

you're giving me (pleasure over matter)

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by [solizabeth](#)

Summary

Patrick's begging for something he doesn't know how to want. He doesn't know how to want Jonny, how to even begin to try.

But Jonny's holding him so *tightly*, like he's afraid Patrick will slip from his grasp if he doesn't, like Patrick's water he has to cup in his palm at the fear it'll spill.

Patrick's spilling, all over the edges.

Notes

hello.

i have no excuses for the below. we simply must endure.

this is a fill for the gethawksdeep kink meme. the particular prompt being:

"patrick kane/jonathan toews, underage or just of age, age diff, patrick sleeps with his son's best friend." — you can view it [here](#).

as the warning and tags implicate, jonny is seventeen, patrick is thirty-five and he is both a father to a seventeen-year-old and married to a woman. i please implore you to take heed of this, before reading. i completely appreciate this won't be everyone's bag.

other tags could also include:

- patrick is just a Hot dad trying to do the right thing
- jonathan toews is a walking, teasing, teenage wet dream
- who is very hard to resist
- and patrick has what can only be described as 'complete and utter inner turmoil' about the whole thing

to the anon who submitted the original prompt, wherever you are: stay golden.

[this song](#) is both equally the inspiration for the title, the whole fic and was listened to approx. 589 times whilst this was being written.

PART ONE

Patrick had been a good kid.

Perhaps that's debatable. Perhaps his mom would argue. He imagines raising it, sitting her down at the dining table in his family home, the one that's never clear of junk, and asking outright; *mom, was I a good kid?*

She'd laugh, undeniably.

Patrick would most likely laugh, too.

Because perhaps a part of him—a small, inconvenient part—can acknowledge and accept he had a tendency to be—well, the *worst*. He'd be kinder on himself, owe himself more credit, but he thinks, truly, that *is* putting it kindly.

He was loud, brash, insufferable (at times). He defied his parents like it was his right, like any teenager who thinks living a life of defiance is what defines superiority. Which is so ... *stupid*. He would stay out too late, swiping his dad's beer from the fridge in the basement, pretending he liked the taste when chasing the cheap liquor his buddy Sharpy swiped from his dad. They used to beg Sharpy's older brother, Chris, to buy them bottles of Jack, or Johnny W, or *anything* different than the swill Mr Sharp drank. Chris never did. Asshole.

Patrick would sneak girls home; the word *sneak* being used incredibly liberally, when Patrick reflects on it. He doesn't know if it counts as being entirely covert when they would crash and stumble up the stairs, Patrick stopping to push them up against the banister and kiss them until they were melting. Patrick was always good at that, making people melt between his fingers. He reflects on it all with a modicum of guilt, especially when he thinks of how he'd fuck them, a beat too hard, too loud, the frame of his bed rocking against the wall he shared with his sister, Erica.

She still makes him apologise for it, at least once a year, even if they are both in their thirties now.

But through all of it, reflecting on it all, Patrick doesn't think he was *bad*.

He worked hard, putting his head down when it counted and pushed himself beyond the limits of what so many expected from him. Problem was, Patrick expected the world of himself. He wanted to prove to himself, to his parents, to everyone who would stop and fucking listen, he was *worth* it.

At hockey. At life. At everything.

Patrick didn't believe in receiving praise that wasn't earned, but praise—praise made him arrogant.

Patrick was *good*, which, therein lay the issue. Good at hockey, more than anything. Good enough to make it all the way. And every time he was told that, over and over, with a hand slapped to his back, telling him, '*can't wait to see you lighting it up in the NHL, son,*' it went to his head. People thought he was someone worth knowing, and Patrick wanted to be worthy of that. He wanted to be worthy of everything.

He drank praise down like he was starved for it, letting it cool his throat, blaze his insides. He drank it down to satiate the insecurity; the part of him that didn't feel like he was *worth* it. He was always told *no*, until it settled into his blood. *No, you're too small, you'll never make it. No, you're not strong enough.* A deep rooted insecurity that lashed at him until he was raw.

Patrick had to be the *best*, he wasn't willing to settle. He couldn't.

It wasn't a need to be right, it was a need to be better; better than anyone ever thought he could be.

And Patrick was, for a while. Better than everyone.

Confidence was a drug best prescribed raw, to be taken often and without thought.

Patrick was arrogant. Selfish. Blurring the lines between confident and cocky. But—but he never thought he was *bad*.

He was sorely lacking humility, because confidence was the only thing that took the focus away from the crushing sense of expectation that weighed down on Patrick's shoulders so heavy he was left feeling sore. It was a lot, to be told at fifteen he had the makings of someone who could be incredible, and the crippling fear that seated deep beneath his skin at the thought of being anything less drove him to be—that. Just that. Incredible.

So maybe, for so many reasons, Brooke falling pregnant was the best thing that ever happened to him.

Becoming a father—or rather, the moment he learned he would become a father—changed his course. It altered every stone in the path his life had been travelling down and for a few, brief moments, Patrick felt resentment course through his blood.

When Brooke had told him, it was raining out and a week before they were set to graduate high school.

Patrick remembers the rain most of all because it was all he could hear, thundering against the roof and drowning out the white noise that was screaming in every corner of his mind. He felt numb to it, at first, only conscious of the rain and the way it fell in dense, jagged lines down the window pane of his childhood bedroom.

He wished she had said something, *anything* else. Patrick thinks he could have taken anything, could have accepted anything, but not a *kid*.

'Please Pat,' she'd cried, tears as thick as the rain falling down her cheeks. *'I'm so scared.'*

Something in Patrick had changed, then.

Patrick didn't know if he loved Brooke, not then, not really. And perhaps that's the easiest way he can explain it. She'd been his girlfriend since the end of junior year, beautiful and lovely and clever and everything he was ever told to want. Patrick had never thought she'd be forever.

But he'd looked at her, then, in that moment with the rain falling in angry lashes outside and knew that there was something more important now. Something that would link them forever, whether they liked it or not, but something they could do *together*.

Something felt more important, more important than anything Patrick had ever faced, staring at him down the barrel.

'I won't leave you,' he'd said, strong and more sure than he'd ever been of anything. He's still not sure, all these years later, if he was talking to her or what was starting to grow inside of her. Maybe both.

He'd placed a gentle hand to her stomach, flat and warm and she'd grasped at his wrist with her tiny fingers.

Patrick had given up his scholarship to play hockey at the University of Wisconsin, married Brooke in the fall and in January of the following year, their son was born.

Patrick has been told his whole life, since the moment he knew he would be a father, that he was giving everything up; that he was throwing his life away.

But Patrick didn't see it like that, how could he, when he held his son in his arms for the first time; tiny eyes wide and blue, lips pink and skin blushed and clear and Patrick knew, he would do anything, *be* anything, for his child.

Patrick didn't *care*, he never looked back, he'd give up his life again and again for this kid and he'd never think twice.

Sometimes, in moments of frustration or doubt or inexplicable self-loathing, Patrick would imagine what his life would have been like if things had been different.

He sees it, in bursts of flashing colour, a career in the NHL, money, fame, success—all of it.

He sees it, bright and *there* and all of it will fade when Oliver Timothy Kane smiles at him.

Ollie had made him a better person, undeniably, and perhaps Patrick sees those moments of a life he'll never have and ache for them, but he thinks of the person he would have inevitably become.

Patrick changed, for his child, and he'd never looked back.

“Ollie, I’m not arguing with you about it,” *again*, Patrick finishes, just for himself.

Ollie makes a noise as if he’s been wounded and Patrick barely glances up from his laptop.

“But, dad, come on. Everyone is going.”

For a short, measured second Patrick wants to say, ‘*if everyone jumped off a cliff, would you join them?*’ Which reminds him so shockingly of his mom he twitches from it. Instead, he settles on, “I’m not changing my mind.”

