

## 1.

For some reason, Suvan is frowning at him when he pulls away. His eyebrows have furrowed, and his gaze flicks over Kai's face for a long second before he casts his attention back at the imitation stars overhead. A finger points at another constellation, further up and to the left. "Big Pizza."

"Big Pizza," Kai repeats, glancing up. "Um, try Monoceros?"

The hand tangled with his tightens. Again, Suvan looks at him, the crease between his brows deepening. "Don't be mean," he says, the tone not quite teasing, bordering on something else entirely. "Come on, Kai."

Kai blinks, "I'm not being mean," he replies, confused now. Oh, wait, he hadn't rewarded that answer with a kiss, had he. Quickly, he gives Suvan another butterflyed peck. "Stop answering wrong, and maybe you'll get a better prize," he chides.

The manner in which Suvan is staring at him is off. That's the only way Kai can think to describe it. The affection hasn't dissipated from his eyes, but it's starting to lurk lower down, overshadowed. Slowly, he turns back to the star map, his hand faltering for a heartbeat before it lifts to trace out the shape of Orion in the air above them. "Superman."

*Huh?*

"Orion," Kai corrects.

It's amazing, really, how abruptly everything can go to shit. Kai should know better by now, with how much he's lived through, how many times he's tricked himself into thinking things are fine just seconds before they all fall apart. He'd once clutched a hand to the center of his chest, right over where a hole had been ripped through him, only steps away from the hope that he'd make it out alive. And yet, somehow, he still can't quite believe it when Suvan shoves at him, the harsh, vicious press of his palms to Kai's sternum sending him sprawling back into the blankets littering the flight deck as the other man scrambles to his feet and away from him.

Something's wrong.

Something's *really* wrong.

"Suvan--"

"Who are you?"

Kai tries to sit up, but Suvan takes another two steps back, tripping as his heels tangle in the pillows and he tumbles over onto his ass. He doesn't stop moving through, still trying to put distance between them even as Kai hitches out a hoarse, "What?"

Suvan is breathing hard, every inhale and exhale audible. "Tell me you're joking," he pleads, tears gathering in the corners of his eyes as another one heaves through him.

"I . . ." Kai starts, stumbles. What is there to joke about here? He thought they were playing a game. "I just . . . We were naming the constellations."

Suvan's eyes widen, his already stricken face paling further. "No. No, *no*, **no**. Kai, please . . . Come on, it's . . . We've never called it Orion. Say it right. It's Superman."

"I don't . . . I don't know who Superman is," Kai whispers, dismay creeping into the very core of him.

Something's wrong.

And it's *him*.

"Y-you're *not* Kai."

It's the last thing Suvan says before he scrambles to his feet again, vaulting across the room to the center console to slam a hand against one of the buttons. Kai covers his ears as the alarms shriek into life. The star map vanishes in an instant, replaced with the red blare of flashing lights. Suvan skirts around the edge of the room on unsteady legs, eyes never leaving where Kai has stayed on the floor from when he'd pushed him away. He gets his back to the doorway, fumbling behind him to press his spine firmly against the arch of the awning, an action Kai recognizes as one born of genuine terror.

Yue makes it to them first, standing in the entrance to the bridge for only a second before Suvan lunges for him.

They'd been in their pajamas, comfortable, unarmed. But Yue has entered the situation with all of his sharpshooter tendencies, including the blaster hastily holstered to his hip.

Kai freezes as Suvan swings it around towards him, shaking finger already on the trigger.

"What the fuck are you doing?!" Yue screams, stepping forward while Suvan takes two steps back, jerking an elbow towards him as he shifts the blaster to his other hand, never letting the barrel of it leave where it's pointed directly at Kai's head. "That's *Kai!*"

"No it's *not*," Suvan spits, vicious, anguished. "I don't know what you brought back, but that *thing* isn't Kai. I-" He chokes, an awful, strangled sound of grief that sends a tremble through Kai's entire frame. "I grew up with Kai. I-I'd know! That's not him!"

## 2.

Bellamy sits heavily on the edge of his bed, a grimace pulling his lips taut as he does so. "Well?" he snaps. "Are you just going to stand there all night?"

