

Part Five

"Jasper...Jasper!"

With a bit of a gasp, the teen jumped awake, only to relax upon immediately recognizing his surroundings. Jackson's truck, and obviously, he was staring into the other's dark eyes, a little confused but primarily aware.

Smiling, Jackson rubbed his shoulder softly. "We're in Franklin."

Jasper nodded softly, sitting up, holding the blanket close to him, and looking around. A parking lot? Hotel. Expensive hotel. Mentally, he facepalmed, but physically, he only looked up at Jackson. "Why are we at a hotel?" He asked sleepily, rubbing his face and stretching.

"I wanted to drop you off somewhere that I knew was safe." The dark-haired teen leaned back in his seat.

"Mmm..." Jasper hummed, continuing to stretch, his limbs basically numb from the two hours of stagnancy.

"Come on." Jackson turned the truck entirely off. "Gotta get you into a room."

"Mhm." The blonde started to open his door, stretching just a tiny bit more before folding up the blanket and tossing it into the back of the truck. Grabbing one of his bags, he glanced at the hotel building, walking around the back of the truck to meet Jackson. "So what are you gonna say?"

"Hm? About what?" Jackson held the two duffle bags, one his own and the other his boyfriend's.

Staring at the bags for a moment, Jasper cleared his throat. "We're not 18. How are you gonna get a room without an adult?"

"Like this." He motioned for him to follow him inside, starting towards the doors.

"I'm excited to see how you'll do this. I don't think I've ever seen you lie."

"I'm not as good as you. But I have confidence. Therefore, I'm convincing." Jackson wrapped his arm around Jasper's waist.

"Is this a part of the plan?" The blonde turned a slight shade of pink, looking up at him.

"Mhm. Your blushing is, too. Just trust me." The darker-haired teen walked up to the counter, slowly unwrapping his arm from his boyfriend's waist. "Hello, Miss."

"Hey there. How can I help you this morning?" The woman at the desk smiled at the two, leaning forward slightly.

"So...my parents were supposed to come up here with us, but the two of them had a business meeting that they had to attend prior to coming up here, but they wanted us to go ahead up here and get our rooms. I have my dad's number and card if you would like to contact him, but he was saying we should still be able to get rooms?"

"Hmmm...can I contact your father first?"

Jackson gave a nod, handing her a business card. "We'll be waiting over there." He pointed towards the lobby, smiling as she started to dial the number on the card.

"Whose number is that?" Jasper mumbled as they headed towards the couch, plopping next to his boyfriend.

"Orion's." He wrapped his arm around him, reclining back in the chair.

"O...Orion's? Did you tell him you were doing this?"

"I did."

Jasper stared up at him for a few moments, starting to attempt to piece everything together. Something in this scenario was off or didn't make sense. And he still wasn't quite sure what...actually. No. He intertwined his fingers for a few moments, shaking his head. "What did you mean up there? You know you can't stay with me, Jackson."

Jackson remained leaned back, not even inching to look down at his boyfriend.

"Jackson. You can't stay with me." He spoke firmly but softly, trying to avoid raising his voice.

"I...I know, but...it doesn't really matter. My parents are gone all weekend." Jackson shook his head, looking down at him. "Can't I stay with you for one night?" He whispered.

"No, no, you can't. This is a whole different city, and you could get in much more trouble than you're already in now."

"It's not even gonna matter. I'm already grounded for basically the rest of my life, and who knows how long it'll be until we see each other again."

"But we will see each other again, right? So does it really matter if we don't see each other for a few months?"

"You forget that I wanna see you every day."

"And by now, you know that we do *not* see each other every day."

"You think that changes how much I want to see you?"

"Jackson, you're quite literally grounded, and they don't want you anywhere near me. For me and for you, can you please just go home so you don't make this situation any more severe?"

"I don't care if they don't want me anywhere near you. I wanna be near you. They don't get it, and they don't have to."

"Jackson...are you even listening to me?"

"I am. I know you want what's best for us. But I don't wanna be apart from you for a day or even a week. Do you think I could do months...? Or maybe even a year?"

"Yeah, but what's one night gonna do, Jax?"

Jackson looked down at him for a few moments before crossing his arms and looking away. "Ease the pain."

Jasper stared at him once more, closing his eyes to exhale. "It's not like it's gonna be the rest of our lives, Jackson. It's only gonna be a little bit. We can, and you know we will spend the rest of our lives together after all of that."