Patrick kind of feels like a dick, especially when Ollie grunts a frustrated whine, as if Patrick’s the bane of his entire existence, before stalking out of the room.

It would be hypocritical, wildly, of Patrick to not appreciate why Ollie wants to go out with his friends and party. He’s young, seventeen and beautifully naive, priorities off kilter for maybe what’s really important. Patrick will allow him that, truly, because he gets it.

It’s not that he doesn’t trust Ollie, because maybe he’s biased but he’s raised a really fucking *good*, kind, normal kid but—some of his friends are the fucking *worst*.

Ollie used to be quieter, sweeter maybe, a touch shy and a lot reserved. He had a small group of friends, boys he ran with since they were all just kids finding each other on the playground. They had *Mario Kart* tournaments in the basement, wore matching costumes at Halloween and ate all their candy in one sitting until they were sick from it. They played basketball in Patrick’s old hoop, the one he insisted fixing to the wall above the garage, the same net from when he was just a kid and stolen from his parents’ house. Ollie came home with scrapes on his knees, mud beneath his fingernails and a smile permanently fixed to his features. They were loud, messy, *good* kids and Patrick loved the way Ollie was bright and easy around them.

In the summer before Ollie’s junior year he shot up almost a foot and learnt how to work out in a way that made him toned, fit and strong. He grew his hair out, just a bit, letting it fall in its natural blonde waves and spent so much time in the sun he turned a golden colour Patrick was almost jealous of. They had the same eyes, beautiful, clear blue sets and Ollie learnt how to start pinning people with them. Patrick doesn’t know if he’s ever learnt that, if he ever had the effect on people the same way Ollie does.

Ollie became excruciatingly popular, junior year. He stopped hanging around his friends, the ones who’d loved him for who he was, and started bringing friends home who were too biting for Patrick, too loud and obnoxious and stupidly dull. He knew most of them were from the hockey team, a new league Ollie had joined outside of school rather than joining his high schools perfectly *fine* team.

Patrick had to bite his tongue at arguing that, because it was so shockingly reminiscent of himself he knew disagreeing would be impossible. Ollie knew Patrick loved hockey, how

good he was, had seen it in the trophies and awards that still hung in his old room at his parents' house. He'd begged his mom to take them down, so many times, but every time he did she always got the same look painting across her features; wistful and sad, trapped in a memory of who Patrick could have become, rather than who he was.

She loves her grandson, his dad does too, completely, but—he *gets* it.

Ollie wasn't incredible at hockey, not like Patrick had been and no desire to go pro, but he was still blindingly *good*. Patrick had always promised himself he wouldn't be the sort of father that was too overbearing, that he'd let Ollie make his own choices and support them, one hundred percent, but he hated that he'd chosen club hockey.

Mainly because everyone on the team fucking *sucked*.

They boosted Ollie's ego, everyone did, the kids at school perhaps even worse and Patrick had to stop himself from reaching out to tug on his sons wrist, to keep his feet on the ground when he saw him start to get lost up in the clouds.

Sometimes Ollie was such an arrogant *brat* Patrick would tremble all over and yell at him until he was hoarse from it. Ollie yelled back, always, and Patrick had to remind himself of who he was back in high school.

It hurt and it was frustrating and blinding because Ollie was *him*.

And Patrick was so afraid of the choices he'd make.

'He's just like you were,' Brooke would always remind him, rubbing at Patrick's shoulders calmly after he and Ollie would row.

Patrick would grit his teeth and lean closer into her soft touch because he knew his wife was right.

Sometimes Ollie would be exactly the person Patrick had always known him to be, moments where they were alone and all their defences down. They'd be watching hockey or going for a run or something even more innocuous, like the moments Patrick would be cooking, nothing special just dinner, but Ollie would hover in the doorway and ask quietly if Patrick would like any help.

Patrick would always be caught off guard from it, for just a breath, before he was asking Ollie to help him dice vegetables or stir the pot. Ollie would sidle up next to him, bumping their shoulders together with a gentle smile on the corners of his mouth and ask Patrick how his day was.

He lived for those moments, where they were *them*, nothing but themselves, and he could remember the boy who'd cried into his chest when he was small because he needed Patrick to protect him from the monsters under his bed.

Patrick didn't care if Ollie was four or seventeen, didn't care for the moments he almost didn't recognise his own son, because he'd protect him from the monsters forever.

“Oh no.”

His wife’s voice breaks him from his reprieve, pulling him from somewhere he didn’t know he’d been, until he looks at the screen in front of him and realises he hasn’t typed anything in the past five minutes.

“What did he do?” There’s mirth to her tone, just a bit, but Patrick knows she’s sympathising with him.

Patrick looks at her and smiles gently. “He wants to go to Ryan’s party tonight.”

“Do we know a Ryan? I feel like we don’t know Ryan.”

“He’s on the team.”

“Ah,” Brooke nods knowingly, brushing a hand over Patrick’s shoulders as she moves to the cupboard to grab a mug. “One of the assholes.”

Patrick laughs, quick and loud and Brooke looks over her shoulder to grin at him.

He does love her, truly. She’s everything she was from the moment Patrick started dating her back in high school; clever, funny, gorgeous, shockingly quick witted. He watches her, for a moment, making her cup of coffee. She’s hardly changed, still tiny and compact (*my little mouse*, Patrick used to call her), with warm, golden hair still falling in soft cascades between her shoulder blades and freckles dusted over her nose and cheeks.

Ollie got a lot from her, like his quick wit and cleverness, but he’s always been the image of Patrick. Just taller, tanner, maybe slightly broader.

Patrick watches his wife and gets hit with the same feeling he often does when looking at her. This small, unsettling thing that finds its way sitting somewhere in the depth of his stomach. It nags at him, shameful and insistent, the feeling that what they have, what they are—is something that’s maybe never been right.

He loves her, he knows that much to be true, but there’s something he can’t think, could never say, because thinking it means accepting something he never wants to.

“I just—” Patrick says finally, bringing his thumb to his lips to bite nervously at his nails. An old habit. “I just don’t want him to make stupid choices.”

“Like you,” Brooke finishes without hesitation.

Patrick frowns at her but she simply raises an eyebrow, as if challenging him to question just how *right* she is. She is, naturally.

“Pat,” she sighs, leaning back against the kitchen counter, fingers curled around her coffee mug, “you can’t stop him from having fun. We trust him.”

“I know,” Patrick says, trying not to grunt it almost angrily. “But—I just don’t want him to be spending too much time with people like Ryan, it’s not—not good for him.”

Brooke rolls her eyes, something Patrick is so shockingly used to having been married to her for seventeen years. “I don’t know if I have to tell you this, because it’s such a shocking parenting cliché, Pat. But. If you stop him from doing things like that it’s just going to make him want to do them *more*.”

“I *know* that—”

“And if you tell him Ryan’s a dick, it’ll just make him feel like he has something to prove.”

“What, so you want me to fall at the guys feet? Reverse psychology that shit?”

Brooke’s expression turns pinched. “No,” she says slowly, “but if you let him have fun, in a way that you feel you can still exercise control over by allowing it, then he’ll hold far less resentment toward you.”

Fucking teenagers.

“Fine. So. We let him go?”

She shrugs. “Same rules apply. Home by curfew. No drinking.”

Patrick doesn’t think they’ll ever really be able to enforce that, not when he knows exactly what a party full of seniors is like, but he nods all the same. “Fine.”

His wife smiles, coming to his side to brush her lips quickly to the high line of his cheekbone. She disappears a moment later, ducking out of the kitchen with a click of her heels and calls out from the foot of the stairs.

“Ollie, honey, dad wants to speak to you.”

Patrick can’t make out Ollie’s response, if he even has one, but he can make out the angry slam of a door and the bounding footfalls down the stairs that have a weight to them much harder than is probably necessary.

