

Content Warning:

The following story contains explicitly sexual scenes, non-consensual scenes (however it is never AT ALL encouraged and is the result of a character's trauma), violence, profane language, and mild mentions of an eating disorder. Viewer discretion is advised. Again, this piece/story (not perfectly complete as of now) is written with good intention, for both a social message of how twisted relationships can get and to subvert typical norms). If this content makes you uncomfortable, you are free to click off at any given moment.

- For context, Samriddhi's nickname is Sumi.
- Also, just in case you don't realize Zander grew from middle school so he's not petite anymore.

The date was officially tonight. "Good morning, Kaito," Vane calmly said in the kitchen.

"Good morning," Kaito responded back and noticed Vane's outfit. It was a tighter shirt than usual and it showed his broad muscular chest. He was wearing joggers and was humming to meditation music. As Vane turned around as Kaito sat in the kitchen, he suddenly felt so.... Flat.

Ignoring the thought on flatness, he calmly (or at least tried to) go through his discrete math exercises. He looked at the theories and each curve reminded him of his own body. After 10 minutes, Vane turns around to notice Kaito's on the same problem as he was before when he started. "Hm?" he mused, his eyebrows slightly raised. "Ah, don't worry. He just gave us hard drills this week," Kaito sighed, assuming he was so good at faking everything.

"Get those drills over with Kaito, so then you can enjoy tonight in peace. Kaito nodded and continued his work.

...

Now it was seven pm and 30 minutes before the date. How much could he do, it's not like he's a woman or something. He took a hot shower and continued glancing at his legs, how they didn't look meaty like Vane's. It's fine, It's fine it really doesn't matter. After finishing with the refreshing shower, he changed

into black tight boxers and a brief undershirt that exposed half of his side boob.

Suddenly, he saw in the long mirror his own reflection. *Hmmm, maybe I can look sexy*, he thought very unstoically.

Slowly, he turned around to observe the curves at the back of his body. It's not enough, he thought, his security about practically everything else getting undermined by this one small thing. Okay whatever, he's alone. He can do this. He started... innocently... clapping his cheeks to make them look perkier. *Maybe I'll feel hot when I sit down*

He continued, starting with soft pats and then going harder... but then Vane walked in. Vane just loomed from the doorway... and stared. "V-VANE?! Shoot, I was just checking for cramps. Y'know, I've been working out a lot lately. Anyway, this is a very advanced karate technique to recalibrate one's sensory nerves. Even Zander isn't disciplined enough to do it as well enough as I can..."

Vane continued gazing. “Vane, don’t be an infant. I was simply performing a manual stimulus on the peripheral capillaries as I noticed my muscles looked... deoxygenated.”

Vane blinked. “The room’s ambient temperature was dropping, Vane! I was merely using kinetic friction to to maintain my core heat! If I would’ve walked out there doing nothing, I would’ve gotten a cold or something! I was protecting my health and it was completely necessary!” Vane couldn’t hold back his laughter anymore. It was a deep chesty vibration that filled the entire room and it was rich. His usual bored and heavy-lidded eyes were now filled with pure amusement. He reaches out and taps Kaito on his pink cheek, “Physics huh? I didn’t know ‘kinetic friction’ sounded so much like someone clapping for a sunset. You’re a disaster, Kaito.”

Slowly he reached down and his lips grazed Kaito’s ear, “Hm, if you’re so worried about ‘deoxygenated muscles’, let me handle that.” “Hmph! So annoying! No more date tonight!” Kaito yelped

out of embarrassed rage. “Okay sure. Do you want me to make you something tonight,” Vane asked, completely in control.

Kaito sighed desperately because he was actually so excited for a date night. To feel hot with Vane, “Mmm, fine.... I wanna go somewhere nice and classy.” They both glanced at their suits. Kaito again realized in agonizing humiliation that Vane was simply going in to get his suit. He probably assumed the noise was the washing machine or something.

Vane nonchalantly took off his meditation shirt and joggers, exposing his large chest and abs and Kaito could feel his face heating up. He quickly looked away and began changing into his own suit that fit him well. His butt felt so warm... maybe he did overdo it but it's fine. They looked at each other, fully dressed, and grinned at each other.

“We look nice,” Kaito mused. “Here,” Vane said grabbing an embroidered rose, “Put this in your pocket.”

Kaito, flattered, effusively agreed and put it in. He let the sweet

white color part of the plant peek up from above the pocket to show it off.

They climbed down the marble stairs because they felt like simply walking three flights of stairs together. Leo and Zander were screaming at the football game and then they glanced at Kaito and Vane. Being the menaces they are, they both whistled loudly. They both ignored Leo and Zander and walked out the door.

“C-Cmon wow Vane! A LIMO!?” Vane raised his eyebrows quickly once and opened the door for Kaito. They both climbed in and Vane slowly started driving. The silence felt charged and thrilling. Kaito felt so relaxed and calm, and confident.

The mirror incident suddenly felt so insignificant... but also significant in a nice way. So what! He’s human and everyone does embarrassing things. As the cars finally slowed down they eventually reached into a restaurant that was covered with people dressed in suits and ties and dresses. The restaurant was dark red in the background, in contrast to the rose.

They sat at a nice white table, the ones which flow at the bottom with the fabric. The jazz music was auditory yet pleasantly subtle. “Good evening, men!” a pleasant waitress chimed. She was slender with a bob cut, “What would you like to order?” Vane gave her a respectful smile and started, “We’ll take seared scallops for two. And for the main... two filet mignons, medium rare. We’ll take the Cabernet too-the ones that’ve been slowly complexifying throughout the years.”

He gave a quick glance at Kaito before looking again at the waitress. This reminded Kaito of the H and M incident that happened a few years ago. The waitress was taken aback by Vane's deep voice for a moment, but then nodded politely, “Thank you! Please enjoy your night gentlemen.”

As she walked away, the charged energy returned. Kaito looked to the side for a bit before smirking, “Wow, a little sentimental for you no?” Vane simply looks down and starts swirling the water in his glass for a few minutes, not denying it. “Also... I forgot to order dessert,” Vane said a bit too perfectly

afterward, "Tell me what you want."

...

(Highschool Scene Continued)

For the next few days, Sumi hadn't spoken to Zander in a bit.

You can go now.

Sumi heard Zander's composed words wrecking her head. Yeah, he's spoken like that to her before, and it'd hurt. However, until she never got context to why he's been acting closed off lately until now.

It's quiet moments like this, not in public, that Siri finally let herself cry from guilt. She was so emotionally... constipated! She looked at her straight-As certificate, it didn't feel like much when your best friend doesn't like you anymore.

She was lying in bed with the book in her hand and was comfortably propped in her room, and she was rereading the Twilight saga. She'd wondered how Edward would always handle Bella's messes with such openmindedness, well later on in the book.

Maybe Siri could be the Edward to her Zander?

"Okay, I don't need to overdo it right now..." Siri muttered to herself. She opened her phone and texted.

Sumii: *Hiya, Zander! Do you wanna play Roblox rn?*
Ugh, neither of them exactly play Roblox anymore.

"Why'd I even bring that up?" Sumi muttered again, "Whatever, it's better than nothing."

Siri patiently waited for a bit, well as patient as she could be without starting to pace around the room for the next fifteen minutes. What else, she fiddled with her pencil, drew for exactly 3 minutes, and jump roped for another 10.

Ping! Sumi's eyes lit up.

Zander: Haha, ok fine. Now... what's ur username again?

FLASHBACK:

The hallways were too loud and suffocating. Of course they were as the hyperactive 6th graders and overtly mature 8th graders walked through. Sumi felt... disconnected. Other people spoke to her, but it was almost always like she was a second option to her "more beautiful" older sister. She heard rumors about being more "average" than her sister. But no one paid attention to her grades, no one knew she was a Shodan.

Last year during 7th grade, she was able to put off a facade. And for a while, she really thought her life was changing. No one called her Sumi (cute) at school, they just named her Samriddhi.

And Samriddhi couldn't bear it anymore.

The monotone screaming of teachers yelling at misbehaving fourteen year olds. The rude kids mocking her when she got a question wrong.

Samriddhi was drowning.

As she entered the car with her silent restrictive father at 6 pm in the evening, she sighed and glanced out the window... so lonely.

I don't wanna be an attention seeker. I don't wanna be a "pick me."
Samriddhi thought to herself. *I just feel so underappreciated, no one notices what I do right ever. It's just Mistake A and Mistake B, and Mistake C and so forth. Like shut the fuck up.*

She entered the dojo and it had its usual musty smell of wood. She inhaled it in and signed her name in.

And there? There was Zander, who was currently a Nidan. At barely 5'1 he proved everyone wrong, he wasn't delicate. He was made of **steel**.

"Sumi!" he gushed as he grinned, "How's school going? I haven't seen you in a few days. You haven't been picking my calls lately..."

“Sorry.” she sighed, “Lot of geometry hehe.” Her shoulders slouched slightly as she lied. No, it wasn’t geometry. She was currently putting boring geometry off due to her lack of motivation.

His eye twitched as he could swear something was off. His gut was saying something was off. “Okay... do you want to practice Jion together?”

“Yeah okay Zandy.” Sumi said, silently composing herself.

He grinned at the nickname she gave him. Only to know she’d never call him that ever again after middle school ended.

...

During class, they kicked and punched. Sumi was only doing this to engage herself, and keep herself away from her bad habits and intrusive thoughts. The way she’s been so disrespectful to her parents lately.

Why’d I cuss at my mom yesterday, Sumi thought silently as she threw out another mindless punch, I keep telling my mind to stabilize, to stay away from the porn I “run into” but I always lose after a month.

“Samriddhi! Focus on the way your fist’s moving instead of zoning out!” Sensei pleaded. “Sorry. I’m sorry. Osu,” Sumi sighed. Zander, in the back of the room, glanced at her.

Something is seriously up with her, Zander thought.

“Okay class, time for jiyu sparring! I’ll pair you up randomly with an opponent,” Sensei eyebrows creased his forehead as he pointed two people to each other, “Okay, Zander and Samriddhi.”

“Sumi, I know this’ll be a bit of a challenge for you because Zander is so high ranked. Just try your best.” Sumi scoffed silently, she’s not about to get beaten by him.

Zander gave a soft smile to Sumi that she didn’t return. They bowed to

each other and began. Sumi began relying on her punches, her mastery of punching skillful. Zander however, was elusive.

He glided his small frame around, slowly prying into Sumi's space. Out of pure aggression, Sumi began kicking and throwing punches to score a chudan-geri. Yet Zander calmly blocked her techniques.

After 30 seconds of footwork, Zander launched a mawashi-geri, his hips snapping with the kick onto Sumi's stomach. Sumi wheezed out of pain.

"Mawashi-geri. Waza-ari! Ippon!" the Sensei exclaimed, raising his hand up at Zander's direction.

"Good game Sumi," he said, holding out a fist bump.

She bumped him back and then retreated to the corner, looking confident while others started their rounds, but internally musing on why she failed every sparring round.

...

As class finally ended, Sumi silently prodded at the bruise Zander gave on her lower-abdomen and silently sighed before she walked out. She didn't even bother to say bye to Sensei, he kind of pisses her off.

Until... Zander rushed out the door, "Wait Sumi!" he exclaimed loudly.

"What do you want?" Sumi hardened, unable to fake it anymore.

He was slightly taken aback by her rudeness, but he continued anyway.

"I-I know you might not wanna talk about it. But if you do, whatever's making you sad, I just want you to know I'm right here. And I know you

feel awkward with emotions, but sometimes being awkward actually helps,” he blurted.

And Sumi softened before squeezing his arm gently, “I just feel... unincluded. I feel this loneliness about wanting a boy with me, because you know how much I’ve been struggling with hormones. But I’ve been running into these... sites. And I can’t stop. And I keep telling myself to stop but I can’t.”

Zander’s eyes widened, he barely just started puberty so he couldn’t exactly relate. But then, he smiled and repeated what his mom always said to him, “Your thoughts don’t define you. What other people say doesn’t define you. Only you define yourself. I wish I could be at your school, by your side. But the universe has paired us on separate academic paths.” (Clearly he didn’t know yet that they’d be going to the same college together.)

Sumi giggled through her sniffles, “Gosh, you’re so OVERDRAMATIC Zander!” Zander smiled back, “Don’t be sad Sumi, if you ever feel lonely, you can always call me...” Sumi nodded as they slowly walked out to the parking lot. Out of a combination of recklessness and adoration, Zander’s small hand interlocked into Sumi’s. Sumi reciprocated and

squeezed his hand back

too.

I love you, Sumi thought.

...

Smeeta Downer was the most beautiful woman on planet earth.

She had a curvy hourglass figure with luscious tan skin and long dark hair that reached all the way to her stomach. Samriddhi Downer on the other hand was lanky and had small breasts. She felt like she was comparing a fly to the queen bee.

She traced her face, feeling her cheeks “felt too big” and her nose was “too wide.” Shanu (Smeeta) walked down at the get-together and was talking to her friends about her boy-stalker. She seemed so popular and all the little girls wanted to be like her.

Smeeta used to do karate but quit the month after she became Shodan, but Sumi has continued 6 months after reaching Shodan, and was going to make herself do it for the entirety of high school and beyond.

