

IT WAS LIKE A BOMB HAD GONE OFF. The poignant ringing caused Corey's head to spin. She couldn't hear anything outside of the loud, incessant whirring of her ears. She hadn't even realized that Madison had followed her into the bedroom until the blonde was directly in front of her. The door had swung shut as the girl's silent steps moved towards her. Soft, cold, pale hands found themselves anchored to both sides of her face.

Madison's mouth moved, but it was as if the world that surrounded Corey was mute. The redhead furrowed her brow as her eyes scanned the girl's face. She took in the blonde's tearstained cheeks, her almost stone colored skin, the discoloration of her once pink lips as they moved frantically. Corey pulled away from the blonde, her furrowed brow contorting into a scowl as she swallowed hard. She pushed off the bed, distancing herself from the actress.

"I don't want to hear your flimsy excuses, Madison." Corey's voice was harsh. Her features shifted into confusion once more as she realized she hadn't seen anything when Madison had touched her. She turned her head, blinking rapidly as she tried to understand the sudden pause in her power. She ran a hand down her face as her eyes scanned the room. She wanted to focus on something, anything, other than the broken pieces of the blonde in front of her.

"You're upset," the quiet whimper escaped Madison's lips. She took in a shaky breath. She wanted to build her walls back up. All it took to shoot her back down, to humble her, was Corey's tone. She hadn't seen the other girl that angry since Kyle was put back together like a three dimensional puzzle.

"I'm not." The redhead let her tongue press against the roof of her mouth. Her breath and tone leveled as she caught another glimpse of the crumpling doll in front of her.

"I know that face. That's your *I'm-upset-with-you* face." Madison took a shaky step forward, a single hand outstretched towards the musician. Her head tilted to the side slightly as she locked eyes with the redhead. "And your eyebrows... they get really expressive when you're mad."

"I'm not *fucking* upset, Madison." Corey had snapped. The hairs on the back of her neck stood tall. The energy that surrounded her felt like a gust of wind had struck her in her

outburst. Her demeanor screamed the exact opposite of her words as she clenched her jaw.

"Corey, just take my hand. Hold my hand for two seconds and you'll see that I didn't *do* anything. It was a misunderstanding." There it was, the pain that Madison had so desperately wanted to feel. The pain that she had practically begged to be able to feel again.

"It won't work," Corey said simply. She swallowed hard, sniffing as she ran the back of her hand across her upper lip. "I should've seen whatever had happened when you touched my face, or when I touched your wrists to take your hands off me. But I didn't. So it isn't going to work."

"What do you mean it won't work," Madison furrowed her brow. Her tone quickly filled with anger. "You're the *fucking Supreme*," she scoffed. She shook her head as she folded her arms over her chest. Immediately, her body language shifted. She became defensive, curling herself back into her shell.

"Because it won't, Madison. I don't fucking know." Corey groaned. A hand ran through her loose curls as her gaze locked onto the knotted wood floor below her feet. She rolled her jaw, trying her hardest to hold in her emotions. "Why the fuck does it matter to you?" Corey spat. Her nose twitched involuntarily as her eyes narrowed at the floor below her. The room was on fire. Every cell in her body danced to the sound of their racing heartbeats. "It's not like you even care."

Madison scoffed at the words that left Corey's lips. Everything that she had been searching for was right in front of her. Even with Kyle, she couldn't feel a single thing. She was so angry with herself; hurt that she had let herself become so vulnerable with the floppy haired boy. If she had just left her guard up, kept herself distanced, he never would have kissed her.

The actress only wanted to unleash her feelings on someone else so that she didn't need to bottle them up any longer. She wanted to act upon her own selfishness, as she always did, and it backfired. She knew that Corey would have seen how everything had played out eventually, whether she liked it or not.

She had hoped, silently, that the redhead wouldn't see what had happened in fragments. That the other girl would see everything as it was and not in bits and pieces which she then had to put back together herself. What she didn't expect, however, was for what happened with Kyle to even happen at all. Nor had she expected the redhead to walk in as she was frozen, battling the shock and disgust that fought for dominance within her.

"Why does it matter?" Corey repeated her previous question. Her brows furrowed as she blinked back the hot, angry tears that began to well up. Her jaw rolled as she crossed her arms over her chest. Her eyes finally latched onto the girl that stood across from her. Without thinking, the words flew from Madison's lips.

"Because I fucking love you, Corinna." Her breathing caught in her chest as she realized what she'd said. She swallowed hard, the corners of her lips turning downward. Corey watched as Madison's face fell. All the attitude melted off her as she struggled to process the words she had heard.