He looks up when Ollie comes into the kitchen, expression dark and brooding and Patrick almost wants to laugh at him. Almost.

“What?” Ollie says bluntly, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Don’t speak to me like that,” Patrick says quickly, face hard.

Ollie folds ridiculously quick. He looks pained, almost, dropping his arms by his sides and face softening. “Sorry,” he says gently, and Patrick doesn’t doubt he means it.

“You can go to the party.”

Ollie’s answering smile is shockingly bright and Patrick has to tamp down the urge to mirror him. “But,” he adds quickly, before anyone can get too carried away, “home by curfew and I swear, Ollie, if I so much as smell alcohol on you—”

“You won’t,” Ollie beams, “I’m training with a buddy the next morning anyway, so, we want to be clear headed.”

Patrick sort of wants to tell him that’s not the *point*, the point is that he’s a fucking underage child, but, whatever. “Just be responsible.”

Ollie grins. “Always. You’re the best, dad.”

He’s such a little shit, hitting Patrick right where he hurts, but Patrick smiles from it all the same. “Go get ready for school, you’ll be late.”

“Yeah, yeah, all good,” he says casually, still too fucking pleased with himself. He stretches his arms above his head, resting his hands on the top of the baseball cap he has on backward. “By the way, is it cool if my friend stays over after the party? We’re gonna start training at like, fuckin’ dawn.”

Patrick raises an eyebrow, partially at the swearing, which makes him feel like a bad parent for not correcting but also really fucking old if he does. “Which friend?”

“Oh he’s new at school, just moved from Canada,” Ollie says, stretching his neck like he’s working out the kinks. “He’s on the school hockey team already, but I think he should come play for the club. He’s really fuckin’ good, maybe better than you were.”

“Jesus, stop swearing,” Patrick sighs, exasperated.

Ollie is biting down a grin. “Sorry.” He’s not. “But yeah, he’s actually pretty cool. You’d like him.”

Patrick’s moderately sceptical about that. He hasn’t met a new friend of Ollie’s he’s liked in about two years. “What’s his name?”

“Jonathan Toews.”

As first impressions go, Jonathan’s is pretty terrible.

He runs into Patrick, physically runs into him, when Patrick’s going up to bed that night.

He’d stayed up late, far too late, and it wasn’t even to ensure Ollie was meeting curfew or to check on him. He’d been stuck on the article he’d been writing, the deadline closing in on him; a timely Sunday evening hand in, one he always managed to race just to meet.

Working for the local paper was hardly Patrick’s dream job, but he’d oddly fallen into step there. They’d taken a chance on him, given him a job as a junior columnist right out of community college. It was a step down from hockey scholarships at UW and NHL

aspirations to majoring in communications and publication at community college, but he was just thankful to have a job when Ollie was about to start preschool.

It had been hard, almost impossible some nights, to study and take care of a child who had no regard for things like regular sleeping patterns or rest and relaxation.

Brooke had been incredible about it, providing unwavering support and encouragement, even when she had a screaming baby in her lap and Patrick had to leave for late night classes.

She'd gone back to school, too, once Ollie was a bit older, settled in first grade and Patrick settled at the paper. She'd gotten her degree in finance, scoring a job at a tech conglomerate in the city that was far more impressive than what Patrick did. But that was okay. He was proud of his wife, grateful for the income that provided them with a life he felt blessed to have and he did love working for the paper, truly.

Except on nights like this one, when he can't fucking think of anything to say about how frankly terrible the Kings are this season and how their playoff chances are—not good. That about sums it up. As Patrick's dad told him when he got the job as a sports writer, *“if you can't join them ... write about how shitty they are.”*

He had heard Ollie and his friend get home, somewhere around midnight (right on curfew) and crash moderately quietly up the stairs and into Ollie's room. They didn't stop to say hi, Ollie didn't pop his head around the living room entryway and see why Patrick was still up, like he normally would, but Patrick has a vague suspicion that implicates Ollie and his rule breaking of no drinking. So much for getting up early to train.

Maybe Patrick's not a stellar textbook parent, to not storm up the stairs and chew his son out for underage drinking, but it helps his conscious to know Ollie is home safe and under his roof, at least one rule not broken.

If there's any justice, Ollie will feel horribly hungover in the morning and Patrick can throw it right back in his face gleefully.

Patrick's turning away from the sink, leaving the dishes he's let pile up over the evening and resigning himself to handle it first thing tomorrow, when he crashes right into Jonathan's front.

At least he assumes it's Jonathan, unless Ollie decided to bring a different friend home, but Patrick knows instantly this isn't a friend of Ollie's he's ever met.

Thing is, Jonathan is sort of huge, towering above Patrick and boxing him against the counter, way too built for a seventeen year old. But. How silently he approached, the shock of it all, makes Patrick feel like he's itching out of his skin.

“Jesus,” he gasps, pressing into the bench behind him and reaching back to grab at it.

Jonathan steps back quickly, brown eyes huge and wide and holds his large hands up in surrender. “Sorry,” he says, and Christ his voice is deep. Ollie's voice isn't that deep, he's sure. “M'not looking where I was going. Water.”

Great. Patrick's not entirely in the mood play the role of stern parent to a kid who's fucking drunk in his kitchen.

At least he's not outwardly swaying, just sort of looking at Patrick, expression completely blank.

He's got a nice face, Patrick can appreciate, even in the low light of the kitchen. Patrick had put the lights on dim, always feeling it too bright and harsh to have everything dialled up to full practically in the middle of the night.

Jonathan's broad and hard, but there's a softness to him, too. A vulnerability. In the light of the shadows Patrick can make out a scar just below his lip, watches his tongue dart across the skin quickly.

"I'll get you some water," Patrick says finally, casting his eyes down and off the kid's face. "Go sit." He gestures over at the stools behind the breakfast bar, hoping Jonathan can get himself there without falling flat on his face.

Jonathan does so, easily, and maybe Patrick's not giving him enough credit.

He places a tall glass down in front of him a moment later, the kitchen island between them and Patrick leans forward on his hands.

Jonathan drinks the water down like he's starved of it, throat working to get it down in one, satisfying rush. Patrick watches the muscles work.

"Better," he says with a breath, bringing the glass down almost a strike too hard against the marble top. "Sorry," he follows a second later, like he's wincing at the sound.

Patrick opens his mouth to speak, to maybe offer him more water, to tell him it's fine, but Jonathan's speaking quickly and rushed like he's tripping over the words.

"Please don't call my mom."

Patrick bites down on his bottom lip to stop himself from laughing and Jonathan's gaze tracks it. Jesus. He aims for stern. "It's Jonathan, right?"

The boy nods quickly. "Yeah. But, Jonny. Please."

"Jonny," Patrick repeats, like he's testing it, tasting how it feels in his mouth.

"You must be Mr Kane," Jonny says, like his brain is reminding himself he needs to be polite, despite the fact he's been caught out stumbling around for water in a stranger's home at one in the morning. "It's nice to meet you."

Patrick smiles, only slightly. "You can call me Patrick."

"Patrick," Jonny says quietly, much like Patrick had, like he's feeling the name on his tongue.

Jonny's voice is deep and flat and Patrick doesn't hate how his name sounds on it.

Which—okay.

"I thought maybe Ollie had a brother," Jonny says finally, after the silence was starting to stretch out in waves before them.

Patrick laughs, the sound almost shocked out of him. "What?" He says a second later, leaning further forward on the counter.

Jonny shrugs, tipped forward in his chair. "When I saw you. I don't know. You're young as."

Patrick laughs again, almost. Barely. This fucking kid. "Thanks?"

"How old are you?"

Jonny asks it so bluntly, so casually, like he couldn't care less if Patrick didn't answer but he's also dying to know. And perhaps it's rude, slightly, but Patrick finds himself answering easily. "I'm thirty-five."

