

## Just a coin flip's worth

As you perceive what's real to you, don't forget that your perception of reality is only the realization you perceived throughout your life.

### Chapter 1 – You and I

Hot steam flows through your nostrils as you wake up. Your muscles clench as your mind goes through the day to come, eyes like a warrior and the heart of a tiger, ready to fight for your life. Today is the day you are sent in the arena for the first time. Maybe. You don't know it yet actually. But it's possible! As I walk out of my tent, fully geared and wearing a smile you never wore before. A mixture of fear and fun is coming into your mind. You played with weapons since you were a kid. You were good at it. But then you over-achieved. And Dad died. But weapons are just so much fun! Yesterday they killed someone down the restaurant alley. Tragic stuff really. Should happen only among professionals. True. But when you think about it, being dead is rather tragic to others than to you. You yourself don't really notice it, do you? At least at this point you noticed how you stood in the middle of the arena, the tosser right in front of you, coin ready.

“Menschen dieser Stadt, wen werden wir heute sterben sehen, wer wird im Blut zum Ruhm seines Volkes zum Ende noch stehen?“ rief der Kommentator in die Menge.

Immer diese nervigen Reden vor den Kämpfen. Ich will endlich anfangen. Kopf, ich, Zahl, Justin.

At this point you finally notice, how the world around you actually is, you're in the shopping Isle. You ran again. The world looked so unfamiliar, you felt like a man from another time. Meanwhile the nurses are trying to get you to calm down, as you just, cold as a stone and only wearing your nightgown and with widely open eyes walked out the front door of the mental health clinic you're stationary in, down to the next supermarket and started flipping a coin while mumbling “murder, murder, murder”. You're not a tall woman, maybe 1.57 metres, but they were concerned about your wellbeing since it's Christmas and the night gown is not very thick.

As you are watching with your own two eyes, the miracle is happening. Joshua, your identical twin, is talking to a girl. Since your teenager days, he was too afraid to do so, and now, at your combined age of 36, it is happening.

As you are standing there, Theresa is actually getting talked to by that freak Yoshi. He was your neighbour for half your life, you know this man, and this man ain't sane.

As you arrive in the basement where the party already started, you see that small chump Yoshi talking to your sister, visibly making her uncomfortable.

As you heard on the speaker, the fire spread to the kitchen, but all the kids are safe.

As you run next to the burning carpet, you notice that the smell of wine actually went pretty well with weedplant smoke.

As you're being tended to by the medics, you think of Justin and mentally curse him for his honesty.

As you're assisting the poor boy with the burnmarks on his legs, you think of how easy it is to lose what's important to you. The next day you would start hoarding.

As you tell Mark that his furpelts impressed nobody, you don't notice the soft wind blowing.

As the wind blew through the room, it didn't care for the lamp.

As the lamp was dangling through the wind, the flickering light it provided made Joshua ignore the lamp itself.

As you're being rejected by the first woman you ever talked to, you're a broken man and don't notice the lamp.

As Theresa's brother called Joshua a loser for hitting the lamp after being rejected, the crowd is pleased.

As the crowd is pleased, they become distracted.

As they become distracted, they don't notice the small candle used for Catherine's crack.

As you are at home, cleaning the bathroom and tidying the bedroom, your kids mentioned that they are going to a party tonight, so you and your spouse decide to have a sex night, although the current work is still to be done.

As you stand outside the burning building, thinking about what is coming, you notice, that Joshua is missing.

As you live your life, he will be thought for and then forgotten, as the loser at the bottom.

I don't understand it. Whenever I think about him, pain rushes me but I can't stop. The look of horror on his face. The feeling of life leaving a body.

You did the right thing Elz'. Don't let life take you away. Remember, he was just a human. Not like you. You are superior. Even when facing this you cannot forget. You are superior. Whatever sting you feel in your heart, whenever the straps are applied, you are superior. Don't forget that.

"Yes, you are probably right", you mumble in the mirror. The disfigured face you look at goes on "Just as long as you believe in me, everything will be alright."

"Elizabeth, dinner's ready!", is the first thing I hear from downstairs. Of course they have to break it. They are watching me. They think I didn't spot the camera in the pencils Emily lent me. But I do. I noticed all the cameras, the ones in the floor, the ones in the bathroom, in the hole in the wall.

"How was your day?" you hear Emily mumble in the doorframe behind you.

You, still standing frozen at the mirror, having quite the episode going on, answer "I am okay" with a tone that Satan himself would have thought of as mildly threatening at best. You are good at this. You practice it every day though. Emily is astounded by your, as she sees it, voice training every day. But she murdered someone when she was 6, so what does she know.

You arrived in St. Pete's two weeks ago. After the incident they rushed you here because they were quite concerned about you. After learning about your history, they decided to keep you at their place. It was quite an entertaining one, nothing horrible, just... strange, well except for the recent part. When your dad went shark - fishing with you, you enjoyed the part of removing the teeth the most, since at home you'd make spears from them. After all, mom taught you how stable they are. And if the people ever come back, the shiny people from the bright cities, I'll be ready.

These people, they come, and they take everything. But not this one boy. He looked majestic on his giant Llama. To be fair, as I hurled my newly made smaller spears into their ongoing charge. He's alright. He didn't kill too many of our people and didn't want to probably. He was ordered to do so. Maybe he enjoyed it. It's sad I can't ask him anymore. When the flames spurred up, he was not fast enough. Too bad he didn't know how to handle his rifle. Otherwise I wouldn't have hit him with the burning torch.

"Für meinen Bruder" hast du dabei nur gedacht.

"Hey?"

"Hey?!"

„HEY!"

The nurse slaps you back into reality. She's done that quite a few times already, but you always get lost in your small dreams. Meanwhile everyone at the dinner table stood in shock, as you just quietly, while putting spoon after spoon of boiling hot tea in your mouth, whispered, spitting tea all over the table, "For my brother".

You notice how the empty spoon mirrors your true self. Distorted and Empty. A tool for someone else. Entertainment to the masses and a delightful amount of attention you craved for all your life. Since you were a child, you felt neglected. You felt that you parents didn't talk to you. Or even wanted to. They did. But you're sick. Right now, you are angrily chewing on a metal spoon as everyone at the table agrees on the fact, that your medication needs to be changed. They do not feel the need to intervene though, 4 Finger Johnny has that nickname since he tried to help you the last time. No one suspected you to kick a door that hard. They could have called him Mr 4, since he is the 4th tallest one, the 4th strongest and the 4th best in Double Jeopardy. Good thing he kept doing his lists, it really helped going through his mind and break him accordingly. Every word I muttered in his direction was meant to distract him, every inch I moved my chair at the table was to make him uncomfortable. And every time I had sex with him, all I did was making him sad. He was a bit of a bitch though. He kept giving me bad stares throughout the day, especially when he's trying to organize my medication, and all the stuff you have to take for your health blurs your vision to the point you just dance through the hallways like a ballerina. At least until last week, when you broke your foot trying to do a pirouette on the stairways. It really was a tricky scenario. But you pulled it off. Kind of. John said if that happens again, he's gonna strap you to the bed until he talked sense into you. What a funny man. I still remember the time before the hospital. Back then, I met his son at a party, and we had a bit of a chat. We left early though, I really liked him. As we walked through the badly lit streets, he confessed his love to me. It was so romantic. When he arrived in our village, he was just a small boy, but we invited him over to play with us every other day. That's been 20 years ago... God he was such a friendly boy. But so stupid. He always said exactly what he thought and half of the things he thought about were compliments. And he always told me how beautiful I am. And how creative I can be. I made the best cakes he's ever eaten, he used to say. He was such a good friend. Well, he wanted more than friendship but whatever, I was glad he accepted that I did not want that. You know that quite a few people wouldn't.

As you wander through the hallways, whistling in a lovingly tone, Ephraim yelled from his room "Bitch it's 2 am. Go. To. - Fucking! Sleep!"

And it was 2 am. The streetlights were only barely lit. But I didn't care. Most of the shops were closed. But I didn't notice. The streets were overflowing with trash. But you didn't see that. The small pieces of syringes stuck in my shoe, I didn't understand why there were syringes around, I noticed them.

The man was standing there, right in front of the two of us. We stopped. With a loving tone in my voice, I asked him how his day was, as Justin began evolving a blank stare into the abyss as he noticed the gun the man carried.

"Ich gebe euch eine Wahl, also hübsche, entscheide, Kopf oder Zahl?"

You click. And with all force you ram your fist into Johns stomach. Then you start feeling a giant empty hole in your heart.

You felt someone's missing. Then darkness. John ordered you anaesthetics and 24 hours of observation.

„Und jetzt drei schritte nach rechts, dann zwei nach links und einmal drehen, bitte!“ yelled the teacher at our group. She never really participated or even really paid attention. But she was kind. I liked that.

You notice that you're dreaming, because every time someone starts to speak german, which is very unusual in your country, you know it is a dream. It took 3 fires to find this clue and apply it.

Meine Damen und Herren, ich präsentiere ihnen heute Abend eine Show, wie sie sie noch nie gesehen haben! Bewegung auf einem Level, wie es die Welt vorher noch nicht für möglich gehalten hat. Halten sie alle bitte den Atem an UND – LIEFERN SIE EINEN MÄCHTIGEN APPLAUS FÜR - DIE – GROßARTIGE – DIE EINZIGARTIGE – EL – LI – Za – Beth!

You need quite a few steps to get to the middle of the stage. Having short legs kind of sucks, you think to yourself.

Go on, you know what to do, you tell yourself. Three steps to the front aaand you're spectating. He took over again. God he's so talented. The way he moves my legs is astounding. I always wanted to be able to do so. Now I finally can relax my mind, you think to yourself. Then a crack. You don't feel your legs. Or your arms. You're strapped. Again. I guess the guy who

administers the drugs didn't get the dosage right. Great. Now I have to lay this out, I guess. Or not? What's that? Oh. Gideas.

"Hey Gideas, how are you doing?"

"Well, you just kicked my 2 ass two times while being strapped to a bed and receiving hard medication, I'm kind of surprised actually.

"Come on, have a seat"

"I'd rather not actually."

You know he is not there to entertain you. You see the light shimmering in his eyes as they dry up after the tears he got from your physical treatment. This is a broken man; you think to yourself.

"...so, did you get that?" he asked.

Fuck.

"I guess so, but can you write down a note for me? I don't have a free hand right now", you say, jiggling the metal chain of your straps. You can slightly move them, but you don't feel any pain in them, which could explain how you managed to reach Gideas with your foot multiple times. It was the broken one though. And the crack was real. And now your foot is fucked. Again.

"You didn't hear a word I said, did you? I saw that look in your eyes", a sad tone was undermining his authority at that moment, thinking about this poor woman, and what life has done to her. "Ok, I'll write it down for you, just don't forget about it, o.k.?"

John still remembers the first call he received which started this whole story. Panicked crying, a gunshot. Then another. then silence. Good thing, Justin had his dad on quick dial. So when they stood in that street he could call for help immediately. The life I had, was over that day though. Literally. The ambulance came, but I died on the ride. And then they resuscitated me. 5 Times, every time I became stable a pothole fucked the whole arrangement up again and the medics became frustrated as the woman assisting her boss in the back of the car couldn't take it any longer. As my blood kept dripping down carrier, she cried in the corner, thinking about losing more people that night after that boy in the fire.

John was told about most of it. Since then he started drinking again. Just a bit, because of his medication, but still. He knows it's not good. It wasn't good since he raised two children and it wasn't good since he led a sanitary asylum complex. But everyone deals with loss differently. At least John uses that excuse. She would have made such a good nurse, she had so much practice, he thinks. But I guess I wouldn't have taken that night very well aswell, he continues. Being a paramedic is rough at times, he tells himself, as he remembers me carefully applying her straps to that poor kid. The City lost a lot that day. And John lost his son. Not Justin though, he managed to arrange himself with the whole situation, somehow. Such a strong man, John thought to himself. Then he broke down in tears, thinking about Joshua. Or as his colleagues called him up until the incident "the minor son".