Even if it's hard, I have to try and get out there. Maybe... just maybe Team USA?

The music was so loud and Sumi's mind was short-circuiting, it felt difficult to have a meaningful and truly entertaining conversation with anyone. Intrusive thoughts came to her mind, the way Smeeta would be there at school with her tight pink tops and all the guys's jaws would drop when they realized that so shockingly, they were RELATED!?!? One of her friends even joked about Sumi having distorted genetics.

Zander silently gushed as he walked by Smeeta, “Whoah,

that's your sister right?” Sumi sighed and faked a smile, “Yup.”

Zander stupidly began babbling, "She's like I dunno, the beautiful goddess while your her bodyguard." Sumi, taken aback by this comment, responded, "Yeah, I'm the mediocre one."

Zander, again stupidly missing what she said over the music continued, "She's so smart too! She does Congress debate and what not. It's nice how you followed her footsteps. She helped you win first place that round, no?" Sumi fell silent.

"... but I like you more." Sumi's eyes widened at the surprising statement. No one else says that.

"You're the one who sticks to things. The one with grit. And I know you've been struggling to stay gritty lately. But I just wanna tell you that... that."

"What?" Sumi interjected.

"You're funny, and you're cute. And you're pretty too. Don't compare yourself to someone you're not. Someone who's older than you. Those comments people throw at you are useless, be yourself. And I'll be by your side," Zander's eyes glowed with shounen-protag energy.

"Haha, again so stupid and sentimental," Samriddhi chuckled as she booped cake batter on top of Zander's nose.

...

Zander was sitting down, staring at the seaweed soup in desperation. Slowly, he tried to force it down his throat but he couldn't. He kept bringing the spoon up to his face and then back out of hesitation.

Sumi glanced at him, curious to his actions and why.

"Zander... have you not been feeling hungry lately?" she rumbled, forcing him to open up and be honest.

He let out a conscious sigh before answering, "Yeah. I don't know, its like my body hasn't been like, I don't know, feeling hungry lately." Sumi

looked at him, part concerned but part interested before smiling, "Go to Chloe then!"

He huffed, "I'm not going to a high schooler for advice now am I?"

She smirked, "Heyyy, she did take health practice classes! Instead of searching on AI and sites for a solution, ask someone who actually knows what they're doing. Regardless of their age."

Zander sighed again, "Fine!"

...

Zander knocked on Chloe's door politely three times, and after a minute or two Chloe came in. Her long brown waves were tied up into a high ponytail and she was in cargo-shorts.

"Zander? What happened?"

He gave a soft smile, "Some advice please?" Chloe nodded her head and led him into her decorated room. It had fairy lights and her piano. Along with all her karate tournament medals...

"What's up?" she asked, her mezzo voice bright and airy.

"Well, you know a lot about diet don't you? No wonder you're so fit! Well, I've been losing weight lately and need to get it back! So my punches end up stronger and I can eventually rank up to a Yondan. And then I'll be so prepared for Inters over the summer. I'll feel more... desire. Wait SHOOT why'd I say that in front of you!" he babbled.

"Okay whoah, hold your horses," Chloe mused, "Wait, I think I have a diet plan for you... natural mesomorph... tall... lean..." She started mumbling as she scavenged for the right file until she finally found it. "Here!"

She held out a pretty printed paper. With laces and all. Zander felt so zesty right now.

"Okay so, you need protein and carbs more than anything. Chicken, beef... well no beef eating with Sumi. And have your croissants. Have a

lot because carbohydrates are a secondary source of energy 'kay?"

"Well... I've not been feeling hungry lately..." Zander admitted, "I just stare at my food and expect... and hope for it to simply vanish."

"That's okay, it happened to me a few months ago. I consider myself a *pretty* big eater y'know! But around the time 12th grade started my body had so much to do, I had to stay on the computer for so long to manage my APs, that I just didn't feel hungry. What helped for me was eating small bites of food consistently with breaks. Therefore, you're not pushing your tired body to a breaking point, but you're not unintentionally starving yourself either." The sun illuminated the room suddenly, Chloe smiled and patted the top of his hand, "You'll be fine big bro."

Maya ran into the room, "CHLOEEEE!" she exclaimed while cuddling her little sister. She shared similar physical features with Chloe with her tan skin but lighter hazel eyes. She had a round face that pleasantly curved at the bottom and was the same height as Chloe. She raised her eyebrow playfully and interrogated, "Whatchu doing here Zander?"

"Just some medical advice hehe," Zander said, "your sis is going to be a doctor when she grows up!"

"Oh really?" Maya smirked, she slid her hands underneath Chloe's pits and started tickling her, "How do you cure the tickle monster fufufuu?" before she started cooing.

Zander, clearly the straight man in the situation, rolled his eyes and sighed, "You're going to be ✨valedictorian✨ Chloe!"

Chloe cupped the sides of her face and silently gushed, "All the big kids love me!" Zander and Maya looked back at her cute expression and started wheezing.

...

A week later, he's been praying that Veronica has finally left him alone. And it mostly looked like it. She'd give him an occasional wink that he

wouldn't reciprocate every once in a while.

He decided to hop on Leo's car and sat on his lap (no homo no homo) and eventually fell asleep.

Suddenly, he was in a distorted version of the locker room. He was forced to lay on his back on one of the locker benches.

Everything looked hazy.

Everything looked dizzy.

Everything looked obnoxiously disgusting.

Veronica leaned in, her emerald eyes nihilistic, her smile monotone.

Zander tried to shove her off and scream, but then he noticed the tape in his mouth. His entire body was tied up with jump rope. Jump rope. Jump rope can be so innocent until it's not.

"Let's see how much you can take you anorexic wench," she whispered as she began tearing the skin on his abdomen with her long French-tip nails.

"Mmmph! Mmmph!" was all he could force out. He looked down to see his cock below him. He was completely naked while she was fully dressed in her usual tank top and jeans.

Suddenly, she shoved her throat up his cock while twisting his erect nipples, which betrayed his mental fear, with dangerous force.

"See darling, I'm not boring like Sumi!" Something about this felt paranormal. The way she began teasing him like she was doing something harmless. It grossed him out.

Tears started to dribble down from his eyes and Veronica noticed and shrilly started laughing. She bit his hardware, and more tears poured

out.

"Weak...." she muttered as she continued to scratch his back.

The dream statically ended as Leo kept trying to nudge Zander awake. Zander jolted awake, panting.

"Zander, you good? You were crying in your sleep," Leo said, eyes wide.

"N-No," he stammered, remembering every vivid detail, "I had a dream of Veronica hurting me. Badly."

"Buddy, I'd never let her get close enough to you to hurt you."

Zander's shoulders, which were tense, finally started to loosen up a bit. Apart from his usual mischievous grin, he gave a soft smile.

"Thank you Leo."

...

A week later, Veronica has been overthinking what she's been saying lately. She sat in her barbie-dream house room. Baby pink walls with a hot pink desk. A computer with pink stickers all over it.

Veronica tapped her nails anxiously over her desk as she began writing in her sparkly diary:

Calling someone anorexic as a joke is disgusting. She dug her french-tip nails deep into her arms, Why does he hate me so much? I'm just trying to act differently so he doesn't treat me like any other rich girl?

Should I apologize? Nah... that looks submissive on my end. Let's just forget I ever said that. I'll just say hi to him at school tomorrow. Maybe I'll tease him about something other than his weight. Oooh, his conditioned hair! Yeah... I won't be an idiotic bitch this time.

Zander, I've loved you since 9th grade. But you never seem to notice me. Why?

...

9th grade was hard for Veronica. I wonder how that weird bitch Samriddhi didn't care what people thought of her. I wonder how she didn't care about how ridiculous and awkward she seemed when she stared down people the way she did. Vero wore her makeup the way she does, her gloss shining with her pink eyeshadow.

Her silhouette is long and graceful with her luscious blonde hair climbing down to her lower back. She drowned herself in mascara and lipstick because Jack had left for the military. Veronica gave a small sigh as she kissed her mom on the cheek and left her humble house.

Yet her room was plastered with her favorite celebrities from Taylor Swift to Ariana Grande just to make herself feel like some hot babe. Maybe everyone will forget? She sashayed to the bus stop with the salty smell of the beach near them, expecting a hi from Tiffany, but she grimaced and stared her down. Next, even worse, Tiffany started to turn to her other

plastic friend, discretely whispering about something.

Why? Weren't things meant to be different? Everyone remembers don't they? Her meltdown. Her freaky meltdown in 8th grade. Snot falling, mascara dripping, wardrobe malfunctions, eyes dilating, sweat, blood. Her heart hitched remembering the fight of last year with Maya. Maya who got so fucking mad about everything. She's such a feisty bitch, ruining everything about me? We were just joking when we made fun of your Minecraft world.

...

The day was getting more unbearable by the minute. The teachers looked at her strangely when seeing her flaw in her otherwise perfect student resume. Straight As, Gymnastics Club secretary, Chess Club Vice President, Suspension for unlawful conduct and violence.

A few of the senior boys snickered at her, "The freshmen are so fucked up this year man haha. They get worse every year" as they walk by her. Maya on the other hand, seemed to have

no shame in whatever she did last year. She spoke to everyone enthusiastically with her Fortnite crop top, gushing about the new My Hero Academia skins. She didn't even make eye-contact with the broken Regina George. She didn't care. ...

After a whole day of getting constantly ignored, Vero was looking out at the sunset at 5 pm, and it reminded her of two weeks back when her brother left to perhaps never come back. A pair of arms she can never come back to. She felt hot tears torturously dripping down her face. Who cares, no one even looks at her. No, of course she cares but it's fine, there's like one other person here. Her shoulders softly hitched and she couldn't hold back the sniffles anymore. Just 10 more months. No, 4 more years until hell ends. Until Maya leaves. Until Tiffany's gone. Until it's all gone. Until a fresh start. Until a new beginning. Until Jacki comes back. Until I'm not alone.

Suddenly, she felt someone plop a hat on her, those usual hats. She took it back and observed the logo to see it was of a karate dojo. She turned back to see a lanky boy with pale skin, slightly taller than her with a gentle smile on his face. The hat was the only thing that fit on his frame without outpacing his mind state.

Then, he comfortably, after a few mild stumbles, settled atop the rail near the bus with her. The wind began blowing, his warm black eyes staring into her cold emerald ones. I hate that. “You can have my hat,” Zander said, unsure of what else would console Veronica. She gripped the hat as she silently composed herself and wiped her face. She glanced at Zander and saw how he was so... His mid-neck mullet wrapped around his face in luscious patterns. His clear skin radiated against the setting sun. His steady breath eventually calmed hers. His eyes radiated. She felt her heart uncurling, Those Eyes by New West playing in the back of her head. .Unfortunately. In the near future, Those Eyes would play in her head for a different reason. As she gained her courage back to chase his love, the more he would push back in oblivion. Her heart would curl back and ultimately rot.

...

okay, im envisioning this scenario: zander and... vane get into a physical fight over something in the heavy rain. while zander would beat vane in a calculated karate fight, vane wins because its a street fight. zander wakes up in veronica's room. he's

scared.

but he looks down at himself and sees he's in loose clothes.

veronica walks in, and saying he should lie down for a while.

zander looks annoyed, assuming shes the one who changed

him, but she told him it was her older brother. he looks across

her barbie themed room and is jarred to see jump ropes. he

paces off away from veronica afraid for his life. Zander walks

off in the rain with a fever because he's not thinking straight.

The reason veronica brought zander to her house was because

sumi was too busy looking over maxi and steph for their 6

month birthday and leo was hooking up with liya. And kaito

implied he was on vane's side in this situation so that wasn't an

option either, maybe kaito would've taken him in but he wasn't

getting taken care of someone siding with that asshole.

Veronica, unfortunately was the only one to had the courage to

take him in. Zander got a fever because the fight was in the

heavy rain.

...

The rain was pouring and the wind was pounding against the trees. Zander stumbled slowly, losing it, and slowly started humming through the fever again. In oblivion. Veronica ran all she could after him, the lactic acid burning in her feet, he was miles away from his home and he was going to fall and kill himself before he ever got home.

“Lalaalaa,” he started murmuring, “Mashitta!” (It’s delicious!)

He yelled as he tasted the rain even though his nose was running and his throat hurt like hell. Veronica felt her nails gripping the insides of her palms as she finally caught up to him.

“ZANDER!” He stumbled back for a moment and she could see the sweet face that hid in hats at one point. His eyes looked so watery and delusional.

“Sumii,” he misidentified, “come here baby.” He started walking toward Veronica and tripped on a tree root. He twisted his ankle, badly, feeling the tearing sensation throughout his entire left foot and he just sat on the floor with his temperature of 104 in extreme dizziness.

Veronica rushed to him screaming, "You idiot! Fucking idiot!"

Until she looked closer... "Nooo, Sumi-i.... I zowby I kwan't," he blubbered, tears rushing down his face, "Dwon't. I'm zowby." Veronica glanced back at him in guilt and fear.

Veronica's eyes widened but she couldn't help the words that dropped after, "I'm not Sumi."

"N-no, I don't wwant youuu? Wh-where's Sumi?" he wailed, his voice reduced to a tenor.