“Well, I wanna stay with you until the very last moment I can. Is that too unfair?”

“No, but...” He sighed, shaking his head.

“You know a world where I can’t see you every day? That perfectly describes a life I don’t wanna live. But I’m gonna have to for probably a year. Or even longer. Can’t we do this one night?”

Jasper let out a long sigh, looking down at his lap and picking at his jeans. He watched as the other teen’s hand hovered over his own and stopped pulling at the thread of his pants, turning to look at his boyfriend. *‘Mistake.’* He thought to himself, the connection with Jackson’s puppy eyes immediately making his decision for him.

Jackson smiled softly at him, grabbing his other hand as well. “Just one night?”

“Just the one night.”

The darker-haired teen’s smile turned warmer, and he rested his forehead against Jasper’s, hugging him gently. “Thank you.”

“Yeah, yeah. Whatever.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too.” Jasper rolled his eyes with a grin, slowly pushing off of him.

“Look’s like that lady’s about to get off the phone soon.”

“You’re certain that will work?”

“I was confident when I went up there. That’s how I succeed at lying to some.”

“Who do you lie to?”

“My parents.”

“Of course. Who else?” Jasper mumbled, shaking his head.

“I’ve lied to a couple of teachers...?”

“Oh wow. That’s like, five people.”

“You included the hotel lady?”

“I did.”

“Oh...wow, that is like five people.” Jackson scratched his head, poking his lips out. “Hm, you got me there. Okay, but still. Five people successfully, though.”

“Less than me.”

“How many people have you lied to?”

“More than I can count on my fingers.”

“So 11?”

“Much more.”

“Hello, boys?” The hotel attendant smiled as she approached, leaning down to look at them.

“Hey, ma’am.” Jackson turned to look up at her, putting on a soft smile.

“What’s the deal?”

“So your father confirmed your stay here. All you have to do is come up to the front and pay.” She ushered them back towards the desk, making her way behind it and starting to ring them up for a room. “You ready?”

Jackson offered out his card, watching her swipe it and resting his arms on the help desk, tilting his head slightly.

"Alright, you're all set. Here's your room keys." She handed them the cards, offering a kind smile. "You can call the room service number on the cards if you need anything."

"Thank you, ma'am." Jackson nodded towards her, walking back to his boyfriend and grabbing most of the bags. "We're on the second floor. Room B223."

Picking up the last bag, Jasper started towards the elevator with him, pressing the upwards arrow and resting his head against the wall.

"What's wrong, Jazz?"

The blonde turned towards him and shook his head, pushing off the wall and holding onto his boyfriend's arm, dropping his head on his shoulder.

"I love when you're like this."

"Mm?" Jasper looked up at him, blinking slowly.

Jackson stared down at him, kissing his forehead. "You're like an affectionate cat."

"And you're a dumb puppy." With the ding of the day, he walked into the elevator, leaning against the back of it.

"Your dumb puppy." The dark-haired teen followed him in, resting his head against his.

"Yeah, whatever."

Jackson smiled as he pressed the button to their floor, waiting patiently for the doors to open before practically busting out of them. "Let's go. Come on."

"Why are you so excited?" Jasper watched him speed walk off, sighing and shaking his head to follow behind him. Even as he tried to stay in this mood of disinterest or not wanting to be excited, he couldn't bite back his smile. The two had never had a private space together, and this...this was a likelihood he really couldn't even fathom. Even if it was the result of a slip-up, the possibility of something good happening afterward? Yeah, he wouldn't have thunk it.

Jackson peeked out of the open door, waving for his boyfriend to follow. "Come on!" He whisper-yelled, smiling brightly.

Jasper walked into the room, setting his bag down on the floor and glancing around in the room. The starch-white sheets on the bed were almost too bright to look at, and the sunrise light pouring in from the window was almost a sight he hadn't seen. He turned to look at the bathroom, peeking to look in, but nearly walked into Jackson's chest, turning up towards him.

"Isn't this nice?" The dark-haired teen wrapped his arms around him, a smile off his face that it seemed like he maybe couldn't put away if he tried.

"It's a hotel..." Jasper nodded, hugging his chest.

"But it's nice. It's ours for the night."

"Yeah...yeah, it is."

Jackson grabbed his hands, spinning him out of his arms and then back in, resting his head on top of his. "Even if it's just for this night. Promise me you'll enjoy this?"