Poor Josh... never really lived up to his potential he thinks. Unlike Justin, Joshua always was the pre-emptively scarred child it seems. He knew the stove is hot, so he didn't touch it. He knew that using tricks to impress people is cheap, so he never learned anything. He knew that all women find him disgusting. That's why he never talked to any. He always talked about that girl Elizabeth, and how he likes her. Justin told him to grow a pair and talk to her. So he did. And Justin left. He didn't want to ruin the moment by reminding Joshua that Elizabeth was actually into him or reminding her by being present. So, he and her sister backed off. They wandered through the streets. When they heard sirens they realized they were quite intoxicated, so they took a dark corner, not realizing the sirens were headed to where they're coming from, not where they are. Justin never told his father, what happened afterwards. John had to piece it together through spectating. And when the cameras caught him and me talking, he probably overheard, what happened. Justin told me they day after when he visited me. It was the last time, but I didn't mind, he gave me such a beautiful poem:

Wenn jemand lügt, wird er seine Gründe haben,  
bevor man sich aufregt, besser jene hinterfragen.

Denn Verständnis zeigt, mit den richtigen Fragen  
Eine friedliche Zeit, die könnten wir vertragen.  
Wär's doch so leicht, so viel Verantwortung zu tragen,  
Doch wäre's so hart, einmal die Wahrheit zu sagen?  
Von Verständnis zeugt und steht, wer Verständnis zeigt und geht.

As you slowly arise from your 26 hours of sleep, feeling the synthetical light burning through your lenses and the tightening grip of the straps gone from your wrists and feet. You take a deep breath. Did this actually happen? You don't really know. You never learned to tell reality and dream apart, you think. At least right now you are not able to. Of course, clues and hints get the detective to his objective, but even the smartest lion goes a day without food from time to time.

All you know is, that you need to leave. Right now. You need to see the sun, you need to feel its warmth covering your arms and legs and the embracing smell of nature in your nostrils. Of course, it isn't easy, but you'll get there. Eventually. And one day, you might overcome what you saw, even if it takes everything you have at your disposal. Or one day, you snap completely. And your story is over. And you'll be thought for. And then forgotten. As the crazy woman, tossing coins while shopping.

But John was to be wrong once again. He thought to be hearing the truth when Elizabeth tried to seduce him. And when she offered him to apologize for "Your tantr – m

On a nice Sunday even you're sitting in front of your changing casket, dirty clothes piled up left and right, but you didn't mind. All you had in mind was Justin. His breath, when he tried to smoke tobacco for the first time and you're eternal combination of cigarettes and him, cursed your lung with severe damage following this day. It was a good time. You spent every day together. After being taught in excruciatingly long lessons from your tutors, you would go outside and just spent the afternoon talking to each other about what's on your mind, your lovely pet, the nice house assistant your mother demanded from her new husband to buy, your first kiss.

"what do you mean, you have not, in your whole life, kissed somebody?", he asked you, when you lied to him as you always did. They buy you nice things and also your story of being a hidden angel. It's crazy, isn't it?

"No, I just never felt the connection with anyone", said the girl who gave her dealer a blowjob the week before. You don't even blush when you're lying anymore.

As the leaves on the trees darken, and the temperature drops to an uncomfortable degree, you both decide to head home. Justin was such a good friend. Always there for you, being a shoulder to cry on and the hypeman when life throws difficulties in your way.

On your way home, wandering through the lovely alley they renovated a year ago, you notice a bunch of people coming closer and slowing down.

"Hey Ez', me and the guys are going to the range, wanna join in?" you hear your Martin yell at you from the side of the group.

"Alright, right, no. I won't. Remember last time?"

Martin replied by attempting to smile while shamefully staring at the ground. off.

"Dad's weird today again" you mumble to yourself, as stare at the spot where his group used to be standing minutes before. You don't even once consider that you just forgot about that about the fact, that your father has emotions too. You sometimes freeze for pretty much unknown reasons, nobody exactly knows or has a good guess on what the hell is going on in your head at that moment. Your head basically shuts down when you're mean to someone, you don't exactly know why either. You had this for quite a while and you're used to be basically passive during the team sport exercises, since whenever you scored and saw the shame on the enemy team's faces you're turning into a statue. You don't even really notice, but the others assume you start daydreaming. So, they kicked you out. You weren't really sad about this, since now you're with Justin.

While in St. Petes you actually used the time. You practiced writing. Your most recent story goes as follows:

Next to the frozen Riverbed, on a small hill and probably built onto a rocksolid foundation,

Neben dem gefrorenen Flussbett, auf einer kleinen Anhebung aber vermutlich mit steinernem Fundament gebautem und direkt am Rand einer tiefen Kluft errichteten Zaun war nun doch ein Haus in Sicht. Die letzten Tage hatte Adrian nur darauf gewartet, dass er endlich irgendwo Unterschlupf finden kann, Feuer und Höhlen schützen zwar vor dem Wetter aber nicht vor der Einsamkeit die so ein Marsch mit sich bringt. Langsam trat er an das Haus heran, bewusst stapfte er mit den Füßen durch den dicken Schnee der den Boden bedeckt, um den Bewohner auf sich Aufmerksam zu machen. Er wusste, wenn er sich in irgendeiner Form nicht als einladende Person präsentierte, würde er vermutlich hier draußen erfrieren. Noch machte ihm die Kälte nichts aus, aber nachts konnte es in der Gegend bis zu minus 20 Grad geben, nicht gerade der ideale Ort für einen Campingausflug. Aber deswegen war er auch nicht unterwegs, also gab es keine andere Möglichkeit als in die Kälte eines besonders harten Novembers zu ziehen.

Als er gerade an der Tür stand und eine Klingel suchte, rieselte eine überraschend große Menge Schnee auf ihn herab. Sich den Kopf kratzend, und den „Schnee“ als Asche identifizierend war das nächste was er spürte eine Tür, die ihm ins Gesicht schlug. Noch benommen sammelte sich so schlagartig das Adrenalin in seinem Körper an und Adrian machte sich bereit, um sein Leben zu kämpfen, als ihm eine alte Frau ins Gesicht blickte.

„Oh, tut mir leid, ich dachte ich hätte etwas gehört und wollte nachsehen ob Frieda nicht wieder abgehauen ist. Herrje, was haben sie denn da auf dem Kopf? Was haben sie denn da? Warten sie mal kurz.“

Und bevor der 18-jährige ein Wort sagen konnte, knallte man ihm die Tür wieder vor der Nase zu, dass die Scharniere der vom Wetter zerfressenen aber noch intakten Tür nur so quietschten und nachwackelten. Von drinnen war nur ein leicht vom Schneeregen, der mittlerweile eingesetzt hat übertönte „Scheiße Frida, wie oft soll ich dir noch sagen, dass du aufpassen sollst bevor du etwas aus dem Fenster wirfst. Einmal ein Gast da un – der Rest würde von einer besonders peitschenhaften Windböe übertönt werden.

Die Tür, die trotz der vorherigen und wahrscheinlich regelmäßigen Einsetzung dieser Kraft noch zu funktionieren scheint, öffnete sich fast lautlos vor Adrian während er sich von einzelnen Schnee- und Ascheflocken auf seinem Gesicht befreite.

Die Frau, welche zuvor noch einen angeregten Dialog zu führen schien, stand im Rahmen der Tür und, jetzt mit einer massiven orangenen Brille ausgestattet, auf einem türkisblauen Teppich in dessen Ränder Gold eingewebt zu sein schien. Dir gefiel die Kombination, auch wenn sie unnötig Pompös zu sein scheint, wenn man bedenkt, dass der Rest der Gegenstände in dem Raum eine Lederummantelung zu haben scheinen Sie begutachtete Adrian mit einer Mischung aus Unglauben und Faszination. Wieso sind so viele junge Leute in dieser Region unterwegs? Die müssen doch bekloppt sein bei den Temperaturen draussen zu sein.

„Ach bitte, entschuldigen sie die Verzögerung, kommen sie mal aus dem kalten herein, draussen muss es ja furchtbar sein“  
„Danke, vielen Dank, Guten Tag erstmal, mein Name ist Adrian, Danke das sie mich rein bitten, ja es ist langsam wirklich

etwas belastend hier draussen“ – sagte er, während er das Gefühl hatte, dass seine Hand gleich abfrieren würde.

Langsam aber gezielt betrat er das Haus, welches von innen einen durchaus vornehmen Eindruck machte. Ein schönes helles Leder ummantelte so gut wie alle Möbel, die präsent waren. Nicht mehr unbedingt neu, man sah das Menschen Abenteuer auf der Couch erlebt haben, aber professionell gegerbt, das merkte er sofort. Musste er ja auch. Vater hatte ihm ja die ersten paar Jahre seines Lebens von nichts anderem als der Lederbearbeitung erzählt. Gott, wie Adrian diese Zeit vermisst.

„Wieso haben wir nicht so schöne Dinge“ fragte Adrian sich halblaut, ohne daran zu denken das die Alte nicht unbedingt taub ist.

„Ach wissen sie, seit ich ohne meinen Mann lebe ist es hier deutlich besser geworden, ich und meine Tochter haben zwar unsere kleinen Streitereien, aber manches muss halt auch mal gesagt werden. Sie löste, zu Adrians fassungslosem Erstaunen, während dieses kleinen Austausches einen Zauberwürfel, den Frieda mal wieder hat rumliegen lassen.

„Beeindruckend“ bemerkte er.

„Alles eine Frage der Übung“ antwortete sie mit einem zwinkern.

„Ach, und ihr Mann hat Leder gegerbt?“ „Er hat es mal aus Spaß ausprobiert und mir gezeigt. Ich war ein Naturtalent, sowohl was die Herstellung als auch die Verarbeitung angeht, hat er gesagt und seitdem verwende ich was hier so an Leder vor die Tür schlägt.“ Eine seltsame Redensart, dachte sich der immer noch leicht benommene Adrian. Sie nahm einen Luftzug, als würde der Gedanke an ihren Mann ihr unwohl bereiten. „In letzter Zeit ist es zwar seltener geworden, aber Jäger haben hier früher oft Halt gemacht und ich habe genommen was ich kriegen konnte. Alles was ich dafür brauche.“ – die Frau, welche sich als Alicia herausstellen sollte, ein ungewöhnlicher Name dachte Adrian, stockte und lud mit dem Eintreffen Fridas, ihrer Adoptivnichte Adrian zu einem Tee ein.

„Sie müssen ja furchtbar durchgefroren von ihren Händen an, Frieda schau doch nur mal diese wunderschönen Hände, völlig durchgefroren!“ Frieda trat nah an Adrian heran, fast schon zu nahe für sein wohlbefinden, aber der Satz „Verärgere nie deinen Gastgeber, wer weiß wie lange er es bleibt“ von seinem Vater hängt ihm immernoch im Ohr.

Im geräumigen direkt an den Hauseingang anliegenden Esszimmer nahmen die 3 dann Platz, und Adrian fiel auf, dass er sich Frida noch gar nicht vorgestellt hat. Das wollte er natürlich nachholen. Im Gedanken darüber starrte er sie unfreiwillig an. Die junge Frau, nicht blind, merkte dies sofort und hielt die Hand für ein High five in die Luft. Adrian, völlig perplex, klatscht in ihre Hand woraufhin Frida unter Schmerzensschreien zu weinen anfängt.

„Na toll sie Idiot, sie ist stumm und hat sie begrüßt.“ fuhr Alicia ihn an.

„Entschuldigung, i-i-ich wusste nicht, aber sie hat d-d-doch...“ stammelte Adrian.

Frida und Alicia fingen an schallend loszulachen. „Alles in Ordnung“ sagte Frida nachdem sie sich beruhigt hat. „Tee?, hing sie noch dran.

„Ich glaube Kaffee wäre jetzt eher mein Favorit“ seufzte Adrian erleichtert

„Mit Schuss?“ kam es wie aus der Pistole von Alicia

„Nein danke“

„Sicher? Wir haben auch eine spezielle Zutat die einen echt umhaut.“ Kam es von Frida.