"Zander, please. Please. Please just come with me and cooperate. Sumi's at a meeting right now, she'll be too stressed," she said, her throat so tight. But then, watching the rain flood harder and his... his sobbing was unbearable. All those years of rejection. Was it really worth it for someone who would never care in the long run?

"Okay," she said, a tear sliding down, "I'll call Vane. I'll leave you alone forever."

"Yay!" Zander exclaimed squeakily.

"V-Vane? Hey, Zander doesn't wanna talk to me. I tried, I really did but he's going to die of pneumonia or something if

someone doesn't help. Everyone's too busy at the worst moment. Please?" Off at the comfort of his home and comforting his swollen black eye he grumbled, "Fine." Veronica gently pried under Zander's arms despite his protests and dragged him to a shade with dry benches nearby and Zander hugged his knees. Several times during the fifteen minute wait he was tipping over from the bench like he was going to fall and Veronica steadied him so he wouldn't. You're not anorexic. You're completely normal. Veronica wanted to say that, but didn't. Her pride wouldn't let her.

She zoned out about, musing about what Zander might've said. Would he calm down or would she make his "tantrum" worse? She looked at the side of him, his head was suddenly placed on her lap. His head and long hair felt so cold and wet against her warm thighs but she let him be. Someone should give him a break for once. Especially her. After a few more minutes Vane finally came with a red umbrella. His eyes were tired, dark, and done with it. His figure intimidating. Veronica looked up, "Hey..." Vane looked down with mere disgust at what he saw. A child. A man turned into a child. Disgusting.

Forcefully, he pulled Zander's up by the hair and dragged him into the car before pushing him in. Vane was just so fucking done with today. Veronica looked up at him in horror. As he banged the door closed in macho anger she could hear the frantic screams in the car.

She felt the sobs quivering at her chest, "... " "I had to, he would've recognized me and kept his ass in place. He won't remember," Vane responded silently with a bit of guilt tinged in it.

"Veronica, please go home before you get sick yourself." With that he gave her a respectful nod and walked away into the driver's seat and drove off to his house. Veronica Helender can't do this anymore. ... As Vane got into the front seat to begin driving, he noticed Zander had curled up into a ball and fallen asleep. Vane just shrugged his shoulders, he really didn't care. After 10 minutes of pensive driving in the rain, Vane felt Zander slowly rise up. "What happened?" Zander asked directly.

"Oh, what happened?" Vane cooed mockingly, "You cried like a fucking child in a barbie room cuz you got a little too SICK."

And this woman looked after you because you couldn't fix shit yourself." He chuckled dryly, expecting defeated silence from Zander. Instead he received a bone breaking kick to his back through the leather at the back of the front seat. The leather was the only thing that saved him.

"Shut the fuck up you asshole! I'm fucking leaving!" Zander yelled loudly as he tried to grip the car door open. However Vane had locked the door and so Zander couldn't leave. He did it with all his self-control. Again, Zander kicked again worse this time, fueled by hatred, and Vane felt his back was about to break unless he did something. Vane slammed the brakes of the car in the middle of nowhere as he went off track, jumped to the back seat.

"Fuck! Get off me!" Zander started flailing punches that hurt like hell and kekomi but Vane's tectonic weight was too much eventually for Zander to fight back because otherwise he wouldn't be able to breathe. Eventually, he heard soft sobs. And Vane realized humiliatingly what happened to him underneath.

"I'm sorry what the hell is wrong with me. Your weight was too much for me," Zander said as he shifted Vane off him. He

just breathed and looked down slowly, his legs feeling like lead. Zander reminded Vane of Kaito. Vane's tone shifted a bit, and he laid an arm on Zander's shoulder.

"Vane, I'm sorry. We shouldn't be fighting like this," Zander said, slowly patting Vane on the back despite the exhaustion. Vane looked back and could see Zander's eyes lolling back.

"Zander, I'm sorry too. But please don't lose consciousness and stay with me. I'm sorry, there's nothing wrong with losing it as a man. You're not obligated to do anything. You weren't obligated to stay with Veronica or be 100 percent."

Zander, too tired to even care anymore, wrapped his arms around Vane in adoration. Vane, while slightly shocked, hugged him back. Zander put his face on Vane's jacket and Vane could feel his jacket slowly grow wetter by the second. Eventually Zander let go and fell into a deep sleep and let go. Vane felt guilty, it was... it was like beating up his own little brother. Eventually, he gently prodded Zander awake as they reached Kaito's mansion. "Bud, wake up." "Okay," Zander said gently, rubbing his eyes. He breathed in a bit, "I'm okay." He smiled.

...

Jacki didn't come home. Momma didn't come home. Daddy didn't come home. Veronica came home. She changed out of her pink tank top and jeans and changed into an undershirt and shorts while lolling back and forth violently. She wasn't crying, she was too numb to. She herself could feel the hot-coldness of her skin now. The back of her ears aching awfully. She'll just deal with it, she deals with everything. Whether the feeling of the stares. The feeling of grades dropping. The feeling of mediocrity. The feeling of getting lashed away from the one you love the most. Silently, she plopped herself onto the bed with her soaked hair even though it was only 8:45 pm. She sang Those Eyes to herself. "Going home in the back of a car and your hand touches mine." "I close my eyes and all I see is you" She caught Zander's virus. Now, who was going to save her? I'm glad you asked. No one. ...

...

Zander and Sumi were sitting across each other in

criss-cross on the bed. They were both wearing their karate shirts and black shorts. Their simple clothes.

Zander felt the urge to do something with Sumi tonight, something they haven't done in a while.

"Alright, fine," he mused, his smooth voice playful and flirtatious. Sumi looked up, slightly perplexed and broken out of her zone-out session.

"Take control how you love to, Sumi. Let's see if you can actually handle all of this." He gestured at himself proudly and gave her a playful wink.

Sumi winked back with the same energy and wrapped her arms around his shoulders, "Okay babe."

Sumi began going in closer to Zander's long frame and smelling the musky scent of his neck. He smelled like a cafe that had heat and warmth.

Zander was flattered and he pulled Sumi in closer to a kiss. Her full lips felt so soft against his smooth ones. After some point, their tongues began grinding against each other and Samriddhi then patiently moved down to kissing his jaw.

Zander was breathing steadily and said, "Wow you smell nice

Sumi.”

“Mmm,” Sumi simply nodded and then continued. Each kiss was so warm and Zander felt the overwhelming urge to take off all the clothes.

Her body was smaller compared to his, but at this moment it felt so much more solid and compact. He could tell she was up to something smart, she always was. Her breath felt so warm against his neck that he shivered a bit.

“C’mon Zander,” she nudged softly, lifting up his shirt. Then, she tucked her head underneath his shirt and rose through the shirt in front of his face. She then popped her head out of his shirt and gave a smirk.

Zander felt her clothed breasts against his own bare pecs from underneath his shirt. He could now feel their heat radiating against each other and it felt incredible. Her weight was massaging his body.

He let her continue to kiss the underneath of his ear until she started suctioning him. The endorphins were addicting.

Zander’s heart thumped against his chest with tectonic

force and his long fingers hoisted Samriddhi's back.

"Yes Sumi, I like that," he hummed, his glasses fogging up.

Sumi patted his cheek and took off his glasses.

Zander could feel the edges of the room slightly blur but he could still understand everything that was happening. She gave him one last long kiss on the lips before slowly riding his shirt up. She admired his defined abs and his muscular pectorals and could feel her own heart beating in the process of watching all this.

After he was completely shirtless, he felt... flattered and appreciated once again. Sumi used her own artistic fingers to trace upon his pecs and draw circles with them. Zander himself rode his hands up Sumi's shirt and slid it off fluidly. Sumi was in her bra now. It looked so balanced on her. Her long wolf cut was out and she looked so strong with it on. A beautiful asset to her long and lean frame. The evidence of her own hard work was shown with her carved abdomen and muscular arms.

"Damn girl," he complimented.

Sumi darted her eyes a bit and felt her own heart beating.

The heat in her arm muscles jolted. Sumi said the next bit a bit shyly, “..Can you take it off....?” Zander’s eyes lit up. No, as in literally stars flashed in his pupils.

Zander’s eyes unhooked Samriddhi’s bra in one fluid motion and within three seconds he could see her beautifully shaped breasts. They were shaped like teardrops. They looked balanced. He supportively cupped them and continued in awe. They felt so soft and cupped perfectly against his large hands.

“Zander stop, that's SO embarrassing!” Sumi’s weight wasn’t on him anymore and she was simply sitting on his foot. It didn’t hurt on Zander’s end as while she was powerful, she was also quite light. She was only in her shorts now and so was he.

Zander looked up to see her face red and her large black eyes even wider. “Why does one nipple look swollen?” he curiously asked, his own warm eyes filled with inquiry.

“Shut up- shut the fuck up,” Sumi growled and her face flushed even harder, “Okay, when I was like four and I was

like impulsive and liked twisting things okay? It's stayed that way ever since." Zander snickered.

"I think it's cute," he said, flicking it a bit. Each nerve in that area reacted to his touch and she let out a small gasp.

He could tell that, well of course he could, he's known her for so long, she wanted him to reach in and swoop her in a bit. So that's what he did and she was sitting on his lap. Sumi hugged and cuddled him and felt the warmth in his shoulders and chest. Until... she noticed a small bit of asymmetricality too. She could feel a small bit of muscle bulging in at the side of his stomach.

She stopped cuddling for a minute and her fingers slid to that muscle bulge, and then inquired with the same exact tone but while raising her right eyebrow too.

"And what's this Zander?"

Zander didn't flinch, he simply looked down, his eyes tracking her fingers as they pressed into the bulge of his abdomen.. He let out a low steady hum and then spoke, the initial tectonic breathing of his heart calming into a steady

rhythm.

“That?” he murmured, his baritone smoothing into a honeyed register. He didn’t pull away; he rather wrapped his hands around Sumi’s and pressed her fingers deeper into the muscle. “It’s a knot, Sumi. From the tournament last week, I ate a roundhouse kick and the muscle stayed tight.”

He looked up at her, a small yet knowing smile tugging at his lips. The stars were back in his eyes but calmer now.

“Do I need a massage, or are you just looking for an excuse to keep your hands there?” Sumi quietly explored the knot of his side-stomach, and felt the hard work and force he’d taken for his sport.

“Grind harder Samriddhi...” he said, his voice monotone and teasing. Sumi nodded, he said what he wanted. Now she MUST give it to him haha.

Her fingers twisted against the muscle to loosen it, and it worked.

“Ah! Wow that was strong!” he mused breathily.

The knot finally yielded and settled in, slightly less exaggerated. While his eyes exclaimed with intent, his body

sank down lower on the bed. He could feel the heat steaming from the area and so could Samriddhi. That musky masculine, yet sickly bakery scent pulled Samriddhi back in. She had her hands on the sides of Zander while the rest of her body was in the air upon him while he was lying back on the bed.

“I feel it settling back. Thank you,” he said calmly, but his heart sped against his chest. Samriddhi smirked, seeing through his bluff.

She mindfully put her cool head against his warm sternum and felt his heart vibrate against her temples for a bit. The thick scent charged the atmosphere for a bit and made Samriddhi a bit woozy. Zander’s large hand had one traveling Samriddhi’s wavy wolfcut and the other resting upon the small of her back.

Thump, thump thump. Thump.

Zander simply let her be. The weight of her head felt pleasant.

She could smell everything, her nose grazed his pecs and eventually landed on his own pointy nipples.

Samriddhi gently mused, “Looks like someone’s reacting to the cold...” Her head then sank in heavier to his chest

and her breath hitched softly.

Zander's hand gently tightened its grip against Sumi's hair and Sumi felt secure in it. Zander could feel his heartbeat in rhythmic pulses through her temples but he let it be. Or at least he tried to...

He then let out a low hum and Sumi then slightly shifted herself to put her full bodyweight on top of him. The lightweight champion.

Her fingers gently stroked his nips. It was just right, firm and assertive. His cheeks flushed a bit.

"Sumi-san?"

"Oooh!" Sumi's eyes widened with an idea, she leaped off her bed to her desk and got a bit of denim. She then, poised, walked back to the firm bed.

She curled up her feet into a doggy pose and pulled the denim to his hands. "I won't do this, Zander, if you feel uncomfortable with me doing so," she respected his personal space more than her wild fantasies.

"No Sumi! This looks really cool actually... even if it's weird," Zander gushed. "Okay." Sumi leaned down and

scooped up Zander's hand. For a minute, she lined his hand up against hers and his fingers extended against hers. Two smooth textures against one another.

Cute, she thought. She smoothed the denim with her hand and began massaging the meat of his side-hands. It felt so nice and the acupuncture soothed his muscles.

Scrp! Scrp!

"Nice Samriddhi...." he felt his hands sag slightly and his shoulders loosen a bit. Next, she moved the denim to his ribs. The skin was thinner on his ribs so it sent a series of shivers throughout his body.

And finally...? Sumi began to gently scrap over the tip of his nipples. Zander's shoulders hitched and his breaths came out shocked.

Sumi agonizingly did the process for three whole minutes until they were red and ripe. They would sting with every soft touch she gave. Uh oh, we all know Sumi loves taking things farther and farther!