"Jackson..." Jasper grabbed his face, looking up at him. "I already am." He smiled softly.

The darker-haired teen picked his boyfriend up off of the ground, spinning around with him and kissing his cheek. "This is gonna be amazing, Jazz."

Smiling reluctantly, he nodded, laying his head in the crook of Jackson's neck. "I'll take your word for it."

"You better." Jackson flopped back onto the bed, wrapping his arms around him. "You'd better."

Resting his arms over his, Jasper laid back against him, exhaling out enough to relax and closing his eyes.

The Morning

Jasper sat up slowly as the morning sunlight hit his eyes, groaning softly and stretching out as much as he could with his boyfriend's arms wrapped around his waist. He yawned out loud, looking down at Jackson with endearing eyes. Ruffling his hair, he kissed the top of his head. "Jax?" He whispered, blowing into his ear with a small smile. "Wake up..."

Twitching the slightest bit, he turned over and pushed his hair out of his face, yawning with his eyes closed.

"Jackson..." Jasper poked his shoulder lightly, bouncing his fingers up to his face. "Jackson." He poked at his cheeks, pinching them lightly.

"Hm?" He opened a singular eye, yawning quietly.

"Morning. You gotta get up, pumpkin. It's..." He checked his watch, leaning closer to him. "It's 9: 23 am. And you said you'd be heading home by 11 today."

"Mhm...I know." Jackson turned back to him, wrapping his arms around Jasper and pulling him down into his arms. "But cuddles..."

"We do have enough time to cuddle..." Jasper rested his hands on top of Jackson's, twiddling with the necklace around his neck. He sank back into his arms more, trying to avoid melting into Jackson's warm embrace but still wanting to enjoy for as long as he could. Despite his argument about it only being a year, even he had sat back and sulked at the thought of not seeing his boyfriend for more than a week.

Moving his hands from his necklace to intertwine them with Jackson's, he shifted his eyes to watch as Jackson placed his face in between his head and shoulder, attempting to release even more tension with the change in position. It wasn't gonna be that bad, and it was true that he knew even himself. He'd been alone for most of his life, and this wasn't the second time he'd had to leave a town for some legal-related reason. It was the attachment to Jackson that turned his opinion around.

Leaving wasn't a big deal, but now seeing Jackson would be unlikely, impossible, and straight-up unreasonable. Not only was he quite a while away in comparison to before, but Jackson also had gotten in big trouble with his parents about this whole ordeal. Maybe he could see him when his parents were gone...? No, he couldn't encourage that. He didn't want him to get caught and things to get worse. It seemed best to avoid seeing each other until Jackson could move out or stop being completely dependent on his parents.

"Jasper." Jax pulled away slightly, sitting up behind him.

"Hm?" Blinking out of his thoughts, he glanced back to look at him.

"I...I have something to tell you." Jackson spoke softly, his thumb rubbing over Jasper's hand before he pulled his own hands loose.

Stiffening a bit, Jasper turned around fully to sit up; his heart started to pound. All of a sudden, he feared the thoughts that had been flooding his mind for the past few days, and he could feel his hands being squeezed briefly. Was he obviously nervous? Was it obvious that for the past few days, he'd been waiting for Jackson to call him and say it was over? As unreasonable as it sounded, even knowing that

Jackson loved him more than he loved himself, he'd still been bracing himself for the preparation of the words 'I can't do this.' Blinking hard, he yanked himself out of his thoughts once more, looking up at Jackson.

"I...I don't wanna do this without you, Jazz."

Jasper held his breath, nodding slightly.

Jackson inhaled deeply, closing his eyes to nod to himself before grabbing his boyfriend's hands.

Jasper closed his own eyes, letting his head drop slightly.

"I'm not going back home. I'm running away with you."

In a second, like glass breaking against a wall, Jasper's eyes opened, and he looked up at Jackson, unable to get out words for a second. "I...I-what...no! No, you can't run away with me, Jackson!"

"I'm going with you, Jasper; there is nothing good for me back at home."

"Yes, yes, there is. There's a place to sleep and stay and exist where you don't have to find the answer to everything yourself." He started to get off of the bed, shaking his head.

"I don't care about that; I don't wanna be there when I can't be without you, Jazzy."

"Jackson. You can not. Go with me. And I mean it. It's not safe. You don't know what you're doing, and it- it's just a year."

"And what am I supposed to do in that year without you?"