Kai winces from where he's stayed with his back pressed against the doorway, further twisting the hem of his t-shirt between his trembling hands. His eyes dart around the room. It's not as cluttered as he remembers, almost oddly sparse, even. Still, it's as cramped as any of their single-occupant quarters, and there isn't really anywhere else for Kai to linger than where he already is. "S-sorry," he starts, "I can go out into the hall . . ."

"And give Thatch another excuse to be pissed at me?" Bellamy snorts. "Yeah, no thanks. Fine, stay there and stare. It's not like everyone else doesn't."

For a moment confusion overrules Kai's hurt, and he starts to open his mouth to insist that he really probably should just leave when Bellamy shoves the waistband of his black uniform pants down and kicks them across the room, and Kai gets it. The fact that he can't help the startled, hoarse noise that escapes him doesn't help matters, either.

The other man's prosthetic leg ends a little ways above the knee, and even in the dim lighting of the room, Kai can see the scarring that extends much further up, the twist of puckered skin, and it's already too late for him to try and cover his reaction.

"Yup, super gross, huh," Bellamy deadpans. He's fiddling with something near the seam between metal and skin, and after a beat Kai hears a hiss of

air as the thing pops off, a sound Bellamy echoes as he slides it all the way free. Beneath it, Kai's met with the full sight of what's left of Bellamy's actual leg, including the mess of purpled bruising the attachment was hiding, still striped through with scarring that's pink enough in places that Kai knows it isn't all as well healed as it should be by this point. Knowing Bellamy, he probably hasn't given it the time it needs, pushing himself more than he should, and Kai chokes on another awful non-breath as it hits him exactly why.

Fuck. *Fuck.*

"Take a picture," Bellamy says lowly, abruptly, cutting Kai's spiraling thoughts in half, "maybe it'll last longer." He leans back, his hands braced behind him on the mattress as he strikes a pose. "Here, I'll even make it look good." With a thumb and forefinger around his chin, he flashes Kai a vicious smirk. "Looks especially stunning with the side profile, doesn't it?"

"Beomie . . ." Kai starts. He doesn't know what to say. Should he apologize for staring? There's clearly no point, Bellamy's already pissed, and it's clear from his earlier remark that Kai is, unfortunately, not the only one who's been caught doing so.

He expects the way Bellamy's cold smile only hardens, but that doesn't make it sting any less. "Forget about it, Kai. At this point, I don't really give a shit."

Well, at least Kai's not the only one aboard The Endolphin prone to lying these days.

Bellamy uses the mattress to leverage himself up onto his foot, the prosthetic tucked under one arm as he leans over the headboard to place it in a battered looking charging stand that's been mounted into the wall above the bed. He sits back down with a heavy sigh the second it's set, hands dropping to gingerly massage over the mottled stub of his leg with a grimace before he spares Kai a glance out of the corners of his eyes. "So, where do I plug you in?"

Uh . . .

"Nowhere?" Kai hedges, suddenly unsure. For some reason, he's never even thought that there's a possibility that he might need to be, uh, reenergized in any way. Surely if that were something necessary to his continued cybernetic survival, Thatch would have said something . . . Right?

*Right!?*

With another sigh, Bellamy pats the bed beside him, "Stop freaking out. I'll just pull up Thatch's notes and double check, okay?"

"I'm not freaking out," Kai denies. He shakes his head when Bellamy pats the mattress again. "Of all the things for me to freak out about tonight, this is, like, at the bottom of the list."

For a third time, Bellamy smacks a palm to the bed beside him, firm enough in its insistence that Kai doesn't dare continue to ignore it, lest Bellamy decide that getting up and forcing him to sit is his only remaining option. So, reluctantly, Kai trudges over and lowers himself onto the mattress, barely balanced on the edge as Bellamy grabs a tablet from the low table nearby.

The silence that settles as Bellamy taps away at the screen is just as suffocating as it's been all week thus far. Kai fixes his gaze on his knees, shoulders hunching the longer it stretches on. He needs to come up with a better excuse to leave, a chance to slip away into some lesser used storage room or something so he can curl up on himself for awhile. It hasn't really hit him yet, he thinks over the distant lull of Bellamy flipping through diagrams and notes as they pop up on the glass, but it probably will soon. And when it does, the last place he wants to be is here, in Bellamy's room, the two of them unable to even look each other in the eye for more than a second.

"Here we go," Bellamy hums, and Kai chances a glance at the tablet where a three-dimensional model of his own heart is on full display. "No charge necessary, you've got whatever the fuck this thing is whirring away inside you."