"You're the only thing that makes me feel alive and, when you touch me, I feel a little less broken inside." Madison's words were softer than they had been initially. Her voice cracked as she closed her eyes, the thump of her wrists against her hips audible as her arms fell against her sides. "I love you."

Corey's mouth immediately became dry. The words that she had so desperately wanted to tell the blonde, that she had told Zoe before she could ever tell Madison, had come from the blonde's lips first. Her mouth hung open slightly, confusion and shock washing over her.

"Corey, please say something," Madison's bottom lip quivered. What had felt like only a beat of silence for the redhead was an excruciatingly long pause for the blonde. Corey took a shaky step forward, her hands finding themselves in the notches under Madison's jaw. She held the blonde's face in her hands, her bottom lip trembling as she tried to speak. Corey squeezed her eyes shut for a moment, an attempt to push back the hot tears that threatened to spill across her cheeks.

"I love you, too." Her eyes scanned the blonde's face as she spoke. She swore she could see a flicker of light returning to the blonde's dull, rust colored eyes. Corey could feel Madison's breath against her face. It was immediately followed by the full force of hungry

lips attached to her own. The blonde's hands latched against the her hips as the redhead pulled her flush against herself. She didn't know why, but her body reacted as if her heart hadn't shattered inside of her chest only moments before. Everything finally washed over Corey in waves.

*Madison watching Felix and Corey from the side door.*

*Felix's remarks directed at the blonde he caught a small glimpse of in the doorway.*

*The way that Felix had smirked at Madison as she turned away and went back into the academy.*

*The blonde's search for Zoe.*

*The way she opened herself up to Kyle in an attempt to connect with him.*

*Kyle immediately misunderstanding and trying to communicate in the only way he knew how.*

Corey shook off the visuals as they crept into her mind. Instead, she focused on the way Madison's delicate fingers gently tugged at the buttons of her silk shirt as she backed the blonde up against the wall; the faint scent of strawberry bubblegum that wafted from the girl's lips; the flowery perfume that clung to the dress that didn't belong to her.

Corey's hands moved downward from their spot against Madison's jaw. They made a detour at the girl's collarbone; a rest stop solely used to trace the divot between flesh and bone with the pad of her thumb. Her hands slid across marble skin, causing a ripple of heat to follow the trail left behind by her fingertips. Corey's palms quickly ran down Madison's sides before gripping the girl's hips. She was gentle, forever cautious knowing how fragile the blonde was, but determined in pace and stride.

Madison let out a quiet gasp as her shoulder blades bounced against the cold wooden door. Her hands moved feverishly as she continued to pop open the redhead's button-down top. Each inch of bare skin was met with hungry lips as Madison slid the silk shirt from Corey's shoulders.

In one fluid movement, Madison was lifted up from the floor. Her legs wrapped around the redhead's waist, a pair of serpents constricting against the other girl tightly. Their kisses deepened as the blonde draped her arms over Corey's shoulders. Black coffee and toasted tobacco fought against artificial strawberries and mint before they finally melded into one. They matched each other's rhythm, no longer fighting for control as they fell back into their usual habits.

Corey used her hips to secure the blonde against the door as she let her hands fall against her sides. She tugged her sleeves from their bunched up positions against her wrists before she tossed the crumpled garment behind her. Immediately, it was lost to the silence of the room.

Madison let out a giggle, her lips still latched against Corey's as the redhead's protective hands returned to her thighs. The musician slid her palms up until the hem of Madison's dress bunched up against the remaining excess material that sat against her hips. She could feel the blonde's smile in every kiss, the urgency in each movement, the hitch in her breath as each newly exposed patch of bare skin met the brisk November air that surrounded them.

The blonde's hands trailed up the back of Corey's neck. She twisted the solid curls of copper around fingers, humming with each loop. As her manicured nails traveled through Corey's hair, she gently bit down against the girl's bottom lip. As the redhead let out a light gasp, Madison tugged at a handful of the girl's hair.

Within a beat, her wrist was pinned against the door. A light thud echoed out as the boney knob of her wrist bounced against wood. Her breath hitched slightly, though it was much louder than either of them expected in the surrounding silence. It was less of a reaction than Madison had been hoping for. Even though her wrist was restrained, it was only loosely held up by the redhead. Unfortunately, for the actress, Corey's fear of hurting her only doubled after her resurrection.