"What were you doing before?" Jasper scoffed.

"You want me to go back to being depressed and alone...?"

"No, I...it's not like we have to break up. We just can't physically see each other. We can video call, we can talk on the phone, all of that, but we can't-Jackson, we'll still be together."

"I don't wanna be alone, Jasper."

Starting to put Jackson's things back in his bag, he shook his head to himself, mumbling, "No, no, you are not going with me."

"Jasper, I can't handle being alone again."

"You aren't gonna be alone."

"I won't be near you."

"Oh my god. I shouldn't have let you even drop me off. I shouldn't have let you stay with me at this hotel. No, no, no, I fucked up so badly." Jasper muttered as he continued, only stopping when Jackson grabbed his arm.

"Why? Why shouldn't you have?"

"Because you knew you could trick me. You knew that if you kept asking for little shit, I'd say yes. You-you kept asking for an inch, knowing you'd want a fucking mile. And you knew I would say yes to all these small things."

"Yeah, but I didn't do it on purpose." Jackson moved to stand in front of him, grabbing his shoulders. "I just...I didn't know until today. I thought about yesterday, but I promise I didn't know it for sure."

"Yeah, but you did it on purpose every other time." Jasper pulled away from him, looking up at him. "And you've been doing it ever since we first met. You...you are a manipulator and a brat together. You've been saying we'll go do this little thing, and then it turns into a fucking flurry of other shit. And you know it works on me, and I know it works on me, and...and..." He groaned, starting to grab his own bag.

"Jasper, I...I'm not trying to manipulate you... I've just...I've just wanted to be near you since we met."

"It's what you want, Jackson. It's always what you want...not what anyone else wants because you matter the most, and everything in the fucking world is supposed to go your goddamn way."

"I-I wanted to do things that would help you."

"I didn't need a savior."

"I didn't wanna be your savior, and I just wanted to help because I liked you..."

"Your past three sentences all had things that *you* wanted in them. You wanted to be near me. You wanted to do things that would help. You..." He poked his chest, looking up at him, "Wanted to help. You wanted it. Not me."

"So you didn't want my help...?"

"As much as I love you now...Jackson, I didn't want your help. Because of things like this."

Jackson crossed his arms, biting his lip as he thought. "I didn't...I wasn't trying to do this...I was just trying to guarantee that we would stay together, Jasper."

"I don't care what you're trying or not trying to do. It doesn't matter anymore. You've been doing this since October, and even if you were doing it on accident yesterday and today, it fucking worked. And now...now I'm fucked. I'm fucked, Jackson." Jasper turned to him, sitting on the bed. "I'm fucked, because I know that you're not going home, and I have to figure out what to do." He dropped his head into his hands, groaning to himself as he let it slide down.

Standing in front of him, Jackson exhaled, kneeling in front of him a moment later. "I'm sorry, Jasper..."

"I have to figure out what to do," Jasper muttered a second time, shaking his head.

"Jasper..."

The blonde sat still for a moment, finally lifting his head out of his hands and looking down at his boyfriend.

"I'm sorry." Jackson cupped his face softly, shaking his own head slightly. "Please forgive me for all this. I'm so sorry, Jasper." He whispered.

Eyes locking with his, Jasper let the handle of his bag slide down from his arm, slowly sinking onto the floor into his boyfriend's arms. "I've fucked up twice now..." He mumbled into his chest, head under his chin. "I messed up...I-I...broke into the Blanchet's house because I wanted to get you a gift for your birthday. And I fucked up...I fucked up and forgot to check my notebook. The Blanchets come back at five,

Jackson. I know that. I *know* that. Why did I forget?" He leaned out of his arms, tears threatening to hit his cheeks.

Staring at him, Jackson's face turned from realization to sympathy, and he shook his head, cupping his face with both hands. "Baby, that's not your fault..."

"No, Jackson. It is..." He muttered, letting his head drop, sniffing softly.

"Jasper..."

"I knew it. I knew it the day before. I didn't check my book, my watch, or the fucking garage and..." His voice started to break, and he dropped his head back into his boyfriend's chest, clinging onto him for dear life.

"Jas..." Jackson paused as he could feel the other start to cry into his chest, the tears elevating quickly into sobs. He sat back on his knees slightly, exhaling softly and looking down at him with concern and worry, rubbing his back softly. "Everything's gonna be alright...I promised." He whispered.