Kai squints at the screen. It's certainly . . . Something, alright, a tightly wound ball of energy that seems to be putting off a spinning, dense heat signal. He blinks at it. "What is that?"

Bellamy shrugs. "Dunno. Some kind of stolen Gigye bullshit. But according to Taehyu's notes, he doesn't seem to think you'll be running out of juice anytime within the next twenty or thirty millennia. So you're fine."

If Kai had the capability, he's sure he'd feel nauseous at the nonchalance of that statement. "Twenty or thirty *millennia*?" he croaks. Fuck, it's not like he hasn't had that thought himself already, but it's definitely a lot worse coming from someone else's mouth, let alone Bellamy's. "I . . . I don't *want* to . . ."

He lets the confession fall flat, unfinished and stale in the air. It's already a nightmare enough as it is without him voicing how awful he finds the idea. He doesn't dare look at Bellamy either, even more terrified of the sort of expression he might find on the other man's face. What would be worse, pity? Or apathy.

### 3.

Bellamy scoots closer on the bed, pressed all up against Kai's side as he moves to touch a finger to the glass.

The scene that appears is familiar enough to make him reel, two people standing close together on the bridge of The Endolphin, talking quietly, only one of them human.

"His name is- was Kim Jisoo," Bellamy whispers. "He was older than we are now when The Salamander disappeared. He- he had a *kid*."

Even from the odd, overhead angle of the security feed, Kai can tell Yue isn't armed. He's dressed down, the black of his casual wear contrasting with the Gigye's pristine white attire. There's no holster on his hip. "If I do this for you, you'll take us to Kai?"

"Of course," the Gigye returns, his tone so sincere that for a moment it gives even Kai pause. "I'd do it right now," he goes on, slightly hitched, "except I just . . ."

The way he draws off is too real, too raw, *too human*.

"You want to see your son," Yue finishes for him.

The most painful part of witnessing something in retrospect is the *knowing*. He's not caught in the moment like Yue is, months ago now, he hasn't lived it, hasn't been deceived. Watching, Kai *knows* something is wrong, the ghost of his heart in his throat, his mounting panic unable to reach through time to stop events that have already happened.

He knows that the Gigye that used to be Kim Jisoo is speaking words as silver as his silicone skin.

He knows that his goal is to get Yue to unlock The Endolphin's controls while they're alone together on the bridge.

He knows the lengths a monster will go to to get what they want. His emotions must show on his face, sick distress heavy in how hard he grips the tablet, because Bellamy says, hushed, "I'm sorry. If it's too much, we can turn it off and-"

"No," Kai interrupts, the single syllable cracking. "No. I- I need to see this."

On the screen Yue hesitates. Kai can just barely make out the furrow of his brows in the footage. The flight deck is eerily silent around him, the quiet foreboding from the prospective distance of time. "You . . . Did see him, right?" Yue asks, and Kai's faux heart stutters at the way the other man's tenor breaks, hesitant and weighed down with such obvious *grief* that it would take his breath away if he had any to give. "Kai? You said you saw him."

The thing wearing Kim Jisoo's face smiles. From where Yue is standing, Kai wonders if it looks sympathetic, rather than grotesquely pitying. "Yeah," the Gigye assures. "I did. They like to keep all us former humans in the same place while they turn us into," he gestures sarcastically at himself, "well, *this*."

It's a joke, Kai thinks dizzily. It's a joke, and Jisoo *doesn't laugh*.

Yue has a hand hovering over the part of The Endolphin's console he usually commands, fingers not quite touching anything, hesitant. "And he's okay?"

Kai has to force himself to loosen his grip on the tablet, ears ringing with the unsaid askance. *Is he **alive**?*

"He's alright," Jisoo assures, no thought given to the reply because it's simply not true. But Yue doesn't see that. He can't, too desperate to do anything other than cling to whatever paltry bits of hope he's given. "I'll take you straight to him right after this," Jisoo swears, "promise."

There must be something in his wording, a familiarity in the false vow, because as soon as the syllables leave the Gigye's silicone lips, Yue's tense posture loosens. How many times, Kai wonders grimly, did Jisoo offer similar assurances while he was human to earn that, to have such conviction so easily given? It must have been quite a lot to make Yue uncoil so easily, enough that the Gigye picked up the seemingly frequent turn of phrase and let him keep it, a false reflection of the humanity he's lost.