"Cool," Jonny nods, like he's utterly disinterested, but Patrick can also see him doing the math behind his eyes. "Shit," he adds after a moment, after he's worked it out.

He doesn't look shocked, not really, just a mild surprise dancing across his features. God, this kid should be rude, he *is* rude, but Patrick doesn't really care. He finds he doesn't mind it.

Patrick should go to bed.

"What are you, like, twenty-five?" Patrick asks, hoping it comes across as the joke he intends it to be. The truth remains that Jonny probably legitimately *could* be twenty-five, just from looking at him. Yet, the closer Patrick looks, the more he takes him in, he sees the youthfulness there, clear on his features. It's the rest of him that's built like an adult.

Jonny kind of grins. "Seventeen. But thanks."

Patrick sort of wants to remind him that one day he won't *want* people saying he looks older, that it certainly won't be a compliment, but he gets that feeling of being a teenager, of already thinking you're so much older than you truly are. Any validation that you *look* that way is just the cherry.

"I won't tell your mom," Patrick says, his brain latching on to the response he never gave to Jonny's earlier panic. "But, do I need to lecture you and my son on underage drinking and responsibility?"

Jonny relaxes, just a bit, Patrick can see in the loose set of his shoulders. He shrugs all the same. "If you want."

Patrick really doesn't want. He also doesn't want the kid to think Patrick's a—what? Pushover? He should tell Jonny off, he should, but—it's not like he's his son. Jonny's his—nothing. He doesn't even know if he's a proper *friend* of Ollie's yet. Barely, it seems.

“Ollie tells me you play hockey?” Patrick says instead, aiming for conversational as he grabs Jonny’s glass from in front of him to fill it with more water.

“Yeah,” Jonny says to his turned back at the sink.

“You any good?”

Jonny smirks, only slightly, as Patrick hands him back his glass. “Thanks,” he nods, “and—yeah. I’m alright.”

Patrick watches his throat again, the swallow of his Adam’s apple, tight and smooth. Jonny’s fingers brush across his lower lip when he’s done, catching the drops of water that rest there with his tongue.

“Ollie said you used to play hockey, too.”

Patrick watches the words form around Jonny’s mouth, his gaze caught there for a moment too long but too brief to be strange. Maybe.

“Yeah,” he says finally, catching Jonny’s eyes with his own. “I was alright.”

The corners of Jonny’s lips play on a grin and Patrick can’t help but match him. “You still play?”

Patrick’s mouth softens, any hint of a smile gone. He leans forward with his elbows on top of the counter, fingers twining together and staring down at them. He owes Jonny nothing, absolutely nothing, but he falters and it’s written over every inch of his face. “No,” he says, simply. Plainly.

It’s not a surprise, Jonny won’t be shocked by it. It’s logical, completely, for a thirty-five year old father who works nine-to-five in the city to not play *hockey*, of all things, but—

But.

“You want to.”

It’s not a question and it catches Patrick off guard completely, looking up to take Jonny’s intense, dark stare. This kid is too *much*, too forward, too invested in something he knows nothing about. It makes Patrick angry, almost, playing at the edges until it settles in the grind of his teeth. He’ll tell Jonny off, brush him off, tell him to go back to bed before he threatens to call his mom and rib at Ollie for keeping such awful friends, but—

But.

“Yes.”

Jonny says nothing, face smooth, blank and gentle and Patrick doesn’t know what to say.

“I don’t know,” he adds quickly, mouth twitching. “It wasn’t meant for me, I guess. Things change.” Which is so close yet so far from everything Patrick could say it sits heavy in the air

between them, in the dull light of the kitchen and Jonny won't even get it, but he's looking at Patrick like maybe he wants to.

"For the better?" Jonny asks finally, his voice so low Patrick would miss it if he moved, even an inch.

Patrick frowns, powerless to it. *Of course*, plays on his tongue, confident and sure. "Yes?" Comes out, soft and like a question.

"Did you want to go pro?"

Patrick shrugs. "Maybe." *Yes*. "I was going to go to UW."

Jonny's eyebrow raises, perhaps in disbelief or perhaps because he's impressed. Patrick can't tell anything with this kid and maybe he doesn't want to.

"But then you had Ollie."

Fuck you, rushes through Patrick's blood stream, turning his vision hazy and out of his control. But it doesn't last, nothing toward Jonny he should be feeling is lasting and he feels drunk from it.

"Yes," he says slowly and Jonny's eyes are brushing down and over Patrick's mouth. "I love Ollie."

Patrick flinches at himself. He—he doesn't even need to *say* that, so why does he? Why is he?

"I know," Jonny says gently, like he's so *sure* and Patrick almost wants to laugh because Jonny doesn't even fucking know his family. He has no right, none at all. "Ollie's a good guy."

"I know," Patrick bites back at him.

Jonny's staring and Patrick's tangled in a regret so instant he feels weak from it. His palms go flat to the counter, the marble cool and grounding. "You should go to bed," he says finally, looking down and off Jonny's face. He stares at the patch of skin above Jonny's collarbone, tan and gentle above the worn collar of his grey Henley.

"Okay," Jonny says casually, the shrug of his shoulders shifting the fabric of his shirt. "It was nice to meet you. See you around."

Patrick nods, meeting Jonny's small smile with one of his own. He doesn't say anything, doesn't know what he would if he did, but Jonny slides out of the stool silently and effortlessly with no more than a glance back in Patrick's direction.

Patrick watches the span of his shoulder blades, caught again in the kid's sheer height and light tread of his feet.

As first impressions go, maybe Jonny's wasn't terrible. Maybe he was okay; just okay. He was flat and dry and sort of completely charming and maybe what's hitting Patrick most, what's making him stare down at his fingers for longer than he should is—is the thought, or the odd realisation, that he's never met a friend of Ollie's he wanted to talk to; to really talk to.

Ollie's friends are kids—dumb and young and naive and have nothing more to offer Patrick than a grunted 'hello' as they barrel through his home and out of his life quicker than they entered it. Patrick doesn't care—perhaps he cares that he thinks most of them are utter assholes—but he doesn't care to be *friends* with any of them. Why would he?

He loves his son, completely, but Patrick's not seventeen anymore. And perhaps it makes him old, but he'll own it, he'll own and accept the knowledge that he can't fucking relate to teenagers. Someone his age shouldn't *want* to relate to teenagers, and he doesn't, but maybe he could relate to Jonny.

Jonny's alright. Maybe. Patrick can't be sure.

But maybe he's alright with Ollie being Jonny's friend. Perhaps they'll be good for each other, whatever that means to boys these days.

Jonny's alright, even if he will be sleeping off a hangover on Patrick's couch tomorrow.

Patrick won't hold it against him, but maybe he'll hold some things against himself.

It's like Jonny lives with them, after that.

He's over so much Patrick's almost jarred by it when he's not, conditioned and expecting Jonny's broad shoulders and tilted smile to step through the threshold every evening.

Their schedules aren't aligned, not in perfect symmetry, but Ollie manages to fit Jonny in to every aspect of his life that he can. They study together, eat together, scream at the TV when the Blackhawks are playing and go to each other's games, if they don't clash. Ollie doesn't drive but Jonny does, picking him up for school almost every morning in his beat up Chevy that whirls up to the curb with a groan and a snap of the engine that has become so oddly familiar to Patrick when he's reading the news from his phone at the kitchen counter.

Patrick would joke with Ollie about serious codependency, if he didn't find the whole thing kind of *nice*.

Jonny becomes a constant in their lives that Patrick doesn't find himself minding. He thinks he's good for his son, balances out the levels of asshole they've become so accustomed to and keeps him focused. Jonny's so intense, too intense maybe, driven by hard work and the need to win and such a fierce competitiveness it's too *much* for Patrick, sometimes.