"I'm not made of glass, Cor," Madison whimpered as Corey's lips trailed across her jawline. The blonde craned her neck to give the other girl better access, which the musician gladly scoured. The redhead hummed in response, a gentle acknowledgement of the other girl's words as she left a fluttering trail of open-mouth kisses behind. Madison's fingers flexed

outwards as Corey worked her pressure point. She bit down on her own lip as her tongue dipped outward to keep herself from letting out a guttural moan.

The blonde's hips bucked forward slightly. Corey pushed herself against the other girl. Her light grip around the actress' wrist shifted as their fingers interlocked. She held Madison's hand above their heads, an easy excuse for extra leverage. The whimper that left the blonde's lips was louder than it had been previously. Madison could feel the knot that continued to tighten in her center. Again, she ground her hips against the other girl, silently begging for more; more friction, more force, more Corey.

Corey could feel each gasping breath against her ear, each staggered inhale as she continued to work her way across Madison's neck. Once again, she pressed herself against the blonde who hungered to come undone. This time, however, she made sure the other girl couldn't squirm between her body and the door behind her.

She let go of Madison's hand to let her fingers find the zipper imbedded in the side of the girl's dress. She took careful hold of the zipper between her fingers as she tugged it downward, peppering butterfly kisses across the fabric-turned-choker that covered the scar across Madison's neck. She felt the blonde's hands cup her face.

Madison gently tugged the girl towards herself, closing the gap between their lips. The kiss would have been one of teeth clattering urgency if the pair hadn't memorized every movement, every breath, every sensitive spot of skin. It was delicate, yet full of hunger. An almost touch-starved longing, as if they would never have this moment to themselves again.

"Corey," she spoke between each break, each staggering breath, each ravenous kiss, "Please." The knot in her core continued to tighten, and Madison realized that— even though she couldn't feel anything after her return to the mortal coil— the spark between them was still there, ever present. Dare she say it was even stronger without the other feelings and emotions that had smothered it before.

One of her hands fell from the redhead's face to grasp at her shoulder. Her fingers let out a shaky, silent, pleading squeeze. Corey's arms wrapped around the actress as she pushed off the door, holding the much smaller girl tightly as she carried her across the room.

Corey gently placed Madison against the edge of the mattress and took a single step backwards. She watched as Madison shuttered slightly, both from the loss of contact and the sudden chill of the autumn air. The blonde tugged the black lace dress over her head, revealing her pearl colored skin in slow, methodical increments.

She tossed the dress to the side, letting it crumple against the floor. The ray of light that shone through the bedroom window formed a halo around the blonde. It highlighted every imperfection, every blemish, every granite-like vein that sprawled across her body. Green eyes focused on the deep scar across her shoulder and Corey's look of adoration flashed to sorrow for a fraction of a second. She hoped that Madison hadn't caught it, but the twitch of the blonde's nose told her all that she needed to know.

"Stop fucking looking at me like that," Madison's bottom lip jutted out in a pout. She hated it, the redhead treating her as if she was fragile; like she had a *handle with care* sticker across her forehead. "Stop looking at me with pity in your eyes." Quickly, her bottom lip found its way between her teeth. She was suddenly self-conscious, aware of every imperfection she had thought made her unlovable to begin with. She turned to look anywhere but at the redhead in front of her, her arms folding over her stomach as she shied away.

Corey nodded, swallowing hard as she took a step forward. Her hand reached out to carefully grab the blonde's chin. Still, she moved as though she was afraid to break the porcelain girl. She tilted Madison's head towards her, guiding the girl's attention back to herself as she spoke.

"You are so *dangerously* beautiful, Madison Montgomery," there was a huskiness to her voice that Madison hadn't heard in a while. It caused her heart to flutter erratically. She hoped, silently prayed, that the whole *being dead thing* had cured her heart murmur. She tilted her head back, shifting to close the distance between them once again.

Corey could feel the heat that radiated from the blush in Madison's cheeks; a warm wave of bashfulness shining like a beacon. The redhead's hands slowly traveled across Madison's bare skin. Each touch with her fingertips was calculated and meticulous. Madison laid back against the sheets. Her eyes followed the redhead as she left a trail of sloppy kisses across each newly bared inch of skin.

The actress' back arched as Corey's lips skimmed an overly sensitive spot against the dip of her hip. She wanted to voice her protests, to beg the redhead to focus her attention elsewhere, but the other girl moved on before she could. It didn't take long before her head pressed back against the comforter. She gripped the sheets underneath her, the cotton fabric balled up under her fists. Her back arched towards Corey once more, yearning for more contact as the cold sweat clung to her skin. She let out a breathy moan. It was the only sound in the room, a solo-symphony that bounced off the white walls of the academy around them.