"Sumi-" he softly moaned as his chest heaved, his chest feeling the cool air and overwhelming the tips.

She curls the denim into a tight little cone and traps one of those ripe tips inside the grit. She gives a firm, deliberate, and forceful twist to it. His large frame snapped into an involuntary arch as he let out a sharp gasp.

In that rush of endorphins and ticklishness, Sumi leaned down and began blowing against them. The contrast between her cool breath and his overheating nipples was arousing. Zander's fingers tangled in her wolf cut in search of an anchor.

As Samriddhi traced the outlines of his nipples which were now outlined in red with her fingers, she found another fun device to use as she hopped off for a moment: clamps. She peered in carefully to see if she could target just the right swollen spot. She opened the clamp for a moment, and Zander's eyes widened. He was a bit scared, but he was very excited. Then she let go perfectly at the swollen tip.

"Nghhh. Ngh, nghh. Ahhh," he let out through gritted teeth.

His jaw is locked. After a few moments of Sumi humiliatingly staring into his face in thought, she open the clamp for a moment and then closed it again.

SNAP!

“AGH!” he vocalized. Siri began to see a silver thread of saliva slip from his mouth.

Samriddhi smirked and tugged at the metal for a good half inch. Zander was trying to hold back his moans, not because he was trying not to look weak, but because he wanted to test his stamina. Sumi’s eyes widened at his silence. Rather than arching his back, he was dead silent and his muscles were so tight they were almost vibrating.

Samriddhi Downer.

Was absolutely turned on.

She smiled a bit, playing along with his scheme, “Nice stamina. We haven’t even taken off our pants yet.”

Zander managed to give Siri a confident smirk while at it, “Go ahead.” Samriddhi hastily took off his shorts and left him in his underwear. It was the branded Calven Klein kind. Her hands cupped his hips in admiration before slowly dragging the underpants down. Wow... he was completely naked before she was.

She could already feel her own genitals getting slippery in her own shorts. His cock was so long and suckable. It was

as long as the new pencil on the cabinet in front of them.

She sighed, "Wow, men have such COMPLICATED parts.

Okok, I learned this a few years ago. There's the scrotum nurturing the sperm and the testes producing the sperm..."

"Shut. Up," Zander hissed, involuntarily covering his crotch.

"Hey, you wanna have a fun time? You gotta hear the science behind it!" Sumi exclaimed. "Sumi," he murmured, rolling his eyes despite the exhilarating pain, "We don't need to discuss the... production cycle."

Sumi didn't even budge, she just smoothed her cut and gave the clamp a firm and assertive tug to keep him focused, "Patience, my dear warrior. Now, let us speak of the epididymis." Zander's body betrayed him by tensing up and he let out a breathy gasp that he attempted to hide behind a cough.

However, she shockingly didn't speak of the epididymis. Rather she moved on to tracing the edges of the metal. Every time her finger would touch his sensitive skin, it would feel less like a touch than a high-voltage spark. She was fostering, nurturing, and loving the area.

While the clamps were still on, she started to gently knead his tips to increase blood flow to the area with her thumb and forefinger. Zander's frame shook and he let out a low hum that broke into a small moan.

She then leans down, her hair ghosting his pecs and her lips graze the skin. He watches as she treats his asymmetrical body with so much care and love, it hits his heart as hard as his nerve centers.

Finally, she slowly, agonizingly slowly, lifts the "nip pinchy thingies" as she called them. The second the metal is gone, she doesn't pull away. She covers the hyperstimulated tips with her warm palms, rubbing in slow, soothing circles.

His body sank two inches deeper into the mattress.

Then.. she leaned down and began kissing it. Softly. Too Softly. Her lips barely grazed against his nips. He let out a shaky laugh. It was making his skin crawl in a way that was addicting but frustrating.

"Sumi... please, not so light." His eyes were pleading as he looked down at her wavy wolf-cut. The contrast between his sizzling chest and her mildly warm lips made the bakery scent

grow warmer and stronger. He just laid there, in the fierce effort of not squirming, his fingers tangling the sheets as he endured the soft torture.

After a minute of feather-light kisses, Sumi landed that assertive, firm kiss in the right spot. “S-Siri the other side too...”

Sumi didn’t make him wait, she bent down and gave his other nip a kiss and held it there for a few seconds. Zander sighed a bit in relief.

“A-ah, that feels nice babe.” Sumi then leaned down and pouted a bit, “Aw, they look so red.” Sumi grinned as she began tracing the red circles. Zander swallowed hard, his face matching

the color of his chest as he tried to calm down.

“It’s YOUR fault for going crazy with denim and clamps?” he grumbled in fury. “Do you need a minute?” Sumi mused, her voice deep and unbothered.

Zander’s eyes widened in sudden ego, and his voice grew raspy and cocky, “What minute? Do whatever the fuck you’d

like.”

Samriddhi grinned all of a sudden, “Are you sure?” Zander nodded, his eyes suddenly widening in unsureness, “Go on...” Sumi was suddenly starting to lose her dignity and it was getting replaced with fierceness. Suddenly, she placed her head down and began teething them.

The endorphins were electrifying, Zander’s head jolted back. Sumi’s eyes glanced at him and widened.

“AH, nghh. Ah. That hurts so good.”

“Why do you keep talking, Zander?” Sumi asked, her voice slightly condescending. “Mmm,” Zander stopped, and pulled Sumi closer in. And Sumi sighed and stopped and patted his pecs. She noticed a small dribble of red from one of the tips.

“Ooohlala,” Sumi sang, “It smells so good...” She bent down and licked it with her wet tongue. He took in a sharp intake of breath and his soles shook slightly.

Zander hummed as he took a few deep breaths to calm himself.

And then the smell of himself awakened him. It was sharp and salty. She began to lust for his fluids and licked the saliva

off his face.

“Sumi,” he said, softly.

Sumi’s eyebrows narrowed a bit in confusion, “Yeah Zander?”

Zander pulled Sumi in and hugged his arms around her.

He loved the feel of her protection, her muscly arms around his own toned ones.

Sumi de-escalated by simply placing kisses on his neck and soft suction from time to time. Again... he smelled so warm and toasty she just couldn’t help it. Zander’s hammering heart slowly began to calm down. She covered her warmth in him and breathed on his sternum. “See, this is where your heart beats Zander!”

“And...?”

“Haha, I don’t know if that sounded sentimental,” Sumi said, slipping up a bit herself. Zander let out a small chuckle.

She then gestured at her own joggers, “Can you take them off for me?”

“Sure babe,” he said as his long cold fingers slowly rode up her thighs. She was on top of him but she was light so it didn’t hurt.

He slowly tugged at the bottom of her shorts and tugged down little by little. He could see the peeks of her black underwear. It was very different from her sports bra at the top. It was laced and fancy.

“I-I didn’t know we were doing this today,” Sumi blurted, her face hot and her eyes glazing suddenly.

“Okay whoah whoah whoah,” Zander exclaimed, taken aback.

Sumi gritted her teeth a bit before requesting, “Can you keep going please?” “Please?” Zander mused, his head intentionally tilting to the side. He only pulled down the shorts two inches more down, but it was enough to see how much that underwear really exposed.

It curved down like a thong, enough to expose the majority of her
smoooth ass. It was small
but tight.

Zander suddenly tugged it all the way down in shock.

“Sumi... you bad bad girl.”

“Pull. more,” Sumi wasn’t thinking straight anymore.

Zander deftly pulled off her laced and bowed undergarment.

“You look so fertile.” He commented. His finger swiped down

at her precum and then he put a bit in his mouth and grinned. It tasted slippery and slimy, just how he liked it. Sumi tugged his broad shoulders down and their lips met in a deep hot kiss. Sumi nipped his biteable lips, breaking yet another blood vein today. Zander's long penis jumped for attention. They had shifted their weight and now Zander was atop of Sumi. His muscles are tight and vibrating. Her breaths eventually spun into gasps. Siri arches her back and murmurs, "Show me your best sparring moves."

Zander lifted Sumi up like she was a feather and put her atop of him. Then, he placed her atop of his erect cock.

His was too long to fit against her walls, it couldn't go completely down and she was moving so slow.

Zander, impatient, slid her body down and it let out a series of loud moans coming from Sumi. "Shhh," he grounded, "Sh, stay calm. And move along with it."

Sumi let out a deep moan with it, it felt so nice. It filled up her body and could feel it petting her abdomen.

Samriddhi was then bold enough to lift her hips up and begin going up and down softly. The friction of a calloused to

a smooth inner surface. It was now Zander's turn. "Ah, ah, ahh," he said, his hand lightly placed over his mouth. His hand curled around Sumi's for about the third time this night and tightened.

"Breath Zander," she lightly teased though her own eyes grew hazy.

"Mm," he responded as he shoved Sumi's hips down.

It happened.

Both exactly at the same time.

The sensation of her inner warmth to his outer heat.

The tsunami.

Zander squirted inside Sumi and Sumi squirted onto Zander.

They gasped, baritone to alto.

At last, Zander finally let go of Sumi's small waist and he sighed, his stomach deep into the bed.

"Yay..." Sumi dryly said.

Zander got Sumi off cowgirl pose and then finally pulled her in closer for a hug against his overstimulated skin.

"Man you're rough," he grumbled as he felt the warmth everywhere in his body. Inside to out. Sumi giggled a bit.

He got up and began walking to get himself a blanket, it was 11 pm anyway. "One sec, Imma go brush my teeth," as he walked toward the bathroom, he could hear a low whistle coming from Sumi and he turned back to see her clapping her hands rhythmically. *Wow she never gives me a break does she?*

He ignored her and walked away, his body a bit too sleepy to care.

Ten minutes after waiting in the bedroom, Sumi was wondering what had happened. She walked in to see he hadn't even made it to the bathroom. He was lying on the floor, apparently, Samriddhi's tongue hadn't helped as much as she hoped for because there was another trail now.

What are you, five? She playfully wondered.

"Zander," she said softly, repeatedly poking his soft cheek, "The bed is softer." His eyes remained completely shut as his large hand fumbled for Sumi's. He gripped Sumi's poking finger and brought her hand to his lips for a soft, warm kiss.

"Five more min Sumii? The rug is my home now."

Her un-kissed hand rather delivered a sharp playful smack to

his ass, making his heavy frame jolt awake.

Rather than taking the affectionate bait her boyfriend gave, she rolled her eyes at the man lying on the rug. Her sharp gaze had locked onto the perfect target. With zero mercy and perfect precision, her flat palm met his bare skin with a loud crack!

The sound echoed off the bathroom tiles and Zander's entire body bolted into an involuntary arch. A high pitched yelp ripped out from his throat and his sleep-fogged brain hit an overload as his hands flew to shield himself.

"Ouch! Sumi!" he blubbered as he looked up with her with watery, betrayed eyes, "You can't just... violate me like that."

Sumi just kneeled next to him and stated, "I told you the bed was softer, Powerhouse. If you don't get up I will even out with the other side." Her statement had lowered into a teasing and threatening whisper.

"Hmph!" he whined, rubbing his dark eye circles, "Maybe my butt feels better stuck on the cold tile than being with someone MEAN like you!"

She lifted her eyebrows slightly, startled. And then she

stood up to her full height and smiled, “Good night Zander.”

She deftly walked away and Zander, furiously desperate, began crawling and scrambling after her ankle.

Samriddhi, always absentminded, slammed the door shut as she walked into the bedroom. Except she felt something solid against the door as she flipped the light closed. A few broken whimpers cried out.

In horror, she quickly switched on the lights and opened the door.

“Sumi, you really ARE mean,” he blubbered, his eyes swimming with tears, “I just wanted a cuddle 🥺.” He clutched his nose, “Oww.”

Samriddhi, suddenly immensely guilty, bent down to his sitting level and sat down herself. “I’m so sorry, Zander,” she whispered, “I didn’t mean to use a door to strike you.” She gently moved his hand away to only see a small bruise on his nose. Zander let out a shaky dramatic sigh before continuing to soak up her affection, “Ahh, don’t worry bae. I still love you..”

“I love you too.”

Good night to both of them ❤️.

...

...

The Morning After Zander Told her the Truth:

Currently, she was in her room, staring at the window and silently pondering the morning after the night Zander had told her to completely leave him alone.

Shockingly, he probably hadn't said anything previously for the sake of "politeness." ...

The Morning Of:

"Vero, Vero wake up," a large calloused hand nudged Veronica's shoulders softly. Drowsy and thirsty, she let out an "imph!". Her thighs and calves were aching and her brain stung. Ouchy. Jack looked at her, his big and muscular frame arched directly below her bed. He was probably in criss cross for a while, because he let out a silent huff as he tried to wake up his foot as he crouched over.

Jack was so much more, rugged, now that he's come back from the military. His broad shoulders had grown more meaty and he had deep blonde-brown hair that came in

tufts. His hair was growing rapidly despite the fact that the military made him shave off his hair.

The eyes, those eyes, stood out. They were a light yet deep brown that accentuated his dark eye circles.

“Jacki?” she said, rubbing her eyes. Her outfit was fairly simple with a long pair of pajama pants and a spaghetti strapped velvet pink top for comfort. I guess Jack had changed her out of her undershirt and shorts. She felt a bit cozier and warmer now.