But he's fun, too, and makes those around him feel warm and left laughing and he's so obviously a massive *idiot* (in a slightly dorky, endearing way) that Patrick won't deny his son someone like that.

Patrick had never spoken to Jonny again the way he did that first night back in September; intense and striking and leaving him going to bed confused and slightly off kilter. Slightly out of step.

Jonny was nice, always polite and friendly but Patrick never felt pinned by him, not like he did that first night, when the kitchen counter between them felt like an ocean Patrick wanted to swim. Admittedly, Patrick had never gotten him alone, Ollie always a step behind with a beaming smile and two seconds away from putting Jonny in a headlock.

Patrick doesn't think he *wants* to be alone with Jonny, truthfully. Doesn't know what he'd say, or why he'd need to say anything at all. Jonny's Ollie's friend, maybe slowly but surely becoming his *best* friend and that should be enough for Patrick. And it is. But sometimes he'll catch Jonny looking, when he thinks Patrick doesn't notice; small, weighted gazes across the dinner table as Brooke asks Ollie about his day and Patrick's too focused on work, or the game that night or what the fuck he's going to get Sharpy for his birthday next month and—Jonny stares.

And Patrick finds himself looking back, just long enough that he catches Jonny and Jonny doesn't flinch from it. He'll look away, always, but never as if he's been caught; he's cold to it, completely indifferent, not like Patrick's someone he maybe wants to understand. Which is such a shocking, blatant lie, it rocks at Patrick every time.

Jonny's an intense kid, Patrick will give him that, but he won't give him his full attention, like sometimes he suspects Jonny wants him to. He doesn't know what he's looking for anyway, what he could possibly begin to want to understand about Patrick.

Patrick thinks he's *easy*, open and readable like a novel prescribed to a class of eighth graders. But. Jonny looks at him like he's the collected works of Oscar Wilde; complicated, beautiful and unable to be put down.

Patrick doesn't *get* Jonny, doesn't understand him, and he has to remind himself it's not his place to.

He's Ollie's friend, his *son's* friend, and that's enough. It has to be.

“No Jonny tonight, sweetheart?”

Patrick doesn't look up when his wife speaks, his pen trapped between his teeth as he looks down on the latest stats for the NBA season. The Jazz are *good*, but he can't figure out how

to translate those numbers onto the page in a way that's any more expansive. Or, frankly, exciting.

Ollie throws himself down on the couch between them, kicking his feet up on the coffee table and sinking backward into the cushions.

Patrick glances up, then, watching the set of his sons jaw when he picks up on what they're watching on TV. Well, what Brooke's watching. Patrick's too focused on Utah's projected point average for the season.

"Nah," Ollie says distractedly. "He's got a date."

Brooke practically coos and Patrick bites down on his pen. "How exciting!" She says happily and Ollie rolls his eyes. Patrick has to suppress the urge to huff a laugh. "Anyone we know?"

"Uh, probably not," Ollie says slowly, eyes trained on the television.

"What's her name? Is she nice? Jonny deserves someone nice, he's so lovely."

Patrick thinks he's deserving of being able to roll his eyes now, too.

Ollie simply shrugs. "I dunno. Claire, I think. She's a junior so I don't really know her."

Brooke nods happily and Ollie looks like he couldn't care less. "I wonder if she's pretty."

"Yeah she's hot."

Patrick can't help but roll his eyes, again, but his wife seems completely unbothered. "Jonny will end up with someone gorgeous, I just know it," she says confidently, "he's so beautiful."

Patrick laughs, unable to stop himself, but it comes out like a snort, completely ugly and brash. "Babe," he almost breathes, exasperated, "you can't say that."

"What?" She quips, "he *is*!"

Ollie turns his head to grin at his mom, blonde hair fanning out behind him on the cushions. "You got a thing for Jonny, mom?"

Brooke's frown is so instant and *sour* and Patrick can't help but laugh again. "You're terrible, Oliver," she brushes, a line of disgust furrowed in her brow. "But you're still my most beautiful boy ever."

She leans forward to take Ollie's face and smack her lips against his cheek, laughing delightfully when he groans against her and tries to push her away.

The sound his wife makes is beautiful and melodic and Patrick smiles from it all. She's trying to get Ollie to hug her, telling him over and over how wonderful he is and his grunts of protest lose heat, laughter beginning to paint them as he tells his mom to just fuck *off*.

“Language,” she sings happily, giving the side of his head a push when he starts laughing openly.

Patrick snorts a laugh and looks back down to his notes, unable to keep the smile from playing against his lips. God, he loves his family. Sometimes that thought will hit him so deeply and so suddenly he feels winded by it. It’s luck, that overwhelms him the most.

Luck for where he is, who he’s there with. His beautiful wife and his wonderful son and a life he is *lucky* to have. Fuck everyone who thought he was throwing it away, fuck himself for ever doubting this is exactly everything he’s ever wanted and—and fuck Jonny for questioning him.

Patrick’s *happy*, he can’t ever deny that. He won’t. Jonny won’t make him question it again.

“Drinks tonight, Peeksy.”

“Maybe,” Patrick hums into his phone wedged between his shoulder and ear.

“No, no *maybe*’s, only *yes*’s.”

“Why are you more childish than my seventeen year old son?”

Sharpy’s laugh is clear and bright through the phone and the only reason he smiles from it is because he knows Sharpy can’t see him.

“Would your seventeen year old son need to go out tonight to get spectacularly faced?”

Patrick laughs, pushing his laptop away from him on the coffee table. Sharpy should at least get some of his attention. “He’d probably love that, to be honest.”

“Naughty Peekaboo Junior.”

“Dude, it’s bad enough when you call *me* that.”

“Perhaps, but I’m his Uncle Sharpy, you’re all bound to love me forever.”

Which is probably true. Patrick won’t tell him that, not in a way that’s clear or simple, but he’s been showing it in small ways since they were twelve years old. It’s the way he would pack an extra granola bar for him when they were in freshman year, because Sharpy always got hungry before fourth period history. It’s the way he confided in him, sometimes by saying nothing at all, but never doubting Sharpy would *get* it. It’s the way he’d save him a seat in twelfth grade chemistry, because Sharpy was always late and would have to sit next to Steven McGuire if Patrick didn’t. Sharpy hated Steven McGuire.

It was how Patrick would let himself be pulled into Sharpy's side, tucked under the throw of his arm as his hair got ruined; he'd complain, but he'd never pull away.

Sharpy's his best friend, completely, and he's such a pain in Patrick's ass it's entirely tiresome and often draining but no one has ever been there for him, the way Sharpy has. He loves him, easy and uncomplicated and when everyone in Patrick's life, the ones who'd been worshipping the ground he walked on through high school, no longer wanted to know him or his new life, Sharpy stayed.

Sharpy stayed through all of it.

He knows Sharpy loves him, too, showing it in how he'll push Patrick down into the couch and sit on him to take control of the TV remote. That's about it.

Sharpy's the worst and Patrick loves him.

"Seriously though, work this week *sucked* and Abby is happy to stay home with the girls and *please*, Peeks."

Sharpy's kids are a lot younger than Ollie, still only children, which Patrick equally misses and is also so utterly glad that that is not his life anymore. He *loves* Sharpy's girls, but he also loves not having to worry about what his own child is doing every second of the day.

"I can't be fucked going out though," Patrick groans, "can you come here? Brooke's out tonight anyway."

"You are such an old man."

"I am older than you by literally a month."

"And yet, somehow, I am wiser."

"And more stupid."

"Fine," Sharpy sighs, the sound tinny and distant. "I'll come over, you lazy fuck—"

That's how Patrick knows Sharpy loves him most, in the way he's always willing to change what he wanted to do in order to make Patrick happy.