Kai can see it too, how Yue finds solace in the promise, recognition, the hunch of his shoulders going lax in the shadow of someone he *trusts*.

When Kai blinks, his vision stutters.

Yue doesn't quite turn his back to Jisoo when he moves to access The Endolphin's console, but that half aside, not quite facing the illusion of a man beside him, is all the Gigye needs.

In the same moment that The Endolphin's controls are activated, the thing that was once Kim Jisoo closes that small space between them.

It happens too fast for Kai to catch the details, the struggle too close knit and the angle of the camera wrong. But in the span of a few scant seconds, Jisoo manages to get Yue on the floor, and Yue *screams*.

He's fighting back. That's all Kai can focus on in the blur of limbs and crash of sound when they topple down. The Gigye is too heavy, too strong, *inhuman*, but Yue is still pushing and kicking against it for all he's worth. For a single foolish moment, Kai lets himself hope that's how this ends, that Yue somehow, *somehow* overpowers his attacker.

Something glints in the lights of the bridge, metallic, and scarlet strikes across the scene.

It's not an insignificant amount, but it's not yet deadly either, the splash of blood that splatters up the underside of Yue's chin and all over the Gigye's hands spraying from a cut that stops just shy of hitting any arteries. Regardless though it does what Kai suspects the intention of it was, and Yue falls silent, unmoving, his eyes wide and his chest heaving.

"That's better," Jisoo coos, his cadence now disturbingly foreign compared to how it was mere minutes prior. The inflection of the syllables is all wrong, the tone without a single hint of any emotion other than pure malice. Yue lets out a weak, horrified little noise, tears sliding down his cheeks and his hands fumbling up to clutch at the Gigye's white uniform, a last futile attempt at saving himself. Jisoo doesn't budge. "I'd rather not kill you, you know," he drawls, "that would be such a waste of a perfectly good body."

Kai can see it, the way the statement registers in Yue's mind, the stricken realization of what that means for the very person he got into this mess in his attempts to find.

And Jisoo, the shallow imitation of him recast in silver, sees it too. His neutral expression shifts, a smirk curling the corners of his mouth. "Poor thing," he purrs, "did it just now occur to you that I lied?"



Blaster fire abruptly brightens the scene. It comes from offscreen and hits the console just over the Gigye's head, a warning shot, and Jisoo doesn't even flinch. He sits up slightly from where he's kneeled and pinning Yue to the floor, but his hold on the man beneath him doesn't relinquish in the slightest. His smile is perfectly plastered in place when he utters a disturbingly amicable, "Oh. Hello, Captain."

Suvan is slow to appear within view of the camera, the gun gripped in both his hands, still aimed outstretched at the uncanny thing before him wearing the face of an old friend. It takes him a moment to speak, and when he does the crack of bewildered disbelief is agonizingly audible. "Wh-what are you *doing?*"

From where Kai is sitting, months later and unable to look away from events he's too late to change, it's hard for him to comprehend the sheer confusion in Suvan's tenor. It seems so obvious what's going on, but he can't imagine what this sight must have been like to walk in to, let alone for Suvan. Bellamy said Kim Jisoo was their flight instructor, someone they grew up with as a mentor, someone they looked up to. And now, he's a single calculated move away from murdering one of the people Suvan loves, Yue's blood already pooling on the floor.

Then, to Kai's horror, Jisoo makes it all *so much worse*.

"What do you mean?"

The question is the wrong pitch, innocent on purpose, as though his hands aren't currently wrapped around Yue's neck.

Suvan blinks, gaze snapping from Yue, who's staring at him with panicked, tear-filled eyes, blood on his cheek and seeping out between the Gigye's fingers, and Jisoo, the latter of which simply stares back. "Suvan-" Yue croaks.

Jisoo interrupts him, both with a squeeze of his hands around the man's throat and a pointed, "Well, Suvan? Aren't you going to answer me?"

Again, Kai can tell that he's choosing his words carefully, drawing upon whatever knowledge of his old life the Gigye have left him with just enough familiarity to make Suvan hesitate. "You . . ." He can't seem to get the question out, instead faltering into a hoarse, "*Why?*"

Jisoo tilts his head, like a confused child. Kai's insides roil. "'Why?'" the Gigye parrots, tone still sugar sweet. "Why not? Does it matter, Suvan? I'm your teacher, are you really in any position to be questioning me?"