She straightened up her back and sat up, ready to move along and listen to her music. As the reality of all that had happened, Veronica could feel tears spring onto her. It felt like someone had been stepping on her chest.

“Hey, hey Vero, breathe. You’re just trying to understand everything that’s been happening. Just look at me, I’m home and I’m not going anywhere this time...” Vero had been wiping her face so he wouldn’t notice anything, her usually perfect skin starting to grow just a bit blotchy at her cheeks. She whimpered a bit and her shoulders hitched.

Jack looked at the glass of water at her right wooden desk

and he gave it to her along with a medicine pill, “Listen, I don’t care about who Zander is. I only care that you’re okay and healthy. Please drink this.”

...

“Ugh,” Kaito groaned. It was 6:30 am and he had just woken up from sleeping with Vane. He looked at the bruises on his hands and let out soft arms, remembering last night. Vane had already gotten up, and he walked back in the room with a stoic smile, “Good morning.” He was wearing a simple white bathrobe and had his big fluffy slippers on. His brown hair was in waves and his deep black eyes accentuated his beige eye circles against his pale skin.

“Hey,” Kaito said, still naked. He got up to go wash his face and propped his arm around Vane’s shoulders to give him a morning kiss and Vane bent his neck down a bit for it. It tasted good, like a combination of his own drowsy breath and Vane’s mint. Kaito propped his face down to Vane’s neck to take in the scent. It was musky, strong, and sweet at the same time. Kaito could feel Vane stroking his hair.

Vane slid his arms down to Kaito’s torso and gave him a hug. The sensation was addicting, his morning warmth and positivity spread across Kaito’s soft, naked body. “C’mon Kaito,” he nudged him after a

few minutes in, "School today no? Fun right?" "No," he softly pouted, "Not fun. I got paired up with VERONICA for the art project." Vane laughed a bit, "It's okay, just get it out of the way with the A." "Ew," Kaito moaned, "Art." Wow, okay his back to his usual self.

...

A few months later. Veronica is still in the shadows and not in the focus again yet. She's simply minding her own business currently. Kaito was simply naked. He was simply enjoying his time in the steaming jacuzzi. He loved every sensation of the heat massaging his skin. He had a platter of bread, cheese, and grapes next to him cuz why not. He had his glasses off and was bathing in the cool air mixing along with the heat. "CANNONBALLLL!" Zander screamed as he flipped into the jacuzzi and when he sat down he took his towel off. "Ahhh," he rumbled contently, "The heat feels good against my swimsuit." God, Kaito was the only one naked. Vane, reluctantly not as mad as he used to be settled in too and Leo hopped in. "Heya Kaito! This place is nice!" The only thing he could notice right

now or care about was that he was naked in front of Vane. He sighed and mused internally, No one's gonna know, don't worry. You'll just stay in here long enough that no one notices you.

"Well, UCLA's been pretty boring lately. No drama," Leo mused.

Zander scoffed, "Of course YOU miss the drama. I'm done with it. God... this place feels so GOOD, we should come here everyday!" Errr, no you shouldn't. Kaito silently thought about Vane's visible mid-body. His pronounced chest and defined abdomen. He sighed silently in contentment as he popped another grape in his mouth.

"AYYYY KAITO. YOU'RE 20 YEARS OLD- you shouldn't be drinking wine JUST yet buddy," Zander mused.

Kaito rolled his eyes, "I'm not actually drinking the wine, it's just decor you infant." Zander smirked, "Okay... if ya say so-"

Suddenly, a loud feral growl filled the room. "Wha-" Leo turned back and screamed. A white tiger with black stripes here and there. It was big and scuffing its paws on the floor, ready to attack. Leo, Zander, and even Vane rushed to the door. They were silently wondering why Kaito wasn't going with them.

Vane, preparing to risk his own life for Kaito, turned back to see Kaito hugging the tiger. “Heyy, it’s okay buddy. You’re just stressed and hungry.” Kaito had gotten up from the pool and was cuddling into the tiger who was essentially melting into him.

Kaito forgot about himself being naked but everyone else noticed. He looked like a Greek god. His body was so shiny and he looked so angelic. His skin was shiny and he had a small bracelet round his foot that made his body shine even more. His bum was small but curved right. Everyone, well not Vane, gasped.

The tiger obediently stepped back and slowly walked away after two minutes. Everyone, again well not Vane, gasped. Kaito took two deep breaths of satisfaction until he turned around to see the smirks of the rest of the crew. “Wow, join a sex gig Kaito-” Leo’s perverted ass blurted out.

He completely forgot about how they might’ve all died a moment ago. Vane finally came in closer to observe Kaito’s slender build and finally gently rubbed his shoulders. “Let’s just go in, hmm?” Kaito, slightly flustered, simply nodded and they

all walked into Kaito's mansion together. After some time, he changed into fleecy loose clothes and cuddled in with Vane on the long comfortable bed. Vane lightly spooned Kaito and whispered in his ear. "Beautiful boy, why do you hide so much from me?" Kaito's head jerked in toward Vane's until their lips were nanometers away from each other.

...

Kaito decided to wear something simple. Just a black tee with sweatpants down. He didn't feel like looking nice today. As he headed out, he made a small grimace at the marks, so in the bathroom mirror he put on Liya's foundation to cover the bruises up. He didn't need it to be interpreted as something else.

It was project time. Kaito and Veronica had agreed through text to meet up at her house. He greeted her brother being the gentleman he was and stoically walked in.

"What the hell," he quietly muttered to himself as he looked at the bright pink room with all the pop star posters. It'd been months and Veronica was still too heavy to take it down to

“ground” herself.

“Hey Kaito!” Veronica beamed. Surprisingly, her outfit was fairly simple. She had a wool white sweater on with baby blue triangle patterns across it. She was wearing blue jeans underneath to fit her frame. She sat on her yellow chair and only had a bit of lipgloss on.

“Hi,” he said as he propped himself on the bean bag chair next to her. His tall frame felt awkward as he tried propping himself down. He slid down awkwardly, with zero smile on his face.

“Sorry about that,” Vero said, slightly sheepish, “We haven't refilled it in a while.”

“Whatever,” he said, rolling his eyes. Mildly annoyed, he took the paper he had in his hand the entire time and gave it to her.

“Some ideas,” he muttered. The handwriting was exquisite, neatly placed and very readable. The ideas ranged from generic sunset to girl laughing at a flower. The assignment was

meant to be a 3D representation of shapes, using “household items” like feathers, toilet paper, you know, to make a representation of something. To his surprise, Veronica smiled again and began ripping the paper into shreds.

She laughed a bit and said, “Haha, we’re not doing that!”

“What. The. Fuck,” Kaito gritted his teeth. He *knew* this was going to be a nightmare.

“Kaito, Kaito,” she said, making eye contact with him and softening her voice, “We need to make it along the way and just flow.” He grimaced in response.

He stared at her for a few moments, his glasses covering his eyes somewhat. Until he finally huffed and nodded his head.

“Okay, walk with me and we’ll *talk* through the ideas,” she patiently said.

“No, I don’t have all day for this,” he arrogantly shot back.

“C’mon,” she said, getting off her chair to kneel on the ground, “Please trust me in the process?” Kaito stared again, he was clearly getting shoved outside his comfort

zone.

He begrudgingly got up and began walking out, “Uhm, so in your
community right?”

“Yeah,” she hoisted herself up and walked through the front door. Kaito observed the setting with interest. The house was mostly a deep beige in color outside of Veronica’s room and the living room was wide and spacious with a fancy dining table hoisted with all the little forks and spoons alongside the normal ones. A big painting of a peacock was put on the top. Way too much room for only two people. Where were their parents? Dead?

“Okay, Less gooo,” Veronica said, gesturing at the long front door. She hadn’t noticed his keen eye observing how... empty her house felt.

Kaito walked forward. Today was a hot day and he felt content as the hot breeze waved past him. It was a fairly suburban place apart from the fact that Veronica’s house was near mansion-like. Almost like the mansion Kaito’s daddy lets him borrow. Hehe 🤔🤔.

Veronica felt euphoric finally walking with a friend. Jack will be happy to see her speaking with someone new. Finally less fanatical about her “Legend.”

She walked over, embracing the breeze as it passed by her lithe frame and they walked in the loop near her house.

“Something about... going with the flow?” Veronica claimed casually,
with a bit of zeal.

Kaito continued walking and responded, “Only dead fish go with the flow...” Only.. dead fish Kaito? Yet, weren’t you practically cascading around Vane’s body this morning. Or... how about the way you vocalized and snuggled in last night?

Vero chuckled a bit but refused to stay silent, “Staying stagnant for one thing. One pursuit only depletes the quality of your life. Sometimes, you just need to emancipate and move.”

A small boy walking with his family looked up at the two giants. He was only at Kaito’s knee and he looked up a bit. His chubby face neutral and then he tugged Kaito’s finger; for someone so tiny he had the strength to latch on for quite a few seconds.

“Eugh,” he grimaced as he pulled his hand up in defense.
So... unhygienic, why the hell were his hands so sticky?

“Do you have hand sanitizer?” he desperately said to
Veronica.

“Nope,” she smirked, “Keep walking and keep ‘emancipating’.”

He side-eyed her.

“Fine, we should make a feather image of a boy with
shambolic SNOT all over his hands and how I’ll be missing
MATH a few days later. I can be the depressed corpse made
up of black paper,” Kaito growled. He hastened his pace.

“Actually, good idea!” Veronica chimed, “It shows how you
should be your own messy and weird self no matter what
judgemental people think of you.” She shot him a look back
and stopped for a moment before she walked by the pool.

“Water,” she thought, “Agua. Okay, we can have a glass
container, and we can have a tube sloping downward from it.
From there, water can flow into the glass container and the
tube will be in the container.

“We use feathers to wrap around the container to show how ‘perfect’ the exterior of people are. And we add mud inside to show the filth that people internally go through. However, we need light blue pool water, you know, to show how people still have some ‘purity’ in them.”

“Uh, pool water’s chlorinated. Shouldn’t we just use normal water for actual purity?” Kaito huffed, still mildly upset.

“No, Kaito,” she further insisted, “The chlorine in the water shows that despite the purity people have, our subconscious still gets cloudy because of what people tell us. It shows how... demanding it is to have to claw your way out to a clear headspace.” She sighed and Kaito looked back at her with a bit of pity.

He looked at the pool water, not making eye contact with her. “Fine, I guess pool water works if you’re trying to show how hard it is when things get messy.”

He paused a bit, “By the way, you’re doing a better job at ‘clawing your way out’ than I thought you were. Good job.”

To break the awkward tension, he unlocked the gate of the community pool and walked in. He sat down and Veronica followed him, still in awe at what he said. He took off his sandals and dipped his feet in a bit. Until... Veronica suddenly had a cheeky grin.

She splashed a bit of water at the back of his shirt, completely missing where the marks were. He felt his face heat up a bit in realization.

“ARGH!” he jolted, annoyed, “Just. Collect. The. Mud...” Vero snickered.

“By the way, I forgot a bucket, you know. Because we were EMANCIPATING right?” she said with a grin. Kaito groaned, he knew exactly what she wanted him to do.

He took out one of his polished sandals and muttered, “I hate flowing.”

He moved to the side gate, where there was a field of mud and worms (eugh). He kneeled down and scooped up mud into his sandal. Wow, the genius who usually calculated the angle

of a roundhouse kick was now calculating how much dirty mud he could put in his shoes.

Vero propped herself next to him, still smirking. He rolled his eyes for the fifteenth time today and with his index finger slabbed a bit of mud and streaked it across the back of her sweater. Right on the shoulder. Veronica gasped.

“Wow... Kaito has a sense of humor!?”

He looked back down at the mud with a defiant look on his face. At this point, it was already afternoon and the sun was beating on his back. Black was SUCH a good choice of color for when it was 100 degrees out.

“Shut up,” he groaned, the sweat making the foundation feel looming on his skin, “I’m wearing black in a heatwave, scooping filth into my footwear, and I’m pretty sure a worm just tried to ‘emancipate’ itself into my pants.”

Veronica stood over him, the dark streak on her light sweater a trophy
of his rare humor.

“You’re overthinking the temperature, Kaito,” she teased,

though light pink blotches were beginning to build on cheeks too, “The Sun is part of the flow you know. You see, warriors in the past used to train against the overheating Sun to build their resilience

“Ohh,” she suddenly interrupted herself, “I really shouldn’t have worn a sweater today.” Kaito shot back a mischievous smile.

Suddenly, she kneeled down and deftly took her sweater off.

She sighed, “Ohh that’s better.” Kaito grimaced, all she was wearing was a SKIMPY spaghetti light blue tank top that completely exposed her arms and shoulders. He was suddenly looking away so much that Vero that he might walk into the pool through the gate for a moment.

“This is indecent,” he hissed, his words heavy.

She rolled her eyes, “For god’s sake, it’s a POOL.” She then ignored him, looking for a stray plastic cup.

“Ahh there!” she chimed. It was sitting stoically on the top of a wooden picnic chair. She walked in the gate and then

scooped in some pool water. Kaito had finished scooping the mud and then they finally began to leave.

Veronica's dirty sweater was in her hand and Kaito was basically jumping with one foot on the one good sandal he still had left. Nice duo.