"—what do you want me to bring?"

"Good question," Patrick muses, standing from the couch to wander into the kitchen. "I'll check. Pretty sure I have nothing here."

Patrick walks blindly whilst Sharpy rambles in his ear. It's something about chips, or maybe dip, or how *desperately* the Hawks need to get a regulation win tonight. It's the same, smooth way Sharpy always talks; comforting, slightly irritating. And he's focusing, he really is, until he rounds the corner from the hall to the kitchen and—well.

Thing is—or, maybe it's—Patrick doesn't know. It's a problem, maybe, that Jonny's bent over in front of his fridge, shirt off and tucked into the back of his shorts, the brim of his cap visible from the way it's turned backward. It's like he's looking for something, arm resting on the open door, like he's stuck there in a moment too long.

The problem, Patrick thinks (or, guesses), lies within the solution. The solution being he could just—not care. And he *doesn't*. Because Jonny's just a kid, just the kid that's over at his house every fucking minute and it doesn't *matter* that he's shirtless but he—

“What?” He says finally, cutting Sharpy off.

His voice grabs Jonny's attention, the boy looking over his shoulder to quirk the corner of his lips in the promise of a grin.

“I said, Peek,” Sharpy sighs, “what time tonight?”

Patrick feels caught up in the fact, in the simple knowledge, that Jonny has dimples at the base of his spine. He can see the sheen of sweat there, watches the way a single bead of it dips beneath the waist of his shorts.

“Uh—I guess—seven?”

“Sure. Text me what to bring when you've stopped having a stroke.” He hangs up before Patrick can get a word in, leaving him standing there with a disconnected line still pressed to his ear.

Jonny stares, disinterested and amused, like he wants to laugh in Patrick's face for just *standing* there. When Patrick drops the phone from his face to shove it in the back pocket of his jeans, Jonny stands up straight, hips jutting forward and still leaning on the door.

“Hey Mr Kane,” he says finally and Patrick has to huff a laugh from it.

You literally called me Patrick a day ago, he wants to say, but all that comes out is, “hey.”

Jonny's mouth draws a line as if there's a joke he knows that Patrick won't get, dancing there across his face. *Tell me*, wants to pour out of Patrick, to demand Jonny just *stop* whatever it is he's trying to do and just—be.

“Ollie sent me to get water. We were working out,” Jonny smiles, voice soft. “Can't find it, though.”

“Yeah 'cause we have a tap, Jonathan.”

Jonny's laugh is bright and loud and Patrick feels powerless to it. He's caught in—everything. Jonny's dark hair peeking out from beneath his backward Bulls cap, the high flush on his cheekbones, crawling up from his neck, the thick, broad muscle across his chest, hard and smooth and golden. But he's caught in his face, perhaps more than anything; the way he's smiling, open and warm and *looking* at Patrick like just him being there makes him happy. Patrick doesn't think he's ever met someone with eyes as dark as Jonny's, or as

intense. It makes Patrick want to step closer, to get up in Jonny's space, invade him, to see how deep and wide the ring of his iris' go.

Maybe his wife is right, maybe Jonny is beautiful.

Patrick shakes his head at that, unsure what the *fuck* that means, to even think that. Maybe it doesn't mean anything.

"Anything I can help you with?" Jonny asks casually, closing the fridge. Patrick thinks he's going to take a glass and get himself some water, but he puts his arms behind him on the counter next to the sink instead, pushing quickly and with eased strength so he can sit on top of it.

The afternoon sun streams through the large window behind his back, the colours gold and slightly pink. Patrick's always loved that window, loved the way it made the trees outside brighter than they were, how everything felt muted and warm through the glass. It hits Jonny now, that light. It makes his skin look soft, gentle, golden.

"Don't be a dick," Patrick replies, when he's realised it took him a beat longer than it perhaps should have. He's not telling Jonny off, not really, not the way the parent in him wants to. It's like talking to Sharpy, or a friend, light and teasing.

Jonny's lips twitch. "Going out tonight?"

Patrick finds his legs moving forward, only slightly, one foot in front of the other until he's leaning his hip to the counter, right in Jonny's space.

Jonny's huge from this angle, looking down on Patrick with a tilt of his jaw; Patrick feels caught in his shadow.

"No," Patrick says finally, crossing his arms over his chest. "A friend of mine is coming over."

Jonny nods, his legs swinging gently. He's so ... spread out; thighs immense and dark from the sun, his gym shorts pulled tight and high against the skin. He takes up so much space, everywhere he goes, length and width and sheer volume all combined. Something pulls at Patrick, tightening in his jaw because he feels it more than physically, too.

"You boys have plans tonight?" *Please say yes*, Patrick thinks, overwhelmed by it. He doesn't know why, really, couldn't explain it if he tried, but he hates the thought of Sharpy meeting Jonny.

Sharpy would be an asshole, pushing Jonny where he knows it will hurt within two seconds of knowing him and Patrick doesn't know Jonny well enough to decide if he'd push back. But maybe he likes the thought of that, too. Inexplicably. Watching Jonny's buttons be pressed. Watching him be pushed.

"No," Jonny replies with a shrug, "I should probably go home, though—"

He probably *should*. He's stayed almost every night this week. *Easier for going to school*, Ollie had said.

"—I don't want to overstay my welcome."

Patrick smiles at him, just a bit. "It's okay, Jon. You're always welcome."

Jonny's answering smile is sincere and soft. "Thanks. My mom is probably missing me, I'm sure."

Jonny never talks about his parents, or his family. Not in a way that's obvious, or with intent, but it's one of the moments that reminds Patrick just how little he knows about Jonny. Patrick could ask, he supposes. He could ask Jonny about his life and the people in it. He could learn him.

"I should call your mom some time," Patrick muses, half as a joke. "Make sure she's okay with her son practically living with strangers."

"You're not a stranger."

Patrick looks down to the spot above Jonny's knee. "We are, though."

Jonny's knee shifts, the one Patrick has his eyes trained on. It moves closer to Patrick, legs spreading wider.

"Are we?" He asks, voice low.

Patrick doesn't know what to do, so he shrugs. "I don't really know anything about you, Jonny."

"You do." It's so clear and too sudden—too hard. Patrick looks up, pinned by Jonny's flat stare because what else could he possibly do.

It's too much, when Jonny looks at him like this. Sometimes he hardly looks at Patrick at all, but when he does—it's overwhelming.

"I—" Patrick tries, forcing himself not to look away. "I know you play hockey, that you're good. I know you're bad at chemistry but love biology. I know you get funny sometimes about what we eat for dinner, but you're too polite to say anything. I know you don't like red meat, so I've stopped cooking it, when you're around. I know that you're bossy and you like to be in charge, but when it comes down to it you'll shut up and take it. Because. You *care*, about the people around you, you want to make them all happy, I think. You like the Bulls even though you don't really like basketball and you're also sort of super fucking nerdy. Your humour is terrible and dry and you smile sometimes like you're the only one in on your own joke. But—I just—"

Patrick stops himself, his tongue heavy and tied in his mouth. He doesn't know what he's saying, really. He doesn't know if he's proving himself to Jonny, to anyone; what he said could perhaps barely constitute as *knowing* Jonny. It's general stuff, he thinks. Things he's

learnt through natural conversation at the dinner table or through Ollie. He doesn't know all of Jonny's loves, his likes and dislikes, what makes him happy.

He's failing to understand what's important, or what he should or shouldn't know. He shouldn't know anything, really. So why does he *want* to?

"I don't like pigeons," Jonny says finally, after a second had turned into forever.

Patrick startles, just a bit, because it's—not what he was expecting.