Alicia sah sie lange an. „Was stimmt mit den beiden nicht“ – dachte Adrian sich. Zumindest war er davon überzeugt, Adrian redet oft mit sich selbst und Alicia und Frida haben jedes Wort gehört, aber sich dazu entschieden, nichts zu sagen. Frida rutschte etwas näher an Adrian heran, ihre Stimme, welcher vorher an einen Sperling erinnert hatte, wurde irgendwie... cremiger, dachte sich Adrian.

Aber weiblichen Annäherungsversuchen gegenüber resistent wie ein Ochse der Vogelgrippe wusste er nicht genau, was er daraus machen sollte.

„Ich verspreche dir, dieser Schuss wird deine Meinung ganz schnell ändern“ kam es ruhig von ihr, während sie trotz seines Protests einen guten Schluck aus einer abgedunkelten grünen Flasche hinzugab.

Adrian, den gerade noch die Sehnsucht gepackt hatte, nahm die Tasse in die Hand und fragte Frida „Was hattest du vorhin eigentlich aus dem Fenster geschüttet?“

„Ach, das war nur“ – setzte Frida an, als Alicia ihr mit einem klassischen tritt gegen ihren freiliegenden kleinen Zeh ins Wort fiel.

Frieda wollte nie wie ihre Tante sein. Aber was sein muss, muss eben sein. Nach einem kurzen deutlich gespielten Husten sagte sie nur „Ach, das war nur der Hamster meiner Tante, ich war sauer auf sie da habe ich ihn verbrannt“. Die Trauer und Wut in Alicias Augen bestätigte dies aus Adrians Sicht, während Alicia innerlich tausend Tode wegen ihrer inkompetent lügenden Nichte starb.

Schnell das Thema wechselnd und stumpf wie sie eben ist fragte Frieda daraufhin, was Adrian denn eigentlich in die Gegend treibt

Adrian dachte kurz nach und entschied sich dazu die Wahrheit zu sagen: „Meine Schwester hat meinen Hund getötet weil er auf sie los ging und versteckt sich jetzt etwa 80 Kilometer nördlich von hier wie mir mitgeteilt wurde. Ich bin ihr nicht böse, es war Selbstverteidigung, ich habe es ja selbst gesehen, aber sie kann mit den Gedanken, dass was sie getan hat, es nicht ertragen in der Nähe von mir zu sein. Mein Vater ist krank und kann kaum gehen und da mein Bruder vor genau 3 Monaten eingezogen wurde soll ich nun nach ihr suchen.“

Da mussten Alicia und Frida erstmal schlucken, das klingt nach einer sehr tragischen Geschichte, aber interessiert hat es sie nicht wirklich, ihnen war wichtiger, dass Adrian jetzt endlich aus seiner Tasse trinkt. Doch er erzählte. Und erzählte. „Das klingt wirklich schlimm, wie wär's, wenn du jetzt erstmal einen Schluck trinkst?“ warf Frida gekonnt in die Situation ein. Alicia war selten so enttäuscht von den rhetorischen Fähigkeiten ihrer Adoptivnichte. „Subtil“ flüsterte sie ihr sarkastisch zu, während Adrian noch im Redefluss war, die Augen auf die Decke gerichtet und in seinem Stuhl zurückgelehnt.

„Selbst an der Decke hängt ein mit Leder ummanteltes Kreuz. Diese Frauen haben es aber auch mit ihrem beschissenen Leder. Aber gut ist sie. Und Kraft hat sie. Wie sie wohl trainiert? Wie zum Teufel hat so eine kleine Frau so ein hoch hängendes Objekt befestigt. Wovon erzählt sie da?“ Adrian landete mental wieder zurück im Gespräch,

„... und deswegen muss man aufpassen, das man im Winter nicht Neurodermitis kriegt. Das passiert ganz schnell, und dann ist die ganze Haut ruiniert“, beendete Frida ihren täglich 3 mal geprobtten Aufsatz über das Häuten und von Großwildhaut, soweit er es verstanden hat. Alicia nickte stolz zu Frida rüber deren Freude kaum zu übertreffen war.

„Ja, klar, logisch, Neurodermitis, habe ich auch. Ist nicht schön.

Den Frauen schlugen die Kinnladen in einer Synchronität auf die Tassenränder wie Adrian es noch nie gesehen hat. Oder sehen würde.

Adrian, davon nicht ein bisschen Notiz zu nehmen scheinend, setzte sich wieder aufrecht hin und bekam den Gedanken an seine Schwester nicht aus dem Kopf, aber seine Hände waren noch Eiszapfen von den kalten Temperaturen draußen. Hier drin war es kuschelig warm, aber er musste weiter, das wusste er, das wussten die beiden, der arme Knirch im Keller, jeder der Adrian gerade hören konnte.

Unten im Keller kannte man den Kaffee schon. Er betäubt dich wie Whiskey nach dem Aufstehen. Als erstes die Zunge, die brauchst du dank Knebel dann ja auch nicht mehr. Dann deine Arme, dann kannst du dich nicht wehren. Dann deine Hüfte, dann kannst du dich nicht mehr so schnell drehen. Und schlussendlich deine Beine, und dann bist du dieser Hexe ausgeliefert.

„Hören sie mal ich...“ setzte Adrian an, „...muss los“, ergänzte Frieda sichtlich betrübt, „Ja sie sollten sich wirklich auf den Weg machen“

setzte Alicia an der Stelle ein, „das Wetter scheint sich sogar gebessert zu haben. Warten sie, wegen ihrer Haut habe ich vielleicht etwas für sie“

Ein Blick aus dem Fenster verriet ihnen, dass das nicht der Fall war. Genau so wenig hatte Alicia noch etwas von der betäubenden Creme übrig die sie für Notfälle aufbewahrt. Im Keller, natürlich. Adrian konnte nichts anderes in seinem Kopf verarbeiten als die plötzlich auftretende Angst um seine Schwester.

Kurz bevor er seinen Mantel nehmen konnte, bot Frida Adrian noch ein Geschenk an, als Zeichen der Solidarität sagte sie.

Adrian, immer noch völlig neben sich, nahm es mit leerem Blick zur Inspektion in die Hände und drehte das Objekt ein paar mal. „Es sind Handschuhe, die haben innen eine spezielle Beschichtung, komm doch mal wieder vorbei. Hilft gegen die Neurodermitis.“, kam es von Frida trocken. Wie aus einer anderen Welt gerissen stand Adrian nun plötzlich im Wohnzimmer,

gefangen von seinen Gedanken. „Hey.“ „Hey!“ „HEY!“; Frida's Versuche ihn wieder zu aktivem Bewusstsein zu brüllen waren zwar höchst unbeeindruckend für Alicia, aber es scheint funktioniert zu haben.



Adrian, wieder er selbst, nahm die Handschuhe dankend an und umarmte die junge Frida und die alte Alicia einmal fest, bedankte sich für die Handschuhe und bevor er ging flüsterte Frieda ihm noch etwas in Ohr um sich seiner Rückkehr sicher zu sein. Ein schnelles Nicken und ein hinterhergeworfenes „Aber die Handschuhe nur so lang du sie brauchst“, und alsbald verschwand Adrian hinter der nächsten Eiche. Er bemerkte nicht, dass diverse Kleidung an ihr hing, so sehr hat er noch ihre Worte in Ohr, Mark und Bein: „Lauf. Oder sie kriegt dich.“

„Warum musstest du ihm die Handschuhe geben? Sie waren mein Meisterwerk“

„Ach Tantchen, ich wollte doch nur das er ein Andenken an seine Schwester hat, und der Rest von ihr liegt doch im Keller. Ein Damenhemd hätte ihm bestimmt nicht gefallen. Und an den Handschuhen ist doch die schöne Schafswolle auf dem Leder, da sieht es fast aus wie Hirschhaut. Oder wolltest du ihm lieber einen deiner Jägersessel schenken?“

The End.

Your eyes stop circling around, as you finish up the last word of the story. Not bad at all, you think to yourself.

Your text is becoming better and better as you read through it, trying to spot mistakes in writing. You are alright, not as good as you'd wish to be, but fine enough to say others can read it without you feeling ashamed. Your German texts are way better than your English ones, though. So, you use it preferably and the results speak for themselves. You were told that your style really lulls in the reader and whenever you want to write something you just wait for a static state of mind to come up, and after it passes you become totally relaxed and just let your mind flow.

And then you present your story to the superiors, expecting an, as usual when you do anything apart from being, you know a freak, amazed reaction from them. Emily actually enjoys listening to your stories, she says you need to expand the stories you write but you actually don't know how. You're a starter. You start a million things and then you go on starting something else because maintenance is an alien phrase to you. It's kind of crippling to you, but at least you have a lot to tell. All the different worlds expanding in your mind, all those dramatically differing stories you can tell, having a point at heart and a strange story packaged in weird details and sometimes even just very believable but still made – up scenarios. You enjoy it though.

Megalomania really infests thought patterns, you sometimes think to yourself.

“Oh, you're awake!” you hear Emily yelling through the door with a broken glass pane.

“Yea, I enjoyed just a small nap”, you replied while rubbing the sleep out of your eyes.

“Gosh, you seem to have a fine mood today, come downstairs we're having lunch in a minute!”

As you walk towards the Dining room you notice the signs they put up.

“Caution, Wet floor”, like, stupid I see that the floor is wet. The headlight is like 3000 Lux too strong and I get blinded by the reflection. At least I can enjoy a nice view out the window.

“Do you see that guy outside?” you ask the group as they sit at the table, hungrily munching down their food. Nobody notices you asking, as they are too busy listening to the news. I should just check it out, it's cold and they sure don't want anyone to freeze out there. If I could just wander by the table without anyone caring.

“Wartet nicht mit dem Essen auf mich.“, you mumble to the group. Emily comes to your side.

„Silly, there's noone there! Now come, we should get finished with lunch soon. The chores are still to be done, even for those who slept like a stone for a solid day.”

You, still distracted, say nothing and walk straight out the door to the adjacent garden. You're lucky, that they put so much focus on patient – wellbeing. As you put your first foot out of the door you freeze for a moment.

I can't believe how cold it is, but I have to help that man. If he freezes out here at this place... gosh I don't even want to imagine.

Good thing I have my thick clothing with me though. I still remember when I nearly froze when fighting off those soldiers.

They do not give us rest these days. Good thing Justus found me, too bad they took him out when they found me sheltered at his place. But he saved my life and I his family. They are probably going to make it. At least I hope so, I left them in the shelter of my cousin, even though we had a breaking a while ago. But when he heard that I managed to stay alive because of Justus he immediately offered to help.

“Damn, where is this man”, you mumble as you’re held back by 2 rather fit appearing patient caretakers from leaving the house this temperature. They are quite used to this anyways, so what’s the problem, you think to yourself. As do they.

A good amount of moths pass, and your family is visiting for this afternoon you used your spare time in your room to fix parts of the story, Emily came in a few times, asking about stuff that didn’t actually matter to you. You tried to help her, but quickly realized it had no real point, so you kept on writing. Once you saw what followed, you knew that a few rough days coming to you. The stabwound in her left arm was painted bright red and she didn’t stop yelling. Well, at least the shower is free for longer today.

On reformation day everyone really gets excited to visit you, especially your as-religious-as-a-whore sister, to rub her successful life in your face and stampede around about what choices she has to make, as in hire a gardener, for her husband has an awfully bad back, or learn to take care of her beloved flowers. Or that other time when she didn’t know if she should try to medicate her dog, of which she had three, or give him away to your mother, who as a vet can take care of him herself. Though she said, if she gets the dog to take care off, he’ll have to stay with her for months. What a pompous bitch, you thought to yourself as the door opened and a cheerful smile yelled:

“Well if it isn’t my lovely sister! How are you doing Elz’? It’s great to see you, the ride was so long but when we finally arrived little charly totally lost his temper. He was so happy to see you!”

As you are withstanding this bombardement of text thrown in your face, her entourage arrives.

“Oh don’t mind him, he just missed you so bad. Since you’re here he doesn’t eat well anymore... It’s not gut worms apparently.”, she says as charly keeps pummelling your leg with his forehead.