Suvan doesn't respond to that, and the footage is just clear enough that Kai can see his adam's apple bob as he swallows.

"When have I ever done anything to hurt you?" Jisoo asks, and the irony of such a question clearly isn't lost on him. His smile as he once more tightens his grip around Yue's throat is saccharine. "You *know* me, Suvan. I would never do something without reason, I *promise*."

It's the same, that deliberate phrasing he'd used to lure Yue into letting his guard down, the act of a man who cares. But that's all it is, a farce.

There's no way for Kai to know what exactly triggers Suvan's reaction, whether it's just his fragile faith finally breaking, or if it was something Jisoo said, a mannerism he didn't quite manage to replicate correctly. Either way, the retaliation to that brittle little vow is nearly instantaneous, and the results far more awful than Kai ever would have imagined.

Suvan's grip on the blaster steadies, and he fires.

Kai has seen Suvan kill a handful of Gigye in their years aboard The Endolphin. It's always quick, efficient. And in a way, Kai supposes this is, too. Except that Suvan *doesn't stop*.

The first shot probably does the job, the beam of it cutting directly through the skull of the thing that was once Kim Jisoo. The second does the same to his throat, a third blazing a hole clean through his shoulder. Shots four and five hit the Gigye's ribs, torso, the sixth severing the cap from his left knee. That's the point where Kai stops counting, but in the end, he thinks Suvan must fire his blaster somewhere around a dozen times.

Jisoo, who was no longer a human being in the first place, certainly isn't anything resembling one once Suvan is through with him. What remains is merely a tattered mess of singed silicone and seared metal that slumps listlessly over the tiles, hands only unwinding from Yue's throat when Suvan stalks forwards to physically kick the husk aside.

"Yue," Suvan murmurs as he drops down to the floor of the bridge. He's already tugging his uniform shirt over his head before his knees hit the metal paneling, the fabric bunched to his palm to press against the gash scarred across Yue's neck that hasn't yet stopped its steady seep of blood.

After that show of sheer brutality, his calm demeanor while he applies pressure and calls for Endolphin is sincerely unsettling. There's no light in his eyes during the time he waits for the rest of the ship to be alerted to the situation, and he doesn't say another word either, grimly stoic in his task of keeping Yue together and alive.

Even when Thatch comes barreling onto the flight deck, his face ghostly white save for the heavy bags under his eyes, Suvan still says nothing. He stays silent, moving his hands where they need to be under Thatch's frantic instructions, holding the tools that he's given, face scarily blank.

It's only once the two of them have transported Yue to medbay that Kai recognizes what this is.

The feed tracks Suvan back through the Endolphin's corridors, switches between the security footage until he reaches the bridge again, and then lingers there right beside him.

Suvan stands in the doorway between the deck and the hall at his back, a hand braced to the arch of the metal. His nostrils flare with every exhale, the rise and fall of his chest outlined in the blood that's smeared across the bare skin.

Minutes pass, quiet and long, before he takes a step.

The Gigye's body hasn't moved in the interim, but Suvan approaches like it might do so at any moment. Nothing happens, the bridge silent save for the quickening sound of Suvan's staggered breaths.

"Sir?"

Kai chokes, vision blurring, flickering, a hand letting go of the tablet so he can put it to his mouth.

Shock.

Suvan doesn't- it was all adrenaline. He's *in shock*, and he's only just now . . .

"Sir?" Suvan tries again. He's shifted to crouch beside the remains, one shaking hand extended towards an inhuman other, lifeless and cold in the same way it has been for years now. "Sir?"

There's no answer. There never will be.

It takes Suvan another few tries to realize that though, trembling fingers nudging at Jisoo's with faltering confusion, then desperation.

"Sir? *Sir?*"

He was dead before they found him, but that hardly matters. All Suvan sees is the same person they thought they brought aboard, a teacher, a mentor he *trusted* the promises of, made of nothing but mutilated bits of metal and silicone.

Bellamy reaches over to turn the tablet off as soon as Suvan starts screaming.