"Like, I really hate them," he continues. "I think they're sort of terrifying, which I know is illogical, but, whatever. I really like watching documentaries about animals, like David Attenborough and shit, I could watch it for hours. I used to have a dream when I was younger of being a professional fisherman. I wanted to own a boat and go off the shores of Nova Scotia, grow a beard and live in a fucking lighthouse. I still love fishing. And I love my parents and my brother, David. He's younger than me and totally fucking annoying but I'd also kill anyone who ever hurt him. I think my mom's the most amazing person in the world and I don't care if it makes me a mama's boy or whatever the fuck, because it's true. She babies me a little bit but she also only wants what's best for me, I know that. I want to go pro in hockey, all the way to the NHL, baby—"

He says it with a quick flash of teeth and Patrick's gripping the kitchen counter to ground himself.

"—I think I can, too. Ollie wants me to join his stupid fucking club hockey but I don't really care about that. I think the team at school is good and I've already been made captain and we're lighting it up and I *like* the guys I play with. I want to go to college and play. Maybe somewhere like North Dakota or Notre Dame. I'm from Winnipeg originally, so maybe I'd like to go back to Canada, too. We moved here 'cause of my Dad's job, which sort of sucked at first but also I don't really care? I can play hockey anywhere and go to school anywhere and I wasn't really attached to anyone from back home, I guess. But I feel like if we had to leave again, leave Chicago, it would really suck to leave Ollie. Because he's my best friend and I feel like, apart from my brother, I've never really had a best friend? So it's sort of great. Anyway, I could talk about everything in my life, all day, if you wanted me to. But I don't think you do."

The thing is—the terrifying, confusing, complicated thing—is that Patrick does.

He wants Jonny to open his mouth and never stop. He wants his mouth to go dry from it, to speak until he's hoarse and exhausted and there's nothing left to be stripped from him. Patrick wants him stripped bare, all his secrets exposed and out in the open for Patrick to make sense of. He feels it, right here in this moment, that Jonny is someone he wants to know. Completely. Utterly. Entirely.

And that—that is terrifying.

But Patrick can't help himself, doesn't stop himself, when he says, "I want everything."

It doesn't make sense, Patrick realises it the moment he says it, but Jonny's looking at him with something Patrick can't recognise. It's hope, maybe. Hope for something Patrick doesn't know how to give, or what he's even giving.

"I just mean—" Patrick tries again, "I want to know everything about you."

"Why?" Jonny asks, his voice so quiet Patrick finds himself inching closer just to hear.

"I don't know."

And that's the truth, honest and plain, but Jonny's staring like maybe he doesn't believe it and Patrick doesn't want to be labelled a liar.

"I want to know everything about you, too." Jonny says, like it's a secret, like he's exposing himself. Good.

"Why?"

"Because I think you're fascinating."

Patrick starts, just a bit. "Yeah," he says a second later, keeping his voice light, "so fascinating. I had a kid when I was still a teenager, got married when I was eighteen, had to drop out of college before I even began and the most exciting part of my week is my idiot friend Sharpy coming over to watch the Hawks game tonight. I have a loyalty card for Whole Foods and I get excited when there's a two-for-one special on this cleaning product I like, because it works the best on stainless steel and I've started taking my own cup with me when I get coffee because it helps me think I'm saving the environment or some shit. I feel like an old man, all the time, and I'm boring, Jonny. I'm really fucking boring and I—"

Jonny's hand strikes out to grip at his shoulder, sudden and sharp and so hard Patrick can feel the bruise from it that's not yet formed. Patrick's eyes widen, not in fear but in shock, maybe. He could move, if he wanted to, Jonny would let him, but—he doesn't *want* to.

"You're not boring," Jonny says, voice so sure it makes Patrick laugh.

"Ollie says I'm boring all the time."

He wants Jonny to laugh, he's trying, but the line of Jonny's mouth doesn't budge.

"Well Ollie's wrong."

"You find most thirty-something's interesting?"

"No."

Jonny's hand is heavy through his shirt, the pads of his fingers pressing into the muscle of his shoulder and right against the knot that's been forming since he went to the gym yesterday. Jonny pushes, just enough that a small sound escapes him; gentle, breathless, weak.

Jonny goes to say something, Patrick can see it, in the tilt of his head and the parting of his lips and Patrick is desperate to hear it. But he stops, eyes flicking over Patrick's shoulder and his hand pulling back almost as quickly as he had put it there.

"Hey man," Jonny says, nodding at the door and Patrick glances behind him.

He steps back from Jonny suddenly when he catches the gaze of his son. He feels caught and he doesn't know why.

"Hey," Ollie says with a nod of his jaw. "Thought maybe you got lost finding water."

Jonny grins. "Well, I did. But then your dad reminded me you have a tap. Crazy."

"Crazy," Ollie echoes, flicking his blue eyes quickly to Patrick. "Everything good, dad?"

Patrick hopes his smile is convincing. "Of course."

"Where's mom?"

Patrick pauses. "Oh. She had some work she needed to do so she went into the office."

"On a Saturday? Surprised you're not at the office, too."

"Yeah, well," Patrick shrugs, "trying to have a bit of work-life balance." Which is a lie, because Patrick's laptop is in the living room right now, open and waiting, with the article he's trying to finish begging to be written. "Mom won't be home 'till later, she's going out for drinks with some friends."

"Kay," Ollie nods, before looking back to Jonny. "We going out tonight, man?"

Patrick won't look at Jonny when he speaks.

"Nah, we're gonna watch the game with your Dad and Sharpy."

Patrick thinks it almost might be comical how quickly he snaps his head around to stare at Jonny. And Jonny's just—smiling. It's one of those moments, those far too frequent and annoyingly irritating moments where Jonny's the only one in on the joke; he knows it, too.

Ollie snorts when he laughs. "Bro, you haven't met my uncle Sharpy." He says it like a warning, one that Patrick wholeheartedly agrees with.

"What, is he boring? Like you?"

"Oh, I'll show you boring." Ollie pushes himself off the wall where he'd been leaning and Jonny jumps down off the counter at the same moment. They step toward each other, laughter bubbling out of both of them as Jonny goes high and Ollie goes low, crashing into each other and playing some game of odd not-wrestling right in front of Patrick.

Patrick rolls his eyes. Fucking teenagers.

“Jesus, don’t break anything,” he mutters, mainly to himself. They’re hardly paying attention. He sidesteps their display, silently hoping Ollie can get a few good punches in. He thinks perhaps Jonny deserves it.

“Yeah we’ll watch the game with you, dad,” Ollie calls when Patrick’s at the entryway. He has Jonny in a headlock. “I fucking love Sharpy.”

Of course he does. Sharpy’s always spoiled him rotten. “Warn him, will you,” Patrick says, gesturing at the mop of hair struggling in Ollie’s grasp. “About your uncle.”

Ollie’s grinning when Patrick walks out of the room.

He pulls out his phone, tapping out a quick message to Sharpy as the sounds of his son and his best friend fill every corner of the house; crashing and laughing and too bright.

Bring a whole case of Coors.

Every fear Patrick could have had about Sharpy meeting Jonny all seem to eventuate.

Sharpy’s rude to him, naturally. He pushes, just how Patrick knew he would, wanting to uncover all the buttons he can press to cause Jonny to break.

He calls Jonny ‘Toes’ before the puck has even dropped and uses every colourful word he can think of to describe Winnipeg. Which, Patrick thinks is pretty rich, considering Sharpy is fucking Canadian himself and was *born* in Winnipeg. Not that Patrick disagrees with the whole sentiment because, fuck Canada, obviously.

Sharpy’s so irritating, in a way that shocks no one, and Patrick can see it in the line of Jonny’s shoulders how annoyed he gets, so instantly.

But the worst part is, the part Patrick could have never anticipated, is—well—they get *along*.

It’s not even the end of the first period before Sharpy’s flinging his arm around Jonny’s shoulders, proclaiming just *how much he loves this kid* and Jonny beams at him like it's Christmas.