“Oh don’t try to fool me, I know he doesn’t like me anymore. I am alright, I could have lived without YOU coming but now we’re here.” You sigh “So just come on in, will you? Hi Mom”

“Hey honey.” she responds from behind your brothers’ back.

“Hey Steven, how was traveling with the beast?”

“My name is Paul and this is between ya’ll.”

As you’re walking down the stairs you notice today’s menu is fish. You hate fish. What a day.

“So, how’s treatment going?”, your mother asks as you sit down. Her natural pitch – black hair with curly hair tips rolling down the side of her shoulder and back of neck as she adjusts her position. “Also, how’s Gideas? I haven’t seen him in ages”, she comically adds.

“Oh I think he’s doing fine, he is on vacation right now. Camping in the mountains he said.”, you reply as you try to adjust yourself next to your sister’s oversized bag.

“Well, it’s sad he’s not around”, she mentions as her mind wanders of to the last time the two “met”. God that man had a grip, you can literally hear her thinking.

“But anyways, back to medication.” She snaps herself out of it, trying to get back to the point of the visit. “Did they find your wonder treatment yet?”

“No. Also it’s not a wonder treatment.”

“Of course not honey, by the way are there new people here? The amount of security really gets me into a relaxed mood., she waves at one Ben, “Hey, it’s good to see some known faces in the crew.”

Ben does not react and keeps enjoying a nice soda.

“No..”, you say with a beaten tone.

“Then why is there more security personal? Did anything happen?”

Sometimes you don't know if she's stupid or just as much a cunt as her other daughter.

"Well, you know," you say as you try to lean backwards, blocked by your sister's bags, "I said that my medication is not perfect yet. I still fell into rages and states for a while, so they just want to be sure."

"To be fair, you really improved since... then."

"Thanks, I'm glad to hear that from you." You answer half sarcastically half relieved. "Also, there is a surprise headed your way."

She said as I sipped my tea. "Oh really? What is it? Come on, you know I don't like surprises" you reply with a smug grin. "Well, Justin is coming to visit". You're ecstatic, you thought you'd never see him again! "Oh really? That's awesome, when does he arrive?" "Today", your mother replied, not really understanding your excitement but happy to see you in a lighthearted mood after the news. "He wants to talk to you about some of the shit that went down. He had some time to think about it, you know."

"Yea, I guess I can do that. Had this exercise often enough since I moved here."

"Oh honey don't say you moved, you're in treatment."

"Mom, shut it. We both know they'll never let me 100% go. It's too risky they say".

As your mind handles, what you just said, the pompous Mary brought dropped a single coin to the ground. She picks it up and exclaims to all 3 of you "Damn, I guess I need to get a new one", as she flicked the coin with her Flingers.

Pling.

You wake up, your head feels like a whale just crashlanded on it, as you open your eyes the artificial light of the lambs burn into your retinas. You are not fixated, well at least not your feet. It's nice for a change.

"How's it going sunshine", Gideas asks from his desk, as you're making disgusted noises from the sleep and laserlike lights covering your eyes.

"Fuck you, Gideas.", you exclaim.

"We're happy to have you with us too. Your sister will make it by the way. Thanks to your brother. Your mom said if he didn't grip your hand right away she would now eat from a second hole in her cheek. You still can't stand her, hm?". John got to know Elizabeth, even the deep sadness she caused him left, when he saw what she herself is enduring. He pledged to take care of her, no matter what. Now he sometimes grieves this decision, but he made it nonetheless. And nothing will stop him from that.

"Why?"

"You tried to stab her. That's why. Not the best idea to use a spoon, but I know for a fact, that you're stronger than you look. Also that's a good sign. I assume, because of better medication, you chose to use less aggressive strategies. Or less lethal at least!" he chuckled.

"Funny guy, how long was I knocked out?"

"Oh, just an hour.", he said. "they stayed gentle.", he added.

"Sorry, but my head is currently on fire, at least the pains crotching through every part of my body right now"

"Ah right, yea, when you saw me and ran straight at me and fist kind of made first contact. I panicked!", his voice slightly raising it's pitch, trying to package the KO punch he delivered less enthusiastic. He took a certain amount of satisfaction from it, seeing it as kind of a payback. Neither is he proud of that nor would he admit that. Or had to. You know. And you understand why. You think.

"Can you please untie me?", you really hate those clippings they added. "Justin is coming to visit me any moment". "Also I could use something for the pain in the back of my skull, I don't want my mood ruined by it today." It would really suck, if he saw me with a bad attitude.

"So that's going to ruin your mood you think? Alright, I'll get some for you. Just do me one favour today. Do. Not. Freak. Out. Today. Any. More." He says with an enforcing tone.

"Why should I?", you say with a jolly good mood rushing your mind as you think about your visitor. John looks at you totally perplexed, returning from the medical's next door to give you some painkillers as you're happily whistling.

"You do get, who's visiting you today right?", he asks.

"Of course I do. You're all so confused about this. I would really like to settle with him what happened."

“That’s oddly grown-up from you. Well enjoy your time then I guess. By the way, your family left shortly after the... thing. They left you a note, but I recommend reading it tomorrow. They hope you’ll get better, also next time your mom’s around, inform me beforehand, I need to talk to her when she has the time.” And with a smirk John leaves the room, ordering the security guard in front of the door to keep you company when his son arrived.

“Oh hey Justin, I am so glad to see you”, you yell as you hear someone coming around the corner. Ben’s face appears in the doorway. He was not happy to see you. You are a fucking maniac in his eyes, no matter what the results say. He knows what happened. And what you’re capable of.

Ben sat down in the corner, extracting a book from his jacket about a mercenary who had to run a slave farm to appease his lord, although he always wanted to be a horse handler. At least his desire for controlling another being were fulfilled, even if not the way he wanted it to.

John actually gave Ben the task to take a little care for Elizabeth, since he wanted them get along better instead of this usual offensive view. Surely not easy, but as John monitored it, he seems to have had a proper behaviour towards her. That surely helped her recovery

“Hey, Ben?”, you quietly ask.

“What?”, the look he gives you could turn a she-bear who just whelped to flee in terror.

“Have you seen Justin lately? How is he doing?” it’s hard for you to keep your excitement to yourself.

A single tear running down his cheek, he responds with a hollow voice: “No, I haven’t.”

“Noone did”, he added after a silent moment.

He must’ve moved away, you think to yourself. What a great guy that he comes to visit. You hope he isn’t... well, taken.

A brief knock on the door disrupts your train of thought at this point.

After a kind “come in”, the door is slowly being pushed open.

Joshua walks into the room, still looking just as good as back then. Still the same eyes. The same smile.

Wait, Joshua?

It was just the same smile you saw as when you stood in front of the door of your sisters room. Joshua matched him toe to toe, but he always has that broken look on his face. You must have misheard the name when they announced he’d arrive.

In front of As you saw his look pointed at the ceiling, his adonis body spread out on her queensize bed. As you hear him moan occasionally, as you see your sisters’ head slowly moving up and down across his crotch. Up. And down. Up. And now you have to make a decision. Do you confront them? Or do you try to talk about it later? Decisionmaking was never an easy task to you, using a cube won’t really help, but right there, on the corner of your sisters wooden dresser next to her door, covering the beautiful carved in symbols your two made when you were younger, you find a small golden coin.

You take it, you put it on your hand, and as you are just about to flick it, you tell yourself “Head, now. Tails, later.”

You flick it.

Pling.

It flies up.

And up.

It hit’s the ceiling.

It’s stuck.

Fuck. “I should leave”, you mumble to yourself

As you’re staring at the ceiling heartbroken and disappointed, you don’t even notice that the commotion stopped. Footsteps are on the floor. They are coming disordered. A small brown curl shows at the door.

“Elz”? What are YOU doing here?!", Justin asks with a mixture of fear rushing over his face and the raging boner a towel was supposed to hide disappearing.

“Are you fucking kidding me” you ask.

“Are you fucking kidding me, what?”, were the last words he ever spoke, since you just dropkicked his throat.

“Why”, Joshua asked as you were slurping your daily smoothie.

“What why?”

“Why did you do that”

“Do what?”

“Elz”

“Ohhh, yes, the thing with Justin, well he attacked me so I went on the offensive and kinda overachieved.” You didn’t have the heart to tell him, that his perfect brother would do something as cruel as cheating, so you spent the next half an hour making up a story about You and Justin arguing throughout watching a documentary on alligators.

“I told him about this dream I had. We were to cross a river with a guide and an old mongolian couple accompanying us. Justin offered to carry the woman who didn’t feel like wading through waist – deep water, but she refused. The river, as said, wasn’t deep but broad as a highway and had quite the populace. Midway through we had a small chat, but I don’t remember what it was about. When we reached the other side, our guide and the mongolian man climbed out first. Then his wife, as I was about to take the ladder, Justin grabbed my shoulders and tossed me aside yelling “Watch out!”. And wouldn’t you know it, an Alligator just rammed it’s snout into the wall I was standing at!”

“Elz’, Elz’, that is not what I meant”

“Relax, the story isn’t over yet” you say cheerful. “Want a smoothie too?”

In the background, Ben, who has always been a good friend of Justin back in School, sat around, reading his book. Unseen by Josh he picks out a coin, holds it in your view and flips it.

Pling!

Chapter 2 – A new perspective

In a close line next to your window you spot a few ants trembling over the kitchen floor like they owned the place. Max saw them too

“Dad, please do something about those ants! Justin found some in his cereal this morning.”

“Relax, I called the exterminator. She’ll bring some ant poison.”, he answered as he cleaned the sink

“Stop calling mom the exterminator, Dad. First, that’s not funny.”, Maxwell replied

“And second, she was in prison, I know, I know. Can you please not grind up the old wounds.”

“I never would. But you do that, all the time!”

“Maxwell, can you stop making such a fuss about this, she knows I say it jokingly, she laughed about it the other day too.”

“Sure she did, Dad.”

As Max left the kitchen to go upstairs and find a few more ants in the bathroom, you try to concentrate.

“Dad?”

“Yes Joshi?”

“How did you meet mom? You told Justin hundreds of times, but never me, I wanna know!”, you get up from the table, being pumped with sugary chocolate chips, you hop around going “I wanna know! I wanna know! I wanna know!”, as Owen was still busy cleaning after the last ones. Elz’ sure could have cleaned up the mess she left on the veranda, and now you have the problem headed to your kitchen on their tiny legs.

“Oh, we will, don’t worry, but I just think you are not mature enough for that honey.” Dad always gets dodgy when you start any serious topics, but you don’t mind. You think of your life as a fun theatre rather than living in a rundown neighbourhood and a

boyfriend who gets wasted whenever he gets the chance. But life sure winds up different, when your mom is a certified psycho. Besides, Ra'ul isn't too bad of a person. Sure he has his problems, but whenever a situation is serious you know, that you can count on him.

As you wander through the hallway you hear the laminated floor creak under your feet, smelling the puke Ra'ul left behind when he came in last night. You need to kick his ass for not cleaning up later, but now you need to get going, dance practice starts soon, and Elizabeth sure doesn't want to be late.

You're passing your room and notice that the gold sign on your door "Jessi" is pretty much in need of changing. Everyone refers to you as "Joshi" since mom called you that one time by accident by this name. Lucky you. "She hates me for the way I am", you think to yourself ever so often. You're wrong though, she pays extra attention to whatever you do and whenever you are not around she chats about you being just as good of a person as he was. And when she's with you, she says she will miss the rest.

Just down the street, past the barber corner, easily reachable by foot, is the training studio. Well "studio", it's more like... Well, it's an abandoned factory hall. But, lots of space. Nobody is around, which is good, since you don't want anyone to see you going to dance practice with your mother. And also there is great lighting, since the roof is missing. Even seeing that you're not really good at it, you think breakdance is fun.

