we are at our own pace. It may not be as hopeless of a situation as you might think."

Henry leaned back against his pillow as he stared up at the ceiling. The whooshing of the fan blades was almost hypnotic as the cool air drifted through the room. Aiden was gay? Well maybe not gay, he figured, but maybe not fully straight either. And if it was something he was trying to wrestle with by himself, then what a nightmare that could be in its own right. No wonder he'd seemed so off lately.

He turned to face Aleks who gazed at him with a steady poker face.

“Thank you for telling me,” Henry said. “You can trust me. I won’t abuse what you said.”

“I know, Henry.” Aleks leaned forward and gave him a lasting kiss on his forehead. “You’re going to make a great boyfriend one day.”

Henry gave Aleks another hug. “I really wish you didn’t have to go.”

“You sure you want to keep your memories of me?”

“Oh my god, yes,” Henry blabbered. “Are you kidding me? Tonight was incredible. I’ve loved every second of being with you. And not just the sex stuff, either. I think you’re genuinely one of the coolest people I’ve met.”

“You’re pretty special, too, Henry. Well then, I think it’s time.”

Henry stepped off the school bus at Misty Pines Middle the next day, and damn it all, if people didn’t think there was a bit of extra pep in his step that morning. Despite the fact that he only got about five hours of sleep, he had slept deeper than he could ever remember. On the bus ride to school, he didn’t feel the need to even test the power that had been given to him. He could sense the instant Aleks had taken it from him. The boy had been right—it hadn’t hurt at all, and strangely, he sensed a part of his supernatural friend with him in his mind. It was comforting, like a hand on his shoulder guiding him along. Somewhere out there, that amazing boy was fighting to bring others out of the dream of darkness and back into light.

Aiden was waiting for him in the courtyard as usual and offered him a weak smile as he approached. Henry smiled back and bumped fists with Aiden.

“You look happy today,” Aiden said. “What gives?”

Henry looked around and breathed in the fresh morning air. “Just...happy to be here, I guess.”

“Where’s your friend?” Aiden asked, scanning the courtyard, half-full by now with students from the morning drop off.

“I don’t know,” Henry lied. “Maybe just hasn’t gotten here yet. Hey, so yesterday, remember when I was going to tell you about what happened at the swimming hole?”

“Yeah?”

“Well, guess what...”

Henry started spilling about how Jake had been filming himself jerking off in the woods, which naturally made Aiden lose his mind for a minute before he slapped him about withholding secrets for so long. Their conversation became filled with hushed comments and whispers, and Henry noticed, there were quite a few questions about Jake. When the morning bell rang, and the middle school students began shuffling inside, the two walked together, giggling to themselves as they passed the red-headed boy with his popular clique.

It wasn't the time, Henry thought. Time was what he had, and one day soon, he would share with Aiden about how boys made him feel. Maybe it would lead to something, maybe it wouldn't, but when time brought them to that point, it would be Aiden's decision. The ball would be in his court. What was most important to Henry in that moment was having his best friend by his side through all the wild, unknown chaos of middle school.

The End

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