As they walked (and kind of hopped) home (Kaito absolutely wouldn't let his right foot touch dirty concrete), Jack noticed his sister walking in a skimpy top with weird guy jumping up and down. For someone who's spent years marching in boots, this had to be the funniest thing he'd seen in his life.

As he pulled the door open into the rapturous AC, he smiled at them a bit and asked, "Is this meant to be a new art trend?"

As Kaito hopped in, he shot back, "I'm actually just testing the friction levels of your driveway with one foot. It turns out your community is very unhygienic and 'snotty'. I rate the experience a zero out of ten." He continued hopping in and Veronica scoffed.

"You know you can't leave just yet. You have to help me

construct it!” she grinned and patted his back and he almost toppled over. He took the other sandal after he finally gained enough balance since they were already at home.

“Come,” she said and invited him to the living room. They hoisted themselves down to the ground and began propping their materials down.

He felt the makeup lightly sliding off his arms, “Veronica, where’s your bathroom?” She got up again (ugh after all that walking) and took him down the hall.

“H-how do I fix this?” he finally whispered to himself in the spacious bathroom full of white tiles and a porcelain toilet. He took a few deep breaths to ask (in 5, out 5) , slowly mustering his courage.

He stepped out of the bathroom to see Jack, likely checking on him to see if he was okay. Kaito kept his hand tightly crossed across his chest to hide the bruises and asked, “It’s chilly in here, do you have a full sleeved top I can borrow?” Jack nodded without suspicion and then got him a light blue UF full sleeve shirt after a moment of walking to his closet.

“My bad if it’s too big you know,” Jack muttered. Kaito shrugged, unassuming, and slid it over his black tee. Wow, that’s much better.

The only thing, Kaito looked like a child wearing his father’s clothes. The sleeves were too long and the shoulders hung over his slim frame.

Veronica watched as Kaito sat back on the ground, now swallowed by her brother’s massive shirt.

“You look like a little marshmallow,” she teased, but her voice was kind.

Kaito didn’t even snap back this time. He simply picked up a feather and a piece of toilet paper, feeling **safe** now that the marks were hidden. For the first time all day, he wasn’t calculating an escape. He was just... there. Prepared for work.

He picked up the first feather, and Veronica began hot-gluing it to the side of the transparent container. It was a systematic pattern. First the red, then pink, green, and finally black. It showed the repetitiveness in perfection.

Veronica then bent and compressed the feathers and the feathers shot up a bit, though still a bit intentionally bent. They looked fancy!

She began to take out the pool water that was in the fridge and dumped it in the container. “Ew, who puts pool water in a fridge?” Kaito lightly teased.

Kaito put the pud in at the bottom of the container and with plastic gloves on (of course), he began flattening the mud to fit the bottom.

“On god it looks like a pile of shit,” he continued.

He then splashed a bit of chlorine water around it to blend the
mud into the water.

“Okay,” he finally sighed, “We’re done.” Veronica looked down and smiled a bit. Jack walked in and grinned, “I made dinner.”

Kaito’s eyes widened a bit, “Uhm.” He just wanted to go home to Vane now, but... he looked deep into their eyes. The big house with no one else in it, and saw the loneliness inside.

“Okay, yeah sure,” he nodded with a taut smile.

“Okay,” Jack said as he patted Kaito’s back, ouch maybe a little
rougher than necessary.

They walked into the dining room, safely leaving the project
on the floor. Wow... a mountain of steak and mashed potatoes.

Kaito lightly picked up the fork and saw how small it really
was.

How do people eat steak with this?

He tried to stab the steak with this little fork, but the prongs
just skidded off the seared crust. Okay, Kaito was officially
losing the battle to a piece of silverware. And every time Kaito
would try to move his arm and cut the meat, his sleeves would
awkwardly hover over the potatoes. So he eventually just
pulled the sleeves up.

“It’s a salad fork, Kaito. Use the one next to it...” Veronica said
with a smirk.

“Ah-I knew that!” he tried to say in his deepest baritone, “I was
just... analyzing it.”

The atmosphere somehow felt less awkward than

before though. Filled with silverware clinking and the quiet sound of chewing, it was peaceful.

The food was admittedly very good. It had a thick velvety taste and the butter soaked up everything. The umami was addicting

Well... until Kaito's elbow caught the edge of his sleeve and that sent a perfect, brown drop of gravy right onto the chest of Jack's shirt.

Kaito's eyes widened in horror.

"Relax weirdo. It's an old gym shirt. It's seen much worse than a little gravy..." Kaito nodded.

"Hey Kaito, let's go take a picture of our project outside for submission," Vero said. Kaito nodded again, "Okay, let's finish up."

They stepped outside to Veronica's backyard. It was completely dark by now, it was 8 pm already. The sky was a deep indigo and the stars were out in full force, looking like the ultimate math problem- infinite and perfect. In the dark, the

oversized UF shirt made him look like a soft, glowing shape against the lake's edge.

As Veronica snapped a few pictures silently, she finally sighed in contentment at the final photo. It looked good, the flash made the feathers pop out against the dark mud and you could see the faint reflection of the stars in the pool water inside the container.”

“It’s acceptable,” Kaito muttered, though he had a faint smile on his face, “Even if it’s a 3D depiction of snot and filth.”

Suddenly, Veronica had pulled him into a tight hug after a small squeal. She was surprisingly warm and since their bodies were both slender, they fit perfectly together like two puzzle pieces.

“Okay, okay,” he said as he patted her shoulder.

As Veronica finally pulled away, he began speaking again.

“Okay,” he says, sounding unusually gentle, “The project is done. Please don’t make it a habit to start squeezing me.”

Jack looked back from the glass door of the back, happy to see his little sister finally has a real friend again. He leaned against the wall and looked forward in contentment.

Finally...

...

“Okay class,” Professor Thompson said as he firmly clapped his hands twice, “We’re going to begin presentations.”

Kaito had been sitting next to Veronica (because partners pair with partners for this class today) and Zander was looking at them. Kaito hadn’t yet noticed how Zander looked at them with his eyes narrowed, confused from across the room.

Zander, at this moment, just wanted to sink into his seat. Vane had been talking about an art extra credit assignment, but he had no idea this had been what they were talking about. He had no idea Kaito would be with.... Her.

“Who wants to present first?” Thompson asked through his thick robes, looking like the artist he always dreamed to be.

Veronica enthusiastically raised her hand up before Kaito could stop her. He sighed softly and then brought the project up.

“Okay guys, the presentation speech will be around 3 minutes long,” Thompson said as he started the timer.

“Hey class,” Veronica said. Zander grimaced in response.

“This project is meant to review the depth of the human brain. Someone who could seem supposedly monotone with colored patterns for every response actually has so much going underneath the surface. There’s the urge to be perfect, the positivity of the world around then... Yet conversely, there’s also filth,” Kaito began as he traced the feathers of the entity.

Zander wondered if Kaito had told Veronica about his own “filth”- the insecurities about his bodies and the fear of being a burden. His large frame tried as hard as possible to look smaller. Veronica was proud of what she built, yet was completely unaware that her presence was crushing the guy in the third row.

“This filth is picked up by the words people tell us about who we’re supposed to be. Jargon about gender, sexuality, or race. Or something completely unrelated. The chlorine is meant to show how even when you have positive intent, it can get subconsciously tainted by the world around you. No one can be absolutely perfect,” Veronica continued.

Zander knew exactly what Veronica meant by words that “taint” your subconscious. Like when you call someone a “bony disorder.” To the rest of the class, Veronica sounded like a dedicated and complex woman. Yet, to Zander, he sounded much like a hypocrite. He didn’t understand how Kaito just stood there and let her preach about “positive intent” when she’d been the one to dump “chlorine” into Zander’s own headspace.

“Sometimes though, you just need to breathe and do what you can. No matter who leaves you, no matter what people try to say who you are,” Kaito vocalized, and then in a spurt of impromptu, he brought a water filter with him. The class gasped! Well, everyone in the class gasped except for

Zander, who supposedly looked bored in the exterior. Though no one knew what was occurring underneath.

To Zander, it just looked like Kaito was trying to idiotically “filter” Veronica’s reputation for her. Zander looked at the water as it started to clear. No one saw how his hands shook underneath the desk and the way his jaw clenched.

The class bursted into loud applause at the introspective speech. Only

Zander didn’t clap.

As class ended, Zander was the first one to leave. There was zero eye contact with Kaito. No congrats, no whoops, no nothing from Zander. As Kaito and Veronica spoke to Professor Thompson, Kaito felt something was deeply off.

“Veronica, I need to go,” he desperately said as he rushed out. Her eyes widened but he didn’t even wait for a response. He rushed out of the halls to see Zander outside, about to walk inside his SUV in the parking lot. There was no breeze, it just felt suffocatingly hot outside. There was no one outside and he could see the back of Zander. The black top and baggy jeans begin to falter and his shoulders start to hitch.

From the top stairs (yet quiet low stairs) of the bottom floor, Kaito suddenly tripped down in a haste and scraped his knee. It stung.

“Kaito?” Zander turned alarmed by the noise, and blinked back the pain. He suddenly paced toward Kaito to check on him.

After releasing a low gasp, he ignored the pain entirely.

“Listen, listen I’m sorry. I know she’s not a good person and it was a one time thing. I didn’t choose to be her partner. Whatever happened, happened. I’m not talking to her ever again. Please...,” he said through slightly gritted teeth. He was so mad at himself.

Zander’s ears perked up a bit, and he softly put his hand on Kaito’s knee, “It’s fine.” Kaito’s eyes widened; he didn’t expect Zander to be so forgiving.

Zander continued, “Kaito, I’ve really moved on from obsessing over my body. It’s not something I can control. I can’t control my height or or my composition. I can’t. But I can

control my actions, and I can forgive you ❤️.”

...

A week later, Veronica has been overthinking what she's been saying lately. She sat in her barbie-dream house room. Baby pink walls with a hot pink desk. A computer with pink stickers all over it.

Veronica tapped her nails anxiously over her desk as she began writing in her sparkly diary:

Calling someone anorexic as a joke is disgusting. She dug her french-tip nails deep into her arms, Why does he hate me so much? I'm just trying to act differently so he doesn't treat me like any other rich girl?

Should I apologize? Nah... that looks weak on my end. Let's just forget I ever said that. I'll just say hi to him at school tomorrow. Maybe I'll tease him about something other than his weight. Oooh, his conditioned hair! Yeah... I won't be an idiotic bitch this time.

Zander, I've loved you since 9th grade. But you never seem to notice me. Why?

...

Kaito and Vane had been arguing lately about something. Art to math.

“Vane,” Kaito slightly whined, “Okay, that philosophy and art project I did a while ago was quiet interesting. But isn't math that shapes the entire universe. Everything has a pattern from flowers, to leaves, to stars. How does it make sense that we need art too?”

Vane scoffed in return, participating in the banter. “Combining philosophy and art with math is what makes the world interesting, Kaito. Otherwise,

it's just pointless, well... jargon everywhere."

Kaito grimaced, "Jargon? Wow Vane, for someone who's body is so big your brain sure isn't." Vane grinned in response, "You want me to show you the beauty of combination?"

Vane began pinning down Kaito's wrists against the bed with a small smirk. Both of them were fully dressed. Kaito had dressed simple today, with only a loose fleecy top and joggers underneath. Vane was wearing baggy jeans and a white top with a Japan logo on it on the side.

Kaito's jewelry was shimmering on the side. The soft light was illuminating the silver ring it always had.

"You like how the room is decorated today?" Vane asked with a grin.

"What do you mean?" Kaito raised his eyebrow, perplexed by Vane's nonsensical question. "It looks the same as always. Same walls, same bathroom. Same huge mirror. Wait, a mirror? Why's there a big mirror right in front of the bed?"

Vane had already begun slipping Kaito's joggers down. He was excited to view Kaito from every perverted angle he could from the ceramic mirror.

"Thank you," Kaito said, starting to lose his cool. He slid it off further and further until he was only in his underwear. It was too tight, too exposing. The way Vane looked at him...

It was black and was beginning to reveal the bulge sticking out. Vane's eyes widened a bit.

"You're excited already, wow for someone so disciplined you lose your cool quite easily," he said, his fingers beginning to prod the bulge. His fingers were rough, strong, and long. Some of the touches were gentle traces and others were firmer presses. Kaito let out a small sigh. Vane took off Kaito's glasses and kept them on the side desk. Kaito had the doe eyes of an Asian. Beautiful. Balanced, and easy to read. Somehow, Vane had always been obsessive with how his eyes narrow and thin down when

he's arrogant and how they nearly double in size during his most vulnerable moments.

Vane now shifted his weight forward to let Kaito know of his creation, the elastic undergarment strained under Vane's movement. Vane then had begun licking the back of Kaito's nerves under the ear.

"You know, I've been growing obsessed with something lately. They're called love marks." Kaito shivered a bit, but then he shot back.

"Yeah Vane, this isn't middle school. It's not my first time learning about sex."

"Really? For someone so... experienced you're pretty tense..." he said as he traced the edge of Kaito's back.

"Shut up- shut up it's weird because of the mirror okay?" Vane smirked in response and began trailing down Kaito's side neck. Being embraced and held by the person he loved the most was a near euphoric feeling. Yet he didn't realize how euphoric he was going to get soon.