"Come on, get on!" she yells, as dad is passing by you with her shopping results." I waited for this all morning, when I was having a peak into the kitchen, trying to get Mom to notice me, so I could get my bottle. She manages to ignore the constant yelling just as well as Dad does. Yelling relentlessly, I tried to get what I wanted, well I am not able to speak yet. I was born about a year ago and I am slowly trying to learn how to deal with my environment. Whenever I looked at you, at Maxwell, at Dad trying to fix something and become, at least for a while, the happiest man alive, at mom overfixating on anything, I only begged for you to see me. But I can count on mom, she never forgets me. Even when she is too busy managing the lives of 3 children and her own.

Obviously, I am not actually aware of that, but I am around, and ya'll don't give a shit.

"Come on Simon", you say as you're ordering me to come to the door. You talk to me more than the others, for which I decided to like you and not cry when you try to pick me up.

And now you're out the door, leaving me with Max, Dad and the Ants. Oh what a jolly good time it will be.

### Chapter 3

Entering 7th grade, you met her. The most wonderful person you ever could have met in your life. She never really thought you'd be a catch but now you realize she might have been wrong. One week later she dumped you and you took a break with your friends

"Dude, I think it's not worth thinking about it", your mate said as you were trying to get your mind in order. Of course it wasn't, but who should have guessed that at your age. Your daily past – time is reserved for the small hut our brother started painting in yesterday. I usually just swing by, attempt to speak and fall over something when you're there. I have realized you will not give me any attention when you are there. So I didn't cry when I fell over and only you were at home at the time. I knew, if you're not with me you're gone. Actually you're fucking useless. After Mom and Joshi left, you started started just laying around in your room, looking at the ceiling smelling like aunt Marys Backyard. So, after a few weeks, I decided to stop talking to you.

## Chapter 4

Dad took care of the ants. I saved a few of them and painted them to tell them apart after I kept mixing them up. I named them Lager, Light and . Radler really embraced his new yellow-ish tint while Light didn't think of the black as very exciting though, he didn't really move a lot for a while. Whenever I tell how pre – school was like or why I didn't like to play with the children in the park, he was always just sitting there, watching me. I think he is sad. He wants to be with his family I guess. Whenever Max comes around he mentions that after I learned reading I should learn a bit about this stuff, and boy is he right. I wanna know more about these little funny things. Lager always makes little pounces, when I enter the room, I think the fact that he didn't get any color made him more lively than the others. His feet did really well in mixing the yellow and black, I drew a picture that was vaguely orientated by that, with a happy little sun in the upright corner, smiling at the Ants and a big glowy ball with circles and little ant tappings on it. The boys seem to like that too. They always gather on the circle when I get near them. I think I will get them some friends, to be only 3 must be annoying. At least they're well fed.

Meanwhile you and Mom are now living close to the sea. I saw you once in a while, when we met up in these in these giant law-thing buildings. We didn't talk much. But the two of you looked happy. I of course couldn't know, that she just lost the job as star dancer and didn't want to make a sad face, Dad still enjoyed himself. It was alright, except when you took my toy and didn't give it back, I was a bit mad about that, but if you needed it more...

The other day, dad found a note, which was stuck in some of moms luggage she didn't want

"You can never leave this facility" was handwritten on it, signed with J. . He was pondering getting in contact with her about this, but only after Max intervened with "What kind of facility are we talking?"

"Well, I guess since you're old enough," as he looked at him during Breakfast" so Max, do you really want to hear the story of what happened to your mother?

"Do I want to?"

"Maybe not, but anyways, when your Mom was recruited for a test operation which was meant to, you know, fix what's wrong with her, basically tending to that part of the brain, you know, the big pink thing we all have in our heads, that assists in thinking. I'm not a specialist, so all I know is, that it was supposed to reduce her mental states to a minimum. The only exception was, for a rather specific reason I will not explain now, because you're to young for that, when a person who has a deeply set hate for her, at least in her eyes, she would go mental. We're talking used her broken foot to kick her brother while trying to stab Grandma"

"What" is all me can say at that point.

"Anyways, THAT was not what put her in custody for a while. You see, when an old "friend" of her visited, she became mental for some reason, we don't exactly know why. The guard, Ben, said she just smashed her glass and started attacking her friend, who was the twinbrother of her deceased first big love."

"Dad, I am 8."

"Yea, well truth's harsh. But you'll soon enough hear comments about that, was quite a popular case."

"Then. Dad?"

"Yep?"

"Why are Jessi and me a thing then"

"What?"

"She sounds dangerous, why did you like her?", He painfully has to remember the sex talk mom gave Max when he was 7, but I guess that's how it goes.

"Oh, well you know, It's like crazy, keeps the live exciting", he said as he opened a bottle and commenced to lay down and rest for a while. He would still have to go out later today, to pick up some things at the market. But now he spent a bit of time with his kids and can reward himself.

Afterwards you and Max are having a phone call

"I hate it here."

"What's the problem?"

“This whole place is filled to the brim with self – worshipping dicks.”

“I never thought a border town could be this way.” “Me neither.”

You two started to call each other at times to check if everyone is alright, a habit neither Mom nor Dad approved. I was glad about it, kind of. It was sad to hear about you and Mom being rejected by the appartement company, now she lives in a relatively small suburb though.

“How’s it going at your’s?, you ask.

“Oh, you know, just the regular stuff, Dad does some stuff and gets trashed. But he gets stuff done. The ants were quickly taken car off, remember?”

“Does Simon still hoard them?”

“Oh, it’s much worse. He is still very sloppy in making sure they’re properly sealed in. He lost like 3 batches already. Also don’t ask me why I know so much about this, he just doesn’t stop telling me about it. Also my breakfast tasted weird the other day and would you look at that?! Ants.”

“Oh don’t be like that Max, just for once be kind to your younger siblings.”

“Jess, I am. What do you think why I can remember it”, he yells laughingly into the phone.

“What do you mean?”

“I always listen to him, you know. You should have tried that too when you were here”

“Are you fucking serious right now?”

“Are you fucking serious right now, what?”, were the last words that made it through the phone as you hang up and try to remain calm.

Elizabeth, who waited in front of the room to hear what her youngsters were up to, knocked her head against the door as she sighed, which opened it.

“Oh hey honey, I – just brought you some pizza”, she smiles as she internally cries out to keep the pizza that was just delivered. You don’t care. Right now you’re sitting there angrily, thinking about what kind of asshole Max was, when you were younger. She changes her statement to “You want some?” to at least get some of the double cheese bacon pizza with medium crust.

“Yea... Sure..”, you replied, grabbing for the pizza box.

“Don’t overeat, we wanted to wander the beach this afternoon, remember?”

You laugh, “I know that you desperately wanted that, don’t worry”. Currently you’re busy checking the diameter of the pizza to take exactly half. Elizabeth isn’t exactly happy, but she sees what you think of. Apparently it’s going to be a hungry walk for her today.

After having a significant talk, we heard them yelling all throughout the house, Mom and Dad decided it would be the best for you to stay with her. She said, can’t take care of all those people back home. But she yelled she wants to raise a daughter to give her a good life. Crying. In a roadside hotel. At 2 A.m. . Held at knife point by you because you thought she was going to flip. Following a 5 hour dead – silent ride through the countryside. You realized what was going on after you saw ol’ Harriots barber shop fading away in the distance. But you also knew it was coming. One day she wore a smile as blessed as the sun above and the next she appeared like a trainwreck cranked up on meth, yelling at us throwing around furniture, like the beautiful chair she made for your 7th birthday, when you got to start school. Let’s say you didn’t exactly appreciate being interrupted while checking your change in your room. Also I miss the piece of wood in my ant farm she used as a leg for it. Sucks for you, but me too. If Mom didn’t get into woodworking thanks to her dad, who by the way is also the actual reason for you to stay with her.

Elizabeth was watching over you, checking if you were alright, all throughout your life. When she was young, she felt an emotional disconnection from her dad. He never accepted that she turned out to be a girl, all his life he wanted a first born son



and was too stubborn to accept anything else. He was.. weird. He showed you and your sister woodworking and how to handle explosions, because that's what an alcoholic like him really should spend his time on apparently. Whenever he was with his guys, he'd get drunk and check out the unguarded part of the military silo. But that's all it took. Afterwards the Guards had guns. And your dad told you to not go down there ever again.

"Did you hear that", spinned in your head as you sprinted down the hallway, trying to get behind the next door and finally away from those two coffee slurpers watching the east side of the basement.

"Yea, I think someone found the hole in the wire. I ordered it last week you know. Seven fucking days ago. Nothing.", the bigger guy grummeled, as he put down his royal flush to find out what's going on. He knew for certain, whether they get that guy or not, he will not get to play this game to the end.

Drawing his handgun, with the letters "O+T" carved into the center of a pink heart his wife drew on the gun every day for 16 years now he decides to take one last look at it before heading out.

"Theresa kissed my gun this morning, ya know", he laughed to his old friend, trying to play down how much money he just missed out on. He looks at Gideas. How's single life going on? "It sucks", the small but heroic looking companion of his replied. His friends always called him "Little Arthur" for that, which he didn't really mind, since he always admired the brave hearted. He only started in this facility very recently and only thought about the four 2's he had on his hand when they had to stop. And that's 42 bucks saved. Nice.

Money Gideas needed for studies to pass the exams.

The lights, due to poor maintenance and even poorer administration, flickered as you the two of them walked down the hallway, past the dark coffin – worth – creators, on a metal floor, rusty nails hurling up nail dust every time their feet change the pressure on the plates.

"I hate this place", Gideas mumbled.

"Oh, come on, it's lovely!", Otis replied.

They stop

"Did you hear that?"

"Yea, down this alleyway", he replies.

"What, you mean the one with the practical entrance due to the torn open barbed wire? Thanks Sherlock."

"Relax, no quick actions today alright? God knows how you didn't kill anyone yet."

Slowly the 2 of them pace down the hallway, trying to step on the stones next to the metal plates to not make any additional sound. Right around the corner they would find Mom and her Dad, looking for her tennisball she dropped here by "accident" wanting to know what's down here. She knew this stuff. Mom said she always saw it on TV when she was a child because her Dad was watching documentations about them in the evening. She sometimes spectated, that's why she knows that the thing she has in her hand can make a loud noise and boy is she proud she found it. On TV they said one can only rarely find it, except for past barbers in Japan. Once again, her talent of finding the special things in life showed.

"Look Dad, they showed this in your show yesterday! They did like 10 minutes on how it's built and what it contains, that was so boring. But look at this nice shape, it's like a lemon but green!"

Her Dad, very mildly drunk only hears her partially due to missing hearing protection on the gunrange. She looked fascinated at the grenade, rolling it in her tiny hands as he turned around. "What did you say honey?"

PLING.

"oh - mY GOD WHAT THE FUCK A-", he stopped talking ripped the grenade out of her hands, and just in time for Gideas and Otis coming around the corner the apparently only partially functioning grenade ripped off his arm, impaling his body with splinters and his daughters head with the eternal memory of this happening, still holding the pin on her ringfinger after wanting to try if it fits. She doesn't notice the blood running down her arm. She noticed nothing.

## Chapter 4

Four Times a year, Mom and Dad see each other, during thanksgiving, Christmas, and each of our birthdays. They don't really enjoy spending time with each other, although there is no clear hatred, since they understood each other's position, Mom trying to raise a good girl and Dad being incapable of raising three children and an ant farm on his own.

It's my birthday so naturally we go for fast – food, since that's been like the big thing for me since I entered 7th grade. Max is cheerfully munching down his burgers, Mom tries to explain to Dad that Halloween is on the same day as reformation day, and that both are not Christmas alike, I am enjoying my ice and you, well. You stare into the abyss, as it appears to all of us, incapable of choosing your meal. You were late, since your ex harassed you, as usual, at the gas station. It's the only one in town and of course she got a job there after the two of you broke up

"Have you tried their classics?", Dad asks you from the other side of the table.

"Honey, you need to try out the fruitcake, they just added it into their menu and I tell you, it's great. You should go the register right now so you can quickly order. There's no queue!"

Fast food restaurants are always everywhere the same, so they both had a valid point, although you and Mom usually eat in a Diner about half a country away, and the staff here might be vastly different. She still has difficulties trying to catch up on concepts, you forgave her for that, although you don't really know why she doesn't just pay attention to details like you. You grin and say "I'll check it out" before hastily leaving the table to get to the drinks dispenser, as the diminished queue is quickly replenished by other customers waiting to get food poisoning from the coughing cook.