#### 4.

The pod is burdened with the majority of what they need by the time Kai finally finds a place that seems to have most of what he's after. He's been keeping his head down, hours dragging by as he and Yue flitted back and forth through the streets of the market. The clamp that catches his eye isn't quite the sort of model he's used to though, and Kai stares at it for a long moment where it's been laid out amidst other various parts from an apparent variety of makers across a low shelf on the table. He can feel the attendant's eyes on him, and after a few too many seconds of staring, a rough paw taps at his shoulder.

As Kai had suspected, the Panttaur's Intergala is fairly stilted, the large, rounded shape of their pads making the hand signs more difficult to read, and the shopkeep has to repeat themselves twice before Kai understands that they want to know what he's looking for. "*Parts for a prosthetic?*" he signs back, pointing to the clamp.

The Panttaur gives him an unreadable look before turning and lifting a box out from beneath another shelf. They set it down on the table, the things inside clanking together loudly. Lifting their paw again, Kai recognizes the sign for "*Size?*"

Kai holds his hands apart in what he hopes is the approximate length of Bellamy's leg. Why that makes the Panttaur roll their eyes, he's not sure, but they bound back towards a curtain behind the stall, heavy steps of their four legs leaving five-toed prints in the snow-dusted ground behind them. They emerge again a moment later, a second box tucked under one arm and

their tail flicking back and forth in obvious agitation as they set that one down in front of him too.

Both boxes are a mess, their contents obviously seen as scrap by the attendant. The parts jumbled together within are of various origins, many far too big to fit someone human sized. His heart in his throat, Kai notes that the few that are end up being of Gigye make, and he hesitates before setting aside each one of those that he finds. The Panttaur is staring at him again, the uncomfortable flick of their tail shifting to a wider, wary back and forth swish. Slowly, Kai dares to glance up at them as he signs a hesitant, "Battery?"

To his relief, that seems to relax the shopkeep's entire demeanor. They huff out a breath that makes their whiskers twitch, ears that had been flattened against their skull perking up as they bound over to the other side of the stall to show off a collection of different batteries. It makes sense, Kai realizes as he turns one of them over in his hands and asks after its lifespan on a charge, the Gigye don't run on this sort of stuff, their lifesource likely the same, unknown power that's currently spinning inside Kai's chest. If they'd thought he might be a cyborg, he's set them at ease by unintentionally implying he's building something a real Gigye would never have use for.

Kai's just finished paying for everything when Yue grabs him by the elbow. His grip is harsh, his eyes wild, and the storage pod bumps against his back as he steers Kai away from the stall. "Quick," he hisses, "this way."

He tugs on Kai hard enough that Kai can feel the urgency in the motion, steering him and the pod into the murky darkness of the nearest alley. "Against the wall," he whispers, every word muffled by the oxygen filter and scarf covering his face. "Don't move, head down." He puts a hand to the back of Kai's neck, pushing until Kai does as asked, staring down at the snow-blown stones beneath their feet as a shadow covers them.

Even though he can't feel the cold, Kai shivers as it passes over. It can't be a Gigye ship, can it? Not here, not without everyone in the outpost panicking. As far as he can tell, it's only him and Yue that are hiding from it. The sun starts to peek into the alleyway again, and Kai chances a glance up at the sky.

His stomach sinks as he recognizes the flash of bronzed-orange hull. *No.*  
Why . . .

"The Horangie?" he chokes.

Yue's hand on his neck slips before pushing his head down again. "Don't look at it!" he snaps. "Don't move! Just wait for it to pass, then we're getting the fuck out of here."

Why? The Horangie is a *human* ship, its crew one they've worked with before on joint missions. Why are they hiding from it?

The truth hits Kai like a blaster to the chest, realization sending a horrified shudder through his frame. Yue's other hand shifts to his arm, steadying him. "You *didn't* . . ." He whispers, knowing even as he says it that they *absolutely did*.

This is why they're so far out.

This is why they can't go back to Meon Jigu.

This is why they let the supplies, vital things like food and medicine, get so low.

Yue's hands on him tighten, the warmth of him that Kai can't feel pressed up against his side as he says, hoarse and vehement, "Defecting was the *only* way to find you, Kai."

"No--"

"They wouldn't let us look for you. They told us to leave you for dead," Yue hisses. "They wanted to ground BG for good. Of course we defected. And none of us regret it, do you hear me?"

Kai stares at him, eyes wide as the words sink in, the gravity of them unable to find solid purchase in his mind. They defected. They defected. And for what? For Kai? Kai, who came back unwhole, pieced back together with different parts?