The vane smell of dark chocolate lit from the side of the room. Wow, a candle.

"Kaito, can I take it off for you?" Vane asked, with all due respect. His sharply angled eyebrows tilted up.

Kaito, foolish Kaito, was prepared to do anything to test his stamina. Satisfy his ego.

"Yeah, of course bae," he chimed with a smile. Vane nodded and began sliding his underwear out. As he noticed Kaito's cock with a smile, it was balanced and pink.

Kaito felt a slight flush on the back of his ears as he saw Vane staring down his body with ultimate stoicism.

"Why're you being like this tonight?" Kaito groaned, slightly annoyed.

"Stop doing that," he muttered softly, "It's embarrassing." Vane shrugged and looked away, only to "respect him" you know?

Kaito pouted as he tried to steer Vane's face back to him, and Vane teasingly kept his head right in the same position. So he began spilling the beans.

"Vane, I feel conflicted about Zander and Veronica. I don't know what to do; I thought I could sneak my way past both of them and keep them both happy with me. I made a vow to Zander to never speak to Veronica again, but it just feels *wrong*. V-Vane, I just envision Jack coming to his sister all alone. With no one other than him to support her..."

Vane's response to that was much more blunt and much less kissy-huggy than Kaito thought he'd be.

"Kaito, you're a genius at math but an idiot at people. You can't keep everyone happy. Pick a side and stand your ground."

Kaito looked at him, his doe eyes widening in shock. But he was right...

"Fine, I'm tired, that's all," he responded with a blank expression. "That's why I'm here," Vane said with a smile as his hands began to slide up Kaito's shirt. He really thought he helped him.

Kaito sighed, "No Vane. No..." His voice broke and Vane's head shot up. His response immediately changed, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry I was exaggerating when I called you an idiot. I'm sorry, do you want me to pause and listen to you?"

Kaito had an embarrassing idea, and it was called multitasking.

"No," Kaito said, "Can you love me and let me talk at the same time?" Kaito's eyes doubled in embarrassment and he practically ducked under the blanket. Vane stroked Kaito's hair in response, "Okay..."

Instead of ripping the blanket off, Vane patiently began peeking it down until Kaito stopped resisting. He peeled back the fleece until he saw Kaito's big brown eyes. He leaned down and kissed the tip of his nose to show he wasn't a "macho idiot" anymore.

He slowly peeled the blanket in response and wrapped his arms around

Kaito's waist.

"Vane, it's a bad thought..." He paused in response and Vane could tell how hard it was for Kaito to open up.

"Tell me, what's a bad thought..." Kaito was sitting across Vane's lap now. Vane's hands began rubbing Kaito's abdomen and stomach from beneath his shirt to generate heat. Kaito then leaned on to Vane's neck.

"Like- like I need to disappear," Kaito said, his head hanging low. And Vane stopped and stared into Kaito's eyes dead serious.

"Stop it. I'm not letting you leave Kaito. I don't care if you're 'bad at people' or you made a 'mess of things with Zander.' None of that changes how I feel about you. You're the only person I want in this room, and you're exactly enough as you are, even when you're falling apart," Vane said, his eyes wide.

"Hmm," Kaito hummed lightly, taking a deep breath. 4 in and 4 out, "Yeah you won't let me fade away." His eyes stung a bit as he looked up and Vane then gave him a half-smile.

"Go to sleep, baby," he muttered, his voice thick and deep. Kaito nodded and pulled the duvet over his naked bottom half. He didn't care anymore, plus, don't worry he brushed his teeth beforehand. Very very hygienic. Sorry, sorry.

As he heard the clink! of Vane turning off the cabinet lamp, the light of the room turned from a deep golden to pitch black. Kaito put his square nerdy lil' glasses upon the cabinet and wrapped his arms around Vane's muscly ones. His breath grew warmer and warmer as he felt protected. Finally, Vane saw that Kaito's eyes fluttered a bit, fighting for a bit more of a view of Vane's jagged features, before they shut into a deep sleep.

Aww, he's honestly so cute.

....

“Soo you’re going to take me out on vacation?” Kaito asked, his eyes wandering around outside the window. Hmm, the weather was pleasant, warm, and breezy. The sky was a bright blue and the clouds ornamented it. He was dressed in a comfortable karate shirt and loose baggy jeans that hugged his upper hips.

“Yes Kaito, you need a break,” Vane said, looking back to see Kaito in the roomy, gray backseat. Kaito liked how Vane’s SUV smelled, like fresh spring. Hey! If you were there you’d understand what he was saying. Vane was driving smoothly and they were a few hours from the “secret spot” Vane wanted to surprise Kaito with.

Kaito sighed softly in his smooth baritone, “Okay, well, this better be worth it.” Vane guffawed a bit and then continued to drive. Something he loved about Vane was the way he just let him be... silent. They didn’t need to force conversation... not like the way he had to with Maya, Leo, or even Samriddhi for that matter. Just living and letting be.

He then slid his butt down a bit so he could lay his back across the seat. Despite the immediate comfort, he felt a warm presence missing.

He exhaled in an attempt to push the thoughts away and smiled at the possibilities of tonight. The rhythm of the highway had slowly begun to lull

Kaito to sweet, deep sleep until the car slowed to a stop. Kaito's eyes blinked awake and he sat up to see the 7-11 outside. The place they were at looked borderline rural with flowery bushes and willowy trees. Ugh... this BETTER not be the place Vane was speaking of.

His eyes continued side-eying the place in slits until he saw a small marigold flower and his eyes widened a bit. Okay, okay, the place was a little pretty. Too gorgeous for a 7-11. He traced his full kissable lips with his long fingers with the slightest trace. Tickly... if only Vane could...

"Oh sorry, I was going to get snacks real quick. Didn't mean to pause your little... daydream," Vane cut in, holding back laughter.

Kaito pulled his lips back to bare his teeth and was about to start snarling until he decided... okay whatever and rolled his eyes.

"Aw Vane, just get me some Lays. Who cares?" Kaito mumbled, his eyes drooping. Wait, of course he was tired! He was enforcing his knowledge on the Trees & Cycles graph theory to himself. He had kept muttering to himself... one more question, one more question at 11:30 pm in deep immersion. Until well... It was 3:30 in the morning.

Vane grinned and walked out, as he walked out. Kaito leaned forward

until he reached the front seat of the car and grabbed the woolly blankie in the front. He was clearly getting comfortable in Vane's car. After a few minutes of Kaito looking outside (he really wasn't in the mood to check the college group chat), Vane had come back with Chile Limon Lays in his left hand and something clearly unknown in his right as he hid it behind his bag. There was also a transparent grocery bag wrapped around his arm filled with other junk foods such as Doritos and Cheetos. Whoah, chill man. You gotta stay buff!

He knocked the car window lightly with his forehead as a gesture to ask Kaito to open the door, Kaito's cheeks grew rosy as he wondered what Vane was hiding. It's some kind of mint flavored condom now, isn't it? God...

Kaito leaned forward and opened the driver's door for Vane. Vane tossed the Lays to Kaito, which Kaito had perfectly caught, and then he grinned.

Kaito's pupils wandered to the right as Vane shot his eyebrows up, still facing Kaito at the back. Until BOO! He shot his right arm to the right to display a marigold! It was seamlessly waved with yellow to red gradients. The ruffles/petals looked carefully designed in small semi-circles. Well, semi-circles with curves at the bottom.

Vane shrugged with a half-smile, “Saw you looking at it a lot, figure I might as well get one for you.” Kaito scoffed a bit but took the flower with tender hands. He put it into his shirt pocket with the flower part sticking out, and gave it a small pat. Then, he flashed Vane a toothy grin with two awkward thumbs up.

“Aw, there’s my boy,” Vane boomed, all cheered up. He turned back (and began driving) and carefully slid out of the parking space, Kaito’s safety was the priority. They then were free of crammed highways for the day as they took on the vast, roomy road ahead of them. And gosh, the lime green willow trees that surrounded them, the bark lightly coated in moss.

Kaito absentmindedly popped the Lays in his mouth, the salty and sour kick satisfying his desiring tastebuds. Okay well... we all know chips wasn’t the only think his tongue was craving 😊. Well, how did Vane know everything so effortlessly?

The final thirty minutes were just like the first half hour. Sunrise to sunset. Kaito opened the window and let the now brisk air nip his soft cheekbones. Finally, they had reached and Kaito had let out a small gasp.

Wow, it looked like a beach at first glance. Yet it was actually chains of bodies of water grouped together. Vane smiled at Kaito’s dimpled smile.

“Awwh, thankyou thankyou thankyou!” he nearly squealed. He leaned forward to give Vane a kiss on the cheekbone. Vane enjoyed the sensation, the prickly texture of Kaito’s lips. He clearly didn’t care enough to apply lip balm today, but the rough texture of Kaito’s lips lit up like acupuncture.

They deftly headed out the car and Vane raised his eyebrows and commanded, “Follow me.” Kaito listened and went along.

Suddenly, their steady strides took them to the middle of many freshwater ecosystems. There was a dirt center that trailed and traced around these five bodies of water which all had a distance of about, I say 60 yards? *How symmetrical*, Kaito admired.

Vane then crouched down in what appeared to be the perfect center and began smoothing over the brown sand with his rough hands. Kaito narrowed his eyebrows together in confusion.

A small button at the part of the dirt Vane was rubbing began to appear. Wait, not just one button. Many small numbers, and unfamiliar symbols, began to appear neatly side by side. They were white and somewhat shiny in texture despite the dirt around them.

Kaito noticed the golden jellyfish in the water to the left of them. The sun

glistened in the light blue water, accentuating its deep bronze shading. It was a similar palate to the marigold.

As he began to hear sharp clicking noises, his head shot back to Vane. Suddenly, he heard a mechanical garage-like noise that opened the underworld. Okay, now Kaito was VERY confused but he knew Vane was savvy in planning, so he went along with it. Vane took his hand out and Kaito gladly grasped it. The stairs heading down were made of smooth, white marble. Kaito gingerly went down the stairs so he wouldn't fall.

As he walked down he saw the vast glass ahead of them. Behind the glass were full of fishies. More of those golden jellyfishes. And more interestingly, mandarin fish. Kaito gasped in delight. The fishes had joyful gradients just like the aesthetic marigold in his shirt pocket.

As they reached completely down to the bottom, the floor was slate and fuzzy and it grounded Kaito's socked feet. He looked to the right of him to see a white fluffy bed with a Nemo plushie on top. ONE bed.

"Here's the plan," Vane stated with authority in his voice, "We stay together tonight and we swim together the next morning."

"Sure," Kaito murmured, and he looked back at the bed in interest until

he groaned a bit.

“What’s with the Nemo plushie?!” he growled, about to toss it to the floor with his long fingers. Vane fake pouted, admired his tantrum, and then teased, “Aw c’mon, give Nemo a break. He was my childhood friend. Dad gave him to me when I was six. Are you making fun of his uneven flippers?”

“Uh-uh no?” Kaito responded, dropping Nemo to the ground a little more gently.

“Now,” Vane smiled, “Go freshen up and we can admire this ocean together.” Kaito went to the bathroom.

He strolled to the left and opened the tall glass door. It was surprisingly compact inside yet comfy and warm. He remembered to take a white pair of shorts and a grey tank top with him (yass monochrome da best). He stripped down until it was just him in his underwear (which of course was black). He then quickly put on the cotton shorts and thin top. He was eager to see the surprises Vane had next. Until... he remembered... his stomach growled furiously. It doesn’t help when you realize all you ate this afternoon was a bag of Lays.

His insides were screaming for dinner, man he really should've eaten more of the food Vane gave in the car.

"Kaito, you okay?" Vane inquired, his hyper-sensitive ears catching the enormous noise.

Kaito walked out with a meek smile, his face flaming, "Oh, oh you heard that?"

Vane didn't respond, rather he began walking forward. Kaito followed him. As the heavy strides Vane took began to slow, Kaito finally saw it! The space was adorned with small, glass marigold fish on each of the top four corners of the room. The color of the walls were an ashy seagreen. To the right was a large white square table with a silky duvet on top. It took up nearly a quarter of the room in width. There was a square plate and a small rounded plate. There was a square plate and a small rounded plate. Finally, as Kaito pushed the heavy wood chair back, he saw a bottle of Sauterne with a small wine glass next to it.

"This is called Da Bao," Vane murmured, as he planted himself next to Kaito, "Well, I tried."

The dough was yeast leavened (meaning it was fermented with yeast to

make it rise) and was filled with something mysterious. Kaito used his bare hands (he washed ahead of time okay??) and took a big bear bite out of it. He sensed cooked pork, onions picked from today, pickled scallions, soy sauce, and what's that... sesame sauce no? The hot juice filled his mouth.

His stomach let out another more meager rumble after the first few bites; he bit into the bao softly. There really wasn't that much force needed to bite, the dough was cushiony.

He then moved on to the second side dish which sat upon the small round circle. It was garnished in small lemon-colored orchids, with a tiny marigold at the right-bottom edge of the plate.

The side?: smashed cucumber salad. He used a fork and tasted something neutral and refreshing, but not just that because that'd be boring! It had a zing to it, a savory garlicky surprise you weren't quite expecting. Cool water ran down his throat, which compensated with the warm embarrassment he felt.