"What do you think she goes for?", Dad attempts to scheme with Mom.

"I don't know to be honest, we never really checked that", she replied. It's not the first time she went through this procedure, last time this happened they went shopping and both gave you advice on what clothing to pick.

"Can you two please stop making it a challenge if your children love you?", Max, who stopped shredding his lunch for second, intervenes. "In front of Simon aswell?". "Fuck you Max, I am not stupid", I thought to myself. I realized that long before he did, and now he wants to start off a controversy about both being lunatics. To be fair, he had a point.

"Look, we know she loves us, but there are details in this world parents can decipher that kids can't."

"Fuck off Dad, ever since I moved out you two fight over who gets to have all of us as his small shitty zoo of curiosities during certain days."

"That's not true, and you know that. Also, how much it hurts to hear you say that.", Mom replied. She backed Dad on this one. That's quite the event though.

Whatever, they always fight like this when you're around. You're the families' little precious.

Standing in line at the counter you think about, who's recommendation sounds the best right now, although you already totally forgot what they advised.

You return with a bag of chips.

Mom's puzzled.

Dad's puzzled.

Max loses it.

I'm trying to get the last bit of ice cream out of my bowl.

"Where did you get that?", they ask in unison.

"Get what?"

"The chips?", once again, unison.

"Ohh, yea well, you know at the drink dispenser I coincidentally met an old friend who advised me to get those since they are better than anywhere else.", who'm you have spectated trying to eat not like a chimp for about 10 minutes straight and jumped up when she noticed her drink was empty.

That does not answer where you got a bag of chips. They don't have a deep fryer in here, but that doesn't matter, since they wanna know who it was. Staring at you, not wanting to greed for information in front of each other and attempting to appear updated on your life, each picks up his lunch.

“Who was the boy? Your new boyfriend?” Max asked childish from the side “Dad, Simons ice is empty! I think we should get more.” He tries to add. “Oh honey, it’s clearly not her boyfriend otherwise Josh would have mentioned him, right Joshi?”, failing to manage his little schemes, the chips and a birthday at once, Dad forgets that she lives on the other side of the continent. Mom didn’t. She looks at him with her “I won” – stare we all know and hate. Dad looks at her, wondering about the silence when he gets his mistake. “Fuck”, he whispers. “FUCK”, I reply loudly and start laughing in tears. “Yea, fuck”, you shrug and walk over to the gal, and try out the old “You tell it, you try it”, while holding the bag of chips under her nose from behind him to get her engaged in a conversation and forget about your freaky family for a second. The Topic won’t change anytime soon to anything different, I guess. Great. “Come on, Simon, we go and play some football on the back off the building. I feel we need to give these two some time.

## Chapter 5

Max has his Imagination of Simons’ existence for quite a while now, having to grow up with a Dad who runs ant farms for a living. As Max woke up one day morning he didn’t realize, that a few ants managed to sneak into his room, crawling up his ears and damaging his perception through repeated little taps on parts of his inner ear, causing him to turn fanatically inclined, that there is a child called “Simon” in the area. He managed to avoid looking at him at first, but then he started questioning himself, if he was actually there. And he just maybe had a traumatic event in his childhood that made him neglect that fact, that his mother had a miscarriage after him or something. But there was no miscarriage, just a mentally disturbed person transferring crazy attributes on their surroundings. Just Dad becoming a raging alcoholic until he beat him up so bad one night, that Max’ Skull received damage. In the face of almost losing his son, Bill told himself to quit alcohol forever, which lasted 6 years, at least.

Joshi started to understand pretty quickly, what was going on, although she went from “Max plays with his own friend again” to “Mom, Max dropped the milk bottle next to his chair again, I think Simon needs to be changed again.”, followed by an annoyed undertone of greed for attention, hoping for her Dad to notice the flaws she had shown him which he had no respect for whatsoever, focussing only on the son he almost killed. So your Mom and You left, to save up your lives from the falling mist this life has become. She wanted to take Max with her, but Dad insisted he could make it. “You know that I can do this! I made it through worse for less.”

He made it. Kind of. He neglected a lot to take care of Max, including taking care of his home, causing ants to swarm the building

The day Max moved out, Bill laid back on his couch, slipped off his shoes, turned on the radio, lit a cigarette and had a shot of vodka. He made it. A once in a lifetime reward.

You can hear the noise of the streets outside, loads of footsteps, a man seems to be chatting to a woman outside the window, Max doesn’t clearly hear them but he briefly looks in the air, thinking.

“So, what’s your plan going forward?”, I ask as I enjoy the smooth carpet he rolled out in his appartement. place. Your should have space for 2 people, like usually right?”

“You know, when you move there is a lot of stuff you have to take with you.”

“Of course, but I think you’ve kind of grown out of your toys, didn’t you?”

“Look, if you just came here to harass me, I don’t need that shit from a guy who supposedly doesn’t exist.”

“I go wherever you go, big bro, don’t I?”

“I am not your brother”, he throws a plate Mom handpicked from her selection of Rap – merch in my general direction, missing entirely.

Looking at the shattered parts I have to chuckle, “You had a better throw before you got a girlfriend. Do you have any idea why?” “And I liked you more when you were neither capable of speaking nor in my peripheral vision.” “ - What do you think that felt like?

“So, what are we doing today?”, I interrupt his phone call, leaning next to the pale blue wall he had his bed leaned against. The contrast of orange and blue really brought out the warmth of the room and a the... well blue colour of his wall. He still has to learn some stuff about interior design.

“Can you fuck off with your monologue description of your surroundings?”, Max’ right arm flinched as he looked into my empty white eyes.

“Your eyes are fucking blue, you mong.”

“So you acknowledge that I do have eyes which are blue and therefor must exist?”. I chuckle chuckingly.

“Why again did you have to interrupt me everytime I wanted to talk to Emily on the phone?

“Oh, I don’t know”, as I think about the fact that he owes me the fact that he has a girlfriend, the will to improve his life situation and..

“Shut up, I know. So, rock scissor papers on what we get for dinner?”

“I am still in your imagination, I know what you’re going to go for and you what I pick” He will call the Chinese takeaway later, trying to not get influenced by my narration, since he originally planned to go for Pizza.

“I hate you”

“You had your first time because of me”

“You watched”

“I learned and helped”

“Yelling in my ear that I have a lot of penis left to use is not actually helpful, we wanted to take it slow”

He didn’t get that only he wanted to take it slow, but his girlfriend who was used to a different treatment

“Can you not.”

“Can I not what.”

“Fuck it, I’ll order something from the Arabic diner.”

“Funny you say fuck it, do you remember that movie? American Pie? Funny as hell!”

“Yes, for an imagined 17 year old.”

Max lied, he also liked the movie.

“No I did not”

But he did.

“No I didn’t and that’s it”. He puts on headphones.

After a long instrumental the voice tunes in.

“I don’t know why it’s so difficult for me...”

“I’m sorry, what? The music is too loud, how about you chill for a moment.”

Max is such an ungrateful bastard. I still remember how he acted when he first met Emily. She was pretty, a small birthmark was on her little finger but I told him to not mention it, when she tried out his console. Now it’s all just “Shut up” and “You ruin my life” and stuff like that. I opened so many doors for him. If I didn’t tell him to move out he would still be complaining about his Dad’s shitty interior. Okay, I killed off his boner once or twice by telling him there is immediate danger, sure. And maybe he kept conversations going with me when he was was in college classes, which really pissed of the teacher, she usually wanted to talk to him in her bureau later that day. I guess he thinks he got in a lot of trouble, although she always looked rather concerned than angry. But whenever we talked she really lost it, quickly trying to get him involved in a conversation.

“Max, we really should talk later today”, Emily, who entered the room a few minutes ago after no one answered the door, asked Max as she tipped him on the shoulder, “this can’t go on any further”, she adds.

“What do you mean?”, Max replied as he took off his headphones and glanced into the empty corner.

“You moved in two weeks ago. How the hell are you sleeping, why are you not putting down furniture anywhere? I was lucky you left the apartment door open and your neighbour opened the front when I rang.” At this point Max notices that she’s drenched in rainwater. Fuck, he thinks to himself. He goes on to think about why he became distracted and in the process started yelling at Emily for scaring him. I guess he doesn’t have his head together, otherwise he’d notice her Dad standing behind her. Oops, now he did.

“Oh, Mr. Michaelis, good day to you, Sir.”, he hastily adds. “Can I explain myself later?” he asks, as Jannis walks out the door. Just another idiot, he probably thinks to himself.

“Em’, I’m so sorry I -.”, don’t bother I saw him for 2 weeks straight, I pretty much enjoy some time without him. Also, what matters his opinion.”, she says, usually answering internally “A lot”. Max’ eyes flicker, as he is unsure about what he should do. “Can you please just give me a moment? Please? I will be right with you, I just need to get my head straight for a second, you have to understand.”

Emily looks at him, stares at him, says nothing, makes a 180 and walks out the door.

Click. It closes behind her.

“You are a cunt” he says into the void of his room, pointing at his orange bed, next to the blue wall.

“No”

“You need to stop”

“I won’t”

“Why?”

“I don’t know”

“I think I -“, Max mutters, as he starts to cry.

Max usually cries for about 5 minutes straight, yelling, hammering the air, the door the wall.

Max looks at the corner your bed stands in.

Max stops crying.

Max lays down.

What is he doing.

oh no

## Chapter 6

It was a rainy day, the rainbow that reigned over the now grey and drenched city is gone. You and Elizabeth stand shoulder to shoulder in decent black dress looking straightforward, trying not to cry as the sarcophagus is passed on beside you.

“I thought he had it managed!”, Your mom whispers, holding back her tear.

“We all had”, you whisper back, wiping a single tear that rolled down your cheek.

“Stop it”, Max whispers from behind them.

“We all tried to get him to stop, but some are good and some are doomed.”, I say, looking over his shoulder from behind.

They turn around

“Honey, you don’t look so good, maybe you should lay down a little. In the other room is a couch.”

Walking over to the room he stubs his foot, making a lot of noise in the process.

He sits down on the couch, lays his head back and starts massaging his temples.

A brief knock on the door interrupts him, and a female voice going “Hey, are you alright?”

“Yea I’m good, thanks for asking though”, he lied.

“What? Sorry, I did not understand.”, she lied.

He hesitates, “Come in”, he finally says. And with Catherine from his old route to school, I also walk into the room. Great, Max thinks to himself.

“Hey, do you need anything?” she asks, acting like she didn’t just make her hair for the past 5 minutes.

“No, No, it’s fine, I guess I just need some rest.”, Max lies. His eyes roll over to me standing to her left. She looks at his stare,

pointed at the door, and assumes he is not wishing company at that moment.

Wait, Max thinks to himself.

“Wait”, Max says to her.

“Yes?”, she asks as she was about to open the door.

“Why are you here?”

Is Max stupid?

“Max, are you stupid?”, she agrees.

“How can you forget about your favorite tutor at college”, she adds.

Apparently Max is stupid, at that point he realizes how much of his life he forgot already, staring into the air and thinking. And listening.

“It’s just... usually when I’m stressed out I do Yoga, but right now I can’t. Mind having a chat?”, Max requests.

“Look, I got a poem for you, Elizabeth told me that you always listened very excited as a child when she read out hers to you.”

“You wrote a poem?” Max asks in disbelief. As a twilight fan he always wished for a girl to put her heart into words for him. I’m not a twilight fan, he thinks to himself.

“Yes, wait a second”, she says, as she fumbles in her purse.

“It’s nothing awesome big and great, but my brother likes stuff like that and he helped me write it in exchange for replacing his bills with coins so he can play down the street. You know?”

“Yea, the slots really had him in his claws”

Awkward silence ensues.

She begins:

“He stepped into the void,

Captured on polaroid,

The last words ever muttered,

Accompanied by an “Oi, Fucker!”

Both chuckle.