They bicker, a constant back and forth, and it sits so uncomfortably with Patrick he feels—guilty, selfish... he’s not sure.

Sharpy is his friend, not this kid. Jonny is his—

Jonny’s his nothing. Patrick has to remind himself that.

But the truth remains, however annoyingly so; Jonny and Sharpy act like they've been friends, for years, and Patrick feels like a child who's had his favourite toy taken off him.

"What a funny fucking kid," Sharpy says to him during the second intermission, when Ollie and Jonny have disappeared into the kitchen to get more snacks.

Patrick swigs at his beer, what must be his fourth (fifth?) of the evening. "Mmm," he hums, keeping his eyes on the TV. He feigns interest in the intermission show, even though he sort of fucking hates the Binny's guys and Sharpy knows that.

"Why do you hate him, though?"

Patrick glances at Sharpy, then. "What?"

"You won't even fucking look at him, man. Is he actually a nightmare or something?"

Yes. "What? No. Of course not."

Sharpy's answering look is an exasperated one. "So, then, stop being a fucking downer."

"I am not."

"Peeksy, I am a college graduate in the studies of Patrick Kane. Lesson number one, '*Peeksy's Moods*'. When engaged with a sullen, sulky Peeksy, be sure to keep conversation stimulating. You can achieve this by offering him food, more drinks, but don't expect your Peeksy to crack so easily. He will never tell you what has him in a bad mood, unless you push and push and—"

Patrick leans over to where Sharpy sits on the single armchair and punches him in arm *real* fucking hard.

Sharpy just laughs, the beautiful, straight toothed fucker.

"I'm just tired, man," Patrick tries and Sharpy rolls his eyes at him.

That's the problem, being friends with Patrick Sharp; he'll pull apart your bullshit before you've even begun.

"Sure," he scoffs, sitting back in his chair. "But don't be a dick to Jonny, dude. He's looking at you a bit wounded."

Patrick frowns at that, slightly. "No he's not? And since when is he your best friend?"

"Well, yes, he is, which you wouldn't notice because you're not looking at him. And don't be a jealous little Princess, it's not pretty, Peekaboo."

"Jealous? You think I'm jealous of you getting close to Jonny? Of Jonny liking you more than me?"

“No,” Sharpy says slowly, raising an eyebrow. “Of Jonny trying to be friends with me, because I’m your friend, obviously.”

Obviously. “Oh.”

“Yeah. *Oh.* ”

Sharpy’s staring, like he can understand Patrick with just a look and the terrifying thing is, history has dictated that he often can.

Patrick’s grateful when the boys come barrelling back into the room, Ollie trying to talk around a mouth full of chips whilst Jonny laughs at him.

Patrick’s quick to zero in on the beer in each of their hands.

“Oliver,” he says, warning laced through it.

“What?” Ollie says quickly, wiping his mouth the back of his hand.

Patrick nods to the beer and Ollie shrugs.

“Please, Dad? Just one?”

Patrick glances at Jonny, the kids face blank. “I don’t really mind if you have one,” he says, looking back to his son, “but I don’t know if Jonny’s parents—”

“Oh, dad, they’re so cool, trust me,” Ollie says casually, collapsing back into the couch with a thud.

He takes the side furthest from Patrick, unlike he had in the first two periods, and leans against the opposing armrest; it gives Jonny no choice but to sit between them both in the middle.

Patrick looks at Jonny when he sits, almost tentatively. He’s not looking at Patrick, the bottle of Coors curled between his palms.

“Okay,” he says finally, “but don’t tell your mom.”

Ollie extends his drink over to Jonny with a raise of his arm, Jonny meeting him quickly with clink of glass on glass. They both look entirely too happy with themselves when they both take a drink and Patrick’s looking—*staring*—when Jonny’s lips wrap around the head of his bottle.

Patrick swallows down his own beer to distract himself.

By the time the game is over, Patrick feels lightheaded. He can't pinpoint why. The alcohol, probably, that would be logical. But maybe it's the way Jonny inched closer, more and more; small, insignificant shifts that were nothing but enough to have their thighs pressed together by the time the final horn sounded.

Jonny's passionate about the game, which is so blindingly obvious to anyone who's in his atmosphere longer than two minutes, but the closer he got the more Patrick *felt* it.

When the Hawks rushed the net Jonny tensed, muscles locking and turning hard against Patrick's side. When the puck hit the post he sighed, an angry, frustrated thing that knocked against Patrick's knee. When the Hawks scored, pushing them ahead with only three minutes remaining in regulation, Jonny had pressed his fingers to Patrick's thigh. It was quick, almost without thought, like he was gripping at Patrick to remind himself not to shout too loud or jump too high.

Patrick had flinched from it, from how unexpected it had been, but Jonny didn't even notice. He'd removed his hand a second later, before the goal horn had even finished sounding and Patrick felt so overwhelming uncomfortable he'd felt the rush like ice jolt through him. He shivered from it, completely, and Jonny didn't even notice.

"Oh shit, what a game," Jonny says happily, resting back into the couch as the Hawks swarm their goalie on the screen.

"They had that one easy," Sharpy responds, like he's so above it all, even though he's grinning from ear to ear.

"Oh fuck no," Jonny counters, "our defence needs to fucking step up, we shouldn't have had it that close at the end. We keep fucking blowing our leads. Like. Yeah, we fucking score in the first period and look like we're set to dominate and then somehow we find ourselves having to consider going empty net, like, all the fucking time? That's fucked. I hate how they're wasting Harrington on that third line, too. It's just insane. And that fucking call by the ref in the third, was just—"

Patrick sort of loves hearing Jonny talk about hockey, even if he does sound like a know-it-all dick when he does so. He lights up, analysing it like it's his *right* and starts throwing in the movement of his hands, flowing through his arms and into his body.

Patrick's always loved it when someone is passionate about the things they care for, when they talk like they could never stop.

Sharpy starts arguing with him when Jonny starts to break down goalie save percentages and when Jonny argues back he presses closer into Patrick's side.

Patrick doesn't think Jonny even notices he's doing it, he's too focused on being turned red in the face from Sharpy. Patrick wants to laugh, mainly at how easy it is to get Jonny going, but he feels kind of sorry for him, too. Patrick's has had a lifetime to deal with Patrick Sharp, Jonny's only had three periods.

"Patrick agrees with me, right?"

Jonny's face is so close and Patrick almost jumps from it. He'd completely lost track of the conversation and Ollie has too, staring down at his phone and not paying attention.

"What?"

Jonny rolls his eyes. "Hawks have a better offensive unit than the Pens, right?"

"Well, statistically, yes," Patrick shrugs, ignoring the way Jonny looks so smug.

"Oh no, that's not fair," Sharpy groans, "you can't get Peekaboo going on stats, he'll ruin us all."

Patrick grins over at him. "Wow, that might be the nicest thing you've ever said to me, Sharp."

"Don't get used to it."

Jonny's knuckles press into the side of Patrick's thigh and he looks back at the boy quickly, eyes flickering down to his hand, just for a second.

Jonny's looking at him, searching. "Peekaboo?"

Sharpy laughs but Patrick doesn't look at him, not this time. "It's his nickname. Little Peekaboo. Peeksy. Peeks. Take your pick."

Patrick can't help but groan. "Don't," he says, only to Jonny. "Don't encourage it."

Jonny's lips quirk in a smile, barely there. "Peeksy," he says slowly. It's so reminiscent of the night they met, of the first time Jonny rolled his name around on his tongue that Patrick feels stunned for a moment. "Peeks," he tries again. His knuckles dig deeper into Patrick's thigh. "My Peeksy."

Patrick swallows against his throat that's gone inexplicably dry. It hurts, almost; raw and impossible. He parts his lips a moment later, to steal air, to speak, he doesn't know. But