Finally, his fingers traced the tall golden wineglass planted to the top of both the dishes. A bottle of Sauterne.

"Noble rot, huh?" Kaito muttered. He hastily unscrewed the tight light

brown cap. Yet before he drowned his tastebuds in them, he froze, clenching his hands and took a few disciplined sips. Clearly, patience had worked here as when he waited to absorb the feeling, he tasted the aged wine marvelously. He sensed the spicy cinnamon mixed with the tropics such as lychee and pineapple, hazelnut, as well as dried fruits and figs. Dear readers, take a moment to envision how euphoric that mixture is.

After a minute, Kaito grunted and stood up, intentionally pushing back the chair along the way.

He went to the bathroom yet again. Kaito looked at himself and ruffled his hair just a bit. Then, the electric toothbrush Vane had for him and began brushing. After a quick round of organized flossing and mouthwashing, he exited to see Vane perched on the bed. He was shirtless, in only loose boxers. The light from the aquarium revealed his fawn colored back. Every time he arched his back forward to stretch, his muscles rippled in response. Yet, it wasn't that only, Vane looked at him with a smile that met his eyes. The security and reliability in his gaze.

Kaito walked to the bed and laid back in front of Vane. Wow, the cushioning was very soft. Vane perched himself atop of Kaito, in a pushup position. Tentatively, Kaito's hand reached up and he felt the steady planes

of Vane's chest. It was soft and hard simultaneously. The contrast... Vane clearly felt flattered by that and began nuzzling the highly sensitive skin just beneath the jawline. The gesture sent shivers throughout the more petite man's spine.

A deep passion overwhelmed Kaito as he pushed Vane closer. Their lips crushed each other. Kaito's soft and moist ones to Vane's hard and healthy ones. Vane hummed in pleasure as he smelled Kaito's sweet breath. The subterranean air was nipping at Kaito's body and Vane could tell by the small twitches in his body. Oh well... there was only one good way to heat him up no?

Vane began to lift up Kaito's tanktop, revealing his flat stomach and chest. Without warning, Vane's lips crushed Kaito's again as he began sliding down his shorts. Now, he was only in one item.

"Wait," Kaito gasped as Vane gave him a moment to breathe, "I can do the last one myself."

Kaito began pulling it off as he heard Vane stripping himself to nothing.

Finally, they were fully exposed. He felt a bit... nervous. It was like all the

marine creatures were staring at him.

“Wow, we really haven’t done anything like this before... Now that I think about it, we’ve only done *it* in your house,” Kaito whispered, voice shaking around the edges.

Vane nodded, and he knew it was about the fish.

“Kaito, they seriously don’t care, trust me. These fishes only care if you start banging on the glass,” Vane stated.

“I know I know,” Kaito groaned, wondering how Vane understood so quickly. Then with a shaky sigh he grinned, “Well, might as well give them a show to watch.”

Vane scoffed and then leaned down, enveloping his muscly arms around Kaito. He was so warm, it was almost feverish. Vane’s ginormous body engulfed Kaito’s smaller and more sensitive build. From a backview, Kaito’s head barely peaked out from Vane’s bear body.

“Ah, ahh,” Kaito softly vocalized.

“Shhh,” Vane whispered as he licked the side of Kaito’s neck and then he took a solid pause before continuing, “By the way, I want you to enjoy all

this. So I have to do this..." Vane shifted his arms and back down, and suddenly Vane's tongue was inside Kaito. Hot and wet.

Initially, Vane only tasted his clean and neutral soap. Hot, scrubbed, and pristine.

Kaito's nerves ignited and he had to clap his hand on his mouth or he'd be *loud*. Rather than moans, his eyes lolled completely back.

Vane possessively grabbed Kaito's thin thighs... *Only I get to see Kaito like this.*

He was clearly going as deep as he could through the tightness. Despite all the "perfectness" Kaito projected, he tasted a clean saltiness to his insides. The taste of a clean shoulder after a workout.

Both of them forgot about the glasses perched on the marble cabinet next to the bed. They both forgot about Nemo who was on the floor.

Though Vane warmed up almost the entirety of Kaito's body, the soles of his feet tingled from the crisp wind.

Vane pulled his head back. Then Kaito noticed how Vane was dripping there. Even the one unbreakable being breaks when they get a taste of

Kaito. Though he didn't let out a single noise. Kaito would've smirked if he weren't so exasperated.

Suddenly, Vane was the one who smirked. He had a small grey packet next to him. His cold eye contact didn't yield as he slowly opened the packet and placed the condom over his area. He then threw the packet back, not caring where the packet ended up.

Vane pupils wandered around Kaito's body as he let out an audible exhale. Then, he moved his hands on top of his shoulder blades. He leaned forward and Kaito felt own body sink down on the mattress.

Until... Vane released a deep growl and he pushed it in one smooth motion. He'd pull back and in with approx 50% of his physical strength. Sometimes when Vane would move into the tight area, he'd twist the peaks on Kaito's chest (haha, very strategic Vane). The friction of his movements were unyielding.

Vane began with about 75% of his power to push in. As they got closer and closer to that moment, a thought came across Kaito's mind.

I need to keep my mouth shut... if he pushes any harder, I'm going to

scream so loud it'll rattle the glass, and he'd never let me live that down...

Vane gave him another hard thrust, it was like he was telepathic. Kaito's thoughts adjusted automatically. All the remaining jargon in his head was shoved out. Vane inside Kaito... healing him.

It's way too fucking hot... Please just let him crush me and make me forget everything.

Suddenly, Kaito reached his breaking point.

A sharp gasp exited his lips. Vane pushed Kaito up for the tightest hug possible, their arms twitching while still being inside him. They both came together. As Vane pulled back with a triumphant smile, "I dumped all in you... Haha! Sorry, that was by accident." Hmm, noo it clearly wasn't.

Kaito rolled his eyes and Vane gave him a few quick kisses on the lips before lying to the side of Kaito. There were already beautiful bruises forming on Kaito's shoulders.

Vane pulled out a remote from the cabinet with the same type of mysterious symbols and dimmed the lights to complete voidness. Kaito was blinded visually and the only sounds he heard was Vane breathing and the sloshing of the fish.

Finally, Vane wrapped the duvet over both of them, arm spooned Kaito and murmured, "I love you, honey."

...

(We have now changed Vane's eyes to a lightish-moderate brown rather than black).

...

(We have removed the Monopoly scene. Zander has only met Kaito since the beginning of college.)

...

...

6/1/2031:

Kaito decided to dress simply today. Black slacks and a plaid shirt striped with green and red. UCLA wasn't very crowded today, it was practically an optional day because it was one of the last few sessions. He decided to go anyway because he hadn't gone for the past few days. He wanted to stay consistent.

His shoulders relaxed and softened as he left his red Toyota (no, no he didn't want Vane's SUV or Tesla).

In the vast sterile hallway, he noticed Veronica. This might be his last chance to ever speak to her. She was a senior. Their distance would prevent them from ever speaking to each other again.

This gash in my heart won't let me be. Breathe.

Kaito moved to Veronica with her plaid white and pink strap dress. She was wearing a full-sleeve white top underneath.

She triggered the conflicting feeling of being so suffocating yet so light and hopeful. He felt physically fine. Robust even. Yet morally?

His lips naturally tightened into a small smile as he brushed Veronica's shoulder lightly with the back of his hand. Her lips paralleled his, her eyebrows tilted a bit upward in melancholy.

Zander had gone today too for turning a history assignment in. He was walking forward to his class, he was going to leave early.

He looked to the side to see Kaito and... her.

His eyes widened a bit. The right side of Zander's lip twitched up and

exposed the right edge of his teeth. As he walked through, his face made a small jerk away from both of them.

The phantom, the thief, the **fraud**, was caught yet again.

Vane, why do you bother for me? Now I have a wound within, a deep rusty one.

Kaito gave Veronica a final rushed glance before running after Zander. When Zander looked like he was to win the race on the outside campus, wow it was windy and marigolds were all in the bushes, Kaito found no other choice but to lean forward and grab the edge of Zander's blue full-sleeve shirt.

Kaito's hand clumsily slid to the slide, exposing Zander's shoulder.

Vane, you created this gash in my heart. Now it will spread everywhere like plague and crumble it.

Zander, irritated, turned around to confront him and tell him to back off. Yet, all he saw was a small boy weeping silently, hot tears dripped down his chin. A bit of water trickled from his nose.

Kaito choked out, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry." He harshly scrubbed his eyes. Zander was jarred.

Rather than bloating his own ego, he gave Kaito a sad smile and rhythmically stroked his hair. The cloth slid back in place and was no longer the focus, and he spoke, "Awh, awh, don't cry..."

Someone acknowledges Kaito's pain... the pain of being a bad person, not even a bad person. The sensation was unexplainable, yet it felt guilty and sensitive. He knew Zander and Vane will never be able to take this away with a magic wand, but they could carry it with him. On the journey with the messy ups and downs.

He will no longer be the one who's hated by all... yet he was no longer defeated by none.

...

...

Also, Zander isn't taking away the wound by doing this. He's acknowledging it and not making Kaito deal with it without a friend anymore. Just removing it like with a wand would make it lazy scripting. This makes it more bittersweet. More poignant as it represents two people carrying pain in a journey of ups and downs rather than a simple cause+effect result.

- Will be pretty fluid about this in the long run, but the intimate scene between Vane and Kaito is planned to be R rated.
- In the scene where Kaito breaks down, it's meant to symbolize how under all that arrogance, he really just wants a friend to sit with him. He doesn't usually mind being alone, but sometimes he needs a friend who will light up his day. If he were truly un-innocent, he would have rationalized his decision and moved on without giving a damn. Interesting.
- This shows EQ is a fluid trait that goes up and down, it is not a relatively static trait unlike someone's calculated IQ. 85 was a playful EQ estimate for Kaito, it is not static. Just like 145 (I think that was Zander's EQ I might be remembering wrong) isn't always how Zander acts.
- Also, there's no new Kaito v old Kaito. They're the same people, it's just certain facets of him have transformed. Sure, he's changed in

some aspects but it's not that cause and effect. Dividing him into "old vs new" would've made it seem like a cheap cartoon transformation. This is actually different aspects of the same complex person finally aligning. When he calms down on the pavement, he's still a competent genius. He's simply letting a different (and generally hidden) facet- the lonelier one craving for a simple friend- take the wheel for a moment because the stress of the distance became too heavy to calculate.

- Recovery is a slow messy blending of traits.
- - Still a neat freak- which is why leftover snot and tears made him intensely awkward.
- - Rather than using his logic to SUPPRESS vulnerability though, he uses his intelligence to ACCEPT it. Running the truth of the situation in his head, looking at Zander, and recognizing the "gash in his heart is finally being acknowledged." Same analytical brain, just applying itself to his emotions rather than text sheets.
- - Soon after, his playful sharp-tongueness returns as that is his baseline. Well, obviously with creative twists and turns though.

- - Kaito wants to treat Veronica with respect and speak to her because deep down when you strip down the complex layers both people share a profound sense of loneliness and regret in how they acted with different people.

...

Kaito name meaning- “victory cry, to harmonize, calmness”

- Can mean freedom + vast possibilities
- Phantom Thief: Cultural reference in Japan meaning mysterious thief.
- – The Phantom Thief part obviously resonates with him the most as part of his archetype is literally him beneath the shadows planning his next **victory** (think double faced [one kind, warm, and a lil’ silly and another misbehaving and blunt] Kaito Kid from Detective Conan).

...

Know Zander is a Sandan.

...

Leo is a playfully feisty cameraman, he likes bugging people in the friendgroup, sometimes even Liya.

Liya is a tiny (4'11) gymnast who has a spiky short wolfcut (at her ears) and is slender in build. She is fiercely protective of Leo even though Leo protects her too (though he knows very well she can take care of herself.)

...

Planned Scenes:

no, ill write them myself. but just discuss w me. ok one time Vane asks to pick Leo up (to practice his benchpressing/weightlifting skills) Leo happily agrees for the sake of research. Vane successfully lifts Leo up but while putting him down, it ends up in an awkward angle (almost like a gymnastics flip), Vane looks straight down to see Leo's bum. Leo is complaining that Vane drop him already because blood is rushing to his head in that position. Vane cant look away, and tries to stabilize Leo, but by accident his hand brushes there and he has to squeeze and take him down so Leo can get down stabley. otherwise, if he went by the shoulders Leo would get hurt.

actually, Vane is just as flustered... because it actually shaped well. and also he feels guilty.

After a minute of pure embarrassing silence, Vane walks away saying "he

needs a drink of water.”

...

Another Planned Scene

Vane and Leo are sneaking in to get something. U know those like fences, well Leo notices a hole in the fence and convinces Vane he can trespass thru there. so leo bends down and tries going down. but... he gets stuck.



Vane had the idea to push him by the thighs and hips but doesnt. instead vane pushes him by the bottom of the feet. so Leo's like, okay cool. but he looks back to see Vane's face burning.

Leo's fit: Simple top and loose shorts that accidentally bunched up when he attempted move thru the warp. Only got lucky because he was wearing tight underwear beneath.

...