“I have another one, that you may like more”

“Sure, what’s it about?”

“You’ll see.”, she says as she again fumbles in her purse.

Pulling out her paper, she shortly clears her throat in a sound that sounded like a raptor getting eaten by a shark.

“Whether you’re crazy or queer”, she sighs at that moment,

“Rich in a war zone or new Yorker and poor,

Handled without love or any care”, max’s head turned slightly pale listening to her,

“remember my dear, there’s no evil in nature, man is not fitted to bear”, she finishes up.

“Did you write that yourself?”

She leans in close, lowering her voice: “Look, I can’t know what you are going through right now.”

“No, you can’t. But to be fair, one gets used to being dropped bullshit on every day”, Max nods in my direction.

“The thing is, I called Dad before he died. And I complained. And complained. And then I hung up the phone angrily.”

“But.. why?”

“I found a few ants crawling under my mattress, and I just had so much collapsing on me at that moment, the thing with Emily, thinking over life decisions, and the ants just blew it all up. So I called him. I didn’t listen to a word he tried to say, probably drunk off his ass already. And when I was done, I hung up.”. Max breaks down in tears once again.

Catherine looks at Max. She doesn’t notice the tear running down his face as the creature she projected in the background was

too horrible to properly adjust with what he just said.

“Really?”, Max babbles as he breaks down in tears and cries like a bitch.

Silence.

Max takes a deep breath, but forgets that you have to breath out to properly breath in, giving his body the feeling of being strangled, furthering his panic

“BREATH OUT FOR CHRIST'S SAKE”, I yell at him, slightly uncomfortable.

And just for a moment, Max spotted something.

He breathed out, silently stares forward and breathed back in again.

“It's alright.”, he says.

Max calms down, having a death stare in his eyes. Catherine sitting right beside him, none the wiser, just looks at him and waits. Max thinks about what a beautiful woman she is, pondering whether he and her were dtf. Sure, she was about 12 years older than him, but he does not mind that.

“Anyways, I hope you enjoy your stay”, he tries to break the silence.

“Yea, a funeral is just the place to lift your mood.”, she jokingly says.

Both chuckle once again.

“Thanks for being here”, he adds.

“Silly, that's what I do.”, she smiles as she stands up and winks at him. She grabs a pillow laying around.

“I know what can distract you”, she says as she slams it into his face.

Stunned, he thinks about what to do, before grabbing a pillow and throwing it in her general direction. He missed. Still throwing like a bitch.

They go on doing that for a while, Max doing squinty faces with Catherine quickly joining in, both giggling about how stupid that was and messing with the pillows.

Click

The door opens and a stunned Emily appears. She broke up with you not even a month ago and couldn't believe what she was seeing. Mr. Michaelis right behind her as he holds the present meant for Max looks not as much surprised as his daughter.

Max at first didn't notice.

Catherine noticed though, she threw her tiny pillow a last time in his direction, after she glanced at the door and when looking the second time she realizes what's going on.

She stops.

Max looks at her.

Max stops.

With Max having his back to the door, he went on pillow fighting, ignoring what his mental exterior copy does or says.

He turns around, slowly, trying to relax his facial expression. He fails.

“I'm glad you got over the girl you lost your virginity to so quickly.”, she says as she turns around walks into her dad looking with an “I told you” – look you could shame a boar to death with. After she stumbled into him she just stares at him. Waiting

“Go.”, she says.

“Yea, sure.”, he answers as he slowly turns around.

With about to start closing he runs after it yelling “Em' wait!”

The door shuts, a faint “My name is Emily you cunt” is heard behind it.

He turns around.

Catherine looks at him.

He tries to figure out what just happened.

She looks at him.

“I should leave.”

Fuck, Max thinks to himself.

“Yea, Fuck, Max.”, she responds. She’s known him for a while.

Stunned he looks on as a second woman left the room disappointed by him in a bare minute, even with his pants still on.

He hisses at the empty corner.

“That was an inside joke”, Max says as he reached out for the pillow on the ground.

“And why are you like this anyways?!”, Max clamped the pillow real tight with one hand. He stares into the corner and thinks about the fact, that his left arm is much weaker than his right arm.

“Also, fuck off, I don’t like Twilight.”

Max is disgruntled. Obviously he can’t do anything without my help. If he just listened to me. “I am listening to you. That’s the problem.”, he says in a calm voice.

At that moment he noticed her forgetting her precious purse. So he quickly picked it up, walked out the door and closed it behind him. Walking outside to a whole bunch of people who all noticed what happened in the room, at his Dad’s funeral. The facial reactions varied, as he stampeded through the hallway

“Wait.” He yells at Catherine

“What?”, she replies

“Your purse”, he hastily hands it to her.

“Well... thanks I guess”, she said as she took her, as Max just noticed, very heavy purse.

Your mother, you and Max all stood in the same place now, as they wanted to retreat in an extra room to calm themselves down and were just on their way back.

A coin drops out her purse.

It dropped on the floor

Catherine notices.

She bends over, not revealing her cleavage though, this woman is a magician.

“Jessi, the thing is, that we can’t drive with Dad on a truck around town. What is wrong with you.”

“Elz’, we talked about this, once it’s up on the back there is nothing that could happen, and Dad’s old friends could go and say him goodbye. You know? Since only 2 of them appeared?”

Catherine, as non’chalant as she is, grabbing for the coin 4 times but due to having like no fingernails fails hard here.

She finally got it, giggling, “that was a task”, she says.

She looks at the coin and it’s shimmer in the light, as she probably thinks about how she and Emily just both rejected Maxwell.

“look, it’s a coin from 1989”

“What was there again?”

“Idk, I think your family left your home that year.”

“Ahh right.”

She takes another good look at the coin and turns to you

“Hey Jessi don’t you gather coins and stuff?”

“Yea, why?”

“You think this one’s interesting?”, as she took the coin in one hand she attempted to throw it over to her via indirect pass.

She fails. It falls. It drops.

PLING



Elizabeth saw it. She attempted to ignore it entirely but it certainly created a feeling of unease in her. She might have to calm herself down some more, but she's not concerned. Everything is alright.

"Uh, well, I guess it's... worth keeping? I haven't figured all this out yet properly.", you answer. You appear slightly disconcerted that you have been just making plans over plans.

You toss it back.

Elizabeth breathed in sharply, as Catherine managed to catch the coin.

She sighed relieved.

Gideas was sure surprised, when another one of those came into his front door, he obviously didn't think "one of those", ~~that's~~ what Max thinks.

## Chapter 7

Max doesn't need to do this. He could just go on living his life the way he always did. This is normal to him. But he wants change, he wants his life to do a 180 and finally find peace. He wants to end this endless stream of suffering I caused him. But he doesn't feel like he can –

"Yes hello, I want to sign up for a single person apartment with extra personal care."

"You are aware this is an asylum, right?"

"Well, that's the place I should be. I need to recover from some stuff and I feel I need some help with that"

"Well... what's your problem?"

"It's like currently not there, but I am usually imagining that there is this guy, who assumed the personality of my non – existent little brother and he comments on everything I do. And when he does, he usually has this condescending tone to him. And it's ruining my life."

Gideas looks at Max concerned.

"Simon says, you are looking at Max concerned"

Gideas doesn't seem to understand what Max means.

"Simon says, you don't seem to understand what Max means."

"Look.. I –", Gideas starts.

"Simon says "Gideas starts"."

"How do you know my name?", he asks, forgetting that his name is written down on the name tag on the wall that Max could glimpse at from the mirror.

"Simon says, you are forgetting, that – ", Max starts -

"Yea yea, I understand", Gideas interrupts me. What a douche.

"You angered Simon", Max meekly adds.

"What"

"You interrupted him."

"What"

"For some reason he's quiet now though."

"He talks to you in the 3rd person about you?",

"Can we chat about that somewhere else?"

"Well, let's start by you giving your name."

"Well, my name is Maxwell -" – WAIT A SECOND, who does Max also know that has known a guy named Gideas.

"Do... do you know my mother?", Max asks after receiving a weird facial expression from Gideas.

"It's a long story... Max, do you have any siblings?"

"A sister"

“From Elizabeth aswell?”

“Yes, why?”

“If what you’re saying is true, we need to get her to come for a visit.”, Gideas states.

“So.. will I get a room?, Max asks. He doesn’t want to be on his own with me anymore, and if there is no woman to stay, atleast the doctors will.

“He started again.”, Max says.

“What did he say?”

“He says I’m frustrated of single life.”

“Are you?”

“Oh well, you know.”

“Yea, well, I guess everyone has a harsh time his life has to pass. Try to keep the positives a little more in mind. Being stuck in the dark of negatives can kill you sooner or later. Also only thinking about the bad shit in life is like only thinking about your full belly after a larger meal you enjoyed.”

“Yea, no, I rather get reminded of the shit.”, Max says, thinking about several negative events like his fathers’ passing.

“Simon is truly a cunt”, he adds.

“What did he say now?”

“He reminded me of the fact, that my dad died 26 days ago.”

“Fuck”, Gideas says.

“Yea, Fuck.”, Max approves.

“What do you usually do, when he talks?”, Gideas seems curious.

“Well, Musik always helps, but my headphones broke.”

“Look, if you want some rest, we’re currently understaffed, we had a room for you, but the bacon menu in the morning is only for the fun ones.”, he smirks. He probably does this joke everytime someone new comes in. Max looks with a raised eyebrow at the glass between him and Gideas.

“Yea, sure.”, he says after a while.

“Alright, it’s a long ride to get out here, you must really be exhausted, I think I still have my headphones here somewhere. Let me look after for a moment, in the room down the alley 3. on the right. There’s a couch we usually use for therapy session. Just relax and we’ll have a chat later, alright? I still have some paperwork laying around.”, he points at the semi well lit hallway, a few doors seemed out of shape but generally a clean impression only a skilled cleaner can provide.

Gideas hands the headphones to him and Max starts walking, picking Songs to listen to.

Meanwhile... you and Mom are having a doozy, she organized a nice afternoon with TV and Popcorn and stuff.

“I missed that so much”, you groan, munching a bag of crisps.

As your evening would go on, your mom was having a breakdown that slowly arose. Beginning with small stuff like clicking on her phone and being completely unresponsive.

You will become quite unnerved when she grabs for the keys of your Truck. But it’s fine, maybe she just had to grab something she forgot.

It would turn out-

“Hey, Max, we could talk now.” – Gideas pulls the headphone off of your head, since you didn’t notice him patting him on the shoulder.

“It’s good you’re here Max, what you’re telling me there is a –“, a loud noise in the main floor interrupts both of you.

“I’ll be right back.”

As Gideas stormed out the room to check what was going on, Max slowly followed.

And at the end of the halley, right besides the counter he and Max talked at, was his sisters’ truck. The afternoon must have started earlier than expected.

It surprisingly took only major damage and didn’t collaps in on itself, leaving the passengers unharmed. God shall have mercy

with the guys who fucked up building a wooden wall.

“Hey honey, you mentioned that you wanna come here. SO I thought I’d bring you some lunch.”, she says, holding up an already opened half empts bag of Cheetos.

“Hello Elizabeth”, Gideas adds, standing at the corner, being generally uncomfortable at that moment.

“Look, I’ve just been looking for you actually. Where’s your daughter?”, Gideas says. He appears to be really tired of this bullshit. As two people with a “Personel” – T-shirt came towards her, Elizabeth, panicked, stands up in her car to cry, knocks her head, drops into her seat, no resistance, the medics can take care of her.

“Wait, why is Elizabeth here?”

“Funeral?”

“Oh sorry, I don’t read newspapers.”

“Well, my Dad wasn’t really… famous after all.”, Max states. He’s right about that one.

“Well.. let’s have a look at that!”, Gideas yells out, as a small dogged waddled out the car. He probably snuck up on the car without her noticing.

“That’s Aria, quite the fighter for her size, but usually a ball of fluff to enjoy your time with.”, you mention as she walks around between you and Gideas, not able to decide by whom he wants to be crawled.

The Fleas in Arias Pelt also enjoyed that.

## Chapter 8

A slight breeze hits your nose as you wake up. Your body seems weightless as you slide to the side of your bed. Still having a sleepy tone and not the power to get to the kitchen, you think about today’s chores. There would still be some gardening work to be done, although Elz’ said she’d manage that during the day, so whatever. You think about whether you want tea or coffee with your toast and decide to be spontaneous. As far as you’re concerned, this is a good morning, with the sunlight brushing your long hair, you missed some make-up yesterday but that’s a problem that has to wait for the next cloud to appear.

Welp, time to go.

Only wearing your sleeping mantle, glad that you didn’t have too much wine yesterday, you walk into the kitchen, ready for some awesome breakfast.

The clock hits 8 and a phone call comes in.

“Yes, you’re talking to Jessi.”

“Look, I don’t want to scare you or anything, BUT it might be that your truck parked in our building.”

“Who is this?”

“Gideas Nneurtem”

“That is who exactly?”

„I work at the Asylum your brother and later the evening your mother introduced themselves at yesterday. We didn’t want to wake you up early in the Morning, but there’s stuff to be dealt with. We need you to come in ASAP, did you understand that? You have to come to our facility at –“

Max is awake!

“Good morning sunshine”, Ephraim says to Max as he strokes his face.

Max shrieks and jumps backwards.

“What the fuck?”

“Willkommen bei den Bekloppten, Kleiner.“

You wake up. You dreamt again.

Your arms feel tired, you probably moved them around during your sleep.

You turn over to the side to turn on your light. You find the note Gideas wrote for you earlier. There is a dried tear on it. You look at it. You take it in your hand.

On the note, with a pretty shaky hand is written:

“This can’t happen again.”

You leave your bed discomfited. What was the note about? God, what year is it? Questions you stated to yourself as you walk through the front door, not noticing that you went past the kitchen and the bathroom long ago, heading straight for the main road running alongside the asylum. Just past the scarecrow Ephraim catches up to you. Of course he would, the boy was always the fastest runner in the class. When Gideas told him to catch up to you he felt no need for shoes though, as the pain of a hedgehog he just stomped a few moments ago rushed his body. He clammed to your waist, begging you to stay. But you just walked on. And on. And one rusty old BMW, an engine the size of a small cow, bumperstickers supporting different Sportsteams and the fuel usage of a small tank flashed his lights. Once. Twice. Otis, who became friends with Martin, was just a little older than your Dad. He tried to shew some deer away from the street. But you kept going. And going. He notices too late. God I’m looking forward to meeting Justin at the market. Otis breaks, swerves, and his car, giving it’s goodbye screeches, hit’s the road marker, causing him to lose traction and flying off in a near cinematic manner. You go on walking. Otis, regaining consciousness, notices that he is stuck. He doesn’t know what to do, so he yells for help as you’re busy thinking about your coffee. Ephraim, having his phone already pulled out, pins you and calls for an ambulance.

Ephraim is kind of unlucky, since you trained for a while now and don’t give up easily. That thief at the market really was a little bastard, I’m glad I got rid of him, anyways, let’s go back to class. I really need to get this set up. If I mess with the board again, I’ll have some trouble on my hands. I guess, I’ll need a ride.

You wander through the dark and walk past the old complex. You instinctively turn right and wander straight through the hole in the fence, just as you remembered it. It was a bit more rusty than you’re used to, but the outwards bent metal is now significantly wider and you can easily pass. But if the gates are open, aren’t we in danger? I mean, what if they return? I don’t see how we could get all set up in time. The last I heard, they ravaged the farms just a few days’ rides away. But whatever, I guess I should get started now, they look unusually impatient today.

From 450 to 1066, old english persisted on the English isles. That changed and until the 1500’s middle English was spoken until it was replaced by “early middle English”, which lasted from then, 1500 to 1700. Since then, the modern English language is commonly used.

The science of linguistics discussed in the first semester is parted into 5 categories. Phonetics and Morphology, which discusses letters and their sounds, and how they’re affected by neighbouring structures, come first. Phonology is begun to be discussed by naming Phonemes, as in, what sound is created when speaking different letters in succession. Allophones on the other hand are the actual written letters used in the alphabet.

For starters, these two can create minimal pairs, as to allowing heat and beat sounding similar by having one allophone changed and heat and hit by having one phoneme changed.

Morphology is the dissection of the look and the structure of words. A Morpheme is the smallest linguistic unit that has meaning. This would be “loved”, “hater” or “relationship”. “love” is a free morpheme, that needs no other component to exist in a meaningful matter. “loves” has the Suffix “-d”, which inflects the word and turns it into the past. But more on that at a later point.

The Lexeme is the word you can find for the differing morphemes in lexica. Such as finding the morpheme “loved” at the Lexeme, or main word in the lexicon at “love”.

## Derivations and Inflections.

To change a word's meaning you can add suffixes and prefixes to the free morphemes discussed before.

Inflections usually don't change the word's category, as in a verb stays a verb, turning the verb "consider" into "reconsider", it still keeps it as a verb. The change of category usually is caused by derivations, turning the word "hate", a verb, to "hater", a noun.

Besides that, inflections have a higher "productivity" – rate, so the morphemes "-s", "-ed" and "-ing" have a higher amount of possible combinations with other words than for example the derivations such as "en-" or "a-", which have even less than the slightly more productive derivations "un-", "miss-" or "non-".

Semantic consistency also is different between the two categories, whereas derivational morphemes are semantically less consistent than inflectional morphemes. The sentences "She loves" can be inflected to "she loved", but from it there is no workable derivation such as "She lovely".

In English, inflectional morphemes are always suffixes, whereas derivational morphemes are both suffixes and prefixes, such as in "relate" which can be turned to "relation" which eventually can be changed to "relationship".

Affixation, which the process of adding suffixes and prefixes is called, is a part of Word formation. Other kinds of word formation would be compounding, which is the adding together of 2 free morphemes such as "arm" and "chair" to create "armchair", a compound that is directly what it's called. A chair for your arms. These kinds of specialities would be discussed at a later point.

Conversion is the changing of a word's category, as in "to hate", sending something or "to mushroom", to experience extreme growth and lastly, shortening. Shortenings can be divided into 4 subgroups. Clipping, which is turning "bicycle" into "bike".

"Blending", which combines "ass" and "hole" into "asshole", Acronyms such as CDC or radar and Initialism such as "wtf" and "USA".

Words themselves are ordered in differing categories and given own Symbols aswell:

- Nouns such as girl or chair N
- Verbs such as hurl or bear V
- Adjectives such as cruel or clear Adj
- adverbs like now and there adv
- prepositions such as above or between P
- conjunctions such as if or after C
- Auxiliaries such as have, will or been. Aux
- Pronouns such as I or him PRO
- Determiners, such as "the", or "some" Det
- Negations, such as "not" or "neither" Neg

Several morphemes together in a logical manner create constituents, the parts sentences are made from. These constituents are once again ordered. There are Nounphrases(NP) such as "a busy road", verb phrases(VP) like "saw a movie", adjective phrases including "extremely fast" and prepositional phrases(PP) such as "between the lines" or "to the market".

The most important Phrase, the verb phrase is added to the rest of the constituents last, the specific order goes usually as follows: S>Sub(-clause)=VP>ADVP>AP>NP.

Words categories themselves classified as "open" or "closed". Open word classes are able to be changed, such as Nouns, Verbs, adjectives.

Nouns which can have inflection categories such as number "car – cars" gender "he – she" and differing cases as in "he – him". There are subtypes as well, such as count nouns "a canister", proper/common nouns including "Justin" and mass nouns like "fuel" or "hair".

Verbs do also have different Inflection categories, mainly tense, as in present and past like "help" and "helped", differing aspects

like perfect including a form of “have” and progressive, which usually is formed with a form of “be” and the suffix “-ing”. Finally, there are active and passive voices that are applied to it as well.

Verbs also have subtypes, talking transitivity at this point. An intransitive verb like “walk” or “sleep” needs less necessary noun phrases attached to it than the intransitive verb “see” for example. Which also needs less included noun phrases than the ditransitive verbs such as give or send.

Following the verbs come pronouns. These can be categorized in personal pronouns which replace things or people in a sentence such as “I” or “me”, possessives, signifying possession or owning like “mine” or “his”. Reflexive pronouns represent self-responsive context such as “myself” or “itself”. Reciprocal pronouns usually tell about a connection such as “each other” or “one another”. Demonstrative pronouns such as “this”, “that” or “those” are the pointy pronouns, always signifying a specific object/person/group of items etc. . Indefinite quantifying pronouns such as “all”, “some” or “none” signify a generalized meaning of a statement. The last group make up the Interrogative pronouns such as “who”, “whom” or “what”.

The word class “Conjunctions”, which usually combine phrases can be temporal like “while” or “since”, conditional, including a condition into the statement like “if”, “unless” or “in case”. Causal conjunctions, transferring causes in the text would be “because”, “as” etc. Concessives like “although” refer to a unlikely scenario and coordinatives coordinate different clauses with each other, like “and”, “but” “or neither”.

There are 2 basic types of auxiliaries.

- Structural ones - be, have, do
- Modal auxiliaries - can, must, may

Structural auxiliaries are commonly used as main verbs.

- She is’nt/can’t
- He has cookies
- You did this.

### Constituency Tests

There are 4 kinds of phrase structure tests. First of all we have the Pronominalization, as in you turn a sentence fragment into a pronoun.

The giant car was destroyed in a fire. – It was destroyed in a fire.

The single mother likes putting ice cream cones in her mouth. – She likes putting it in her mouth.

There is movement, as in you move the sentence fragment around in the sentence.

John kissed the girl on the street – On the street, John kissed a girl.

Followed by coordination, which is adding in a similar structural element.

John kissed the girl and her friend on the street.

Also, Sentence fragments/Fragment answers.

Where did John kiss the girl? On the street.

And last but not least, there is gapping, which is basically asking the question: How many words can you leave out in a particular part which are adjacent to each other until these words and the tied ones are no longer important. Such as in:

I like to cuddle in the morning.

I like to cuddle \_\_\_\_\_.

### Grammatical relations.

Direct objects are immediately following the verb in transitive sentences and object pronouns occur in “object case”(Dativ), as to

which they are usually the patient of the sentence and being acted upon.

“I saw him.”

The double object construction follows a similar concept, whereas both objects have to follow the verb, are noun phrases on their own and can usually serve different roles and have differing cases.

“She gave John the book.”

Oblique objects

Oblique objects require a prepositional phrase, the preposition is connected to the verb and it contains an abstract meaning.

“She sent a letter to his friend.”

“Jill baked a cake for his mother”

Adjuncts’ options in sentences are more widely placed, as they can describe place, time, manner etc. and are optional to be included in a sentence. Their connection to the verb phrase is more loosely placed.

Transitivity and Valency

Transitivity has two views. You can assess it from the pragmatic viewpoint, seeing each verb to take a certain amount of arguments, or from the semantic view, each clause pattern requires a certain number of arguments.

I should draw a table.

Transitivity Example Definitive

Intransitive She is sleeping NP – V.

Transitive She knows John NP – V – NP

Ditransitive She gave John the letter NP – V – NP - NP

Some verbs occur in multiple sentence frames. She cooks every day, but also she is cooking a meal and she cooked a meal. In the verb-based view, the verb is intransitive, transitive or ditransitive. And in the clause based view, cooks has an intransitive frame, cooking has a transitive frame and cooked a ditransitive one.

The transitivity is forced upon it by the number of arguments stated in the sentence., you say.

While “She ran” is intransitive, “She ran from the asylum in her nightgown again.” is changed., you add in a soft tone, staring at the car of your dad’s as the medics are taking care of him. They appear concerned.

“Look, if you keep doing this, we’re never going to get anywhere here.”, Ephraim says, as you’re finishing your lecture.

“Any questions?” I hate to task this when they are storming out the door already. I feel like such a knobhead when I do this.

“Yes, when are we going back?”, Ephraim whispers from behind. He seems to be sad, but I don’t have time for this right now, I need to get started on my paperwork, if I ever want to make it I need to get a little focussed on the topic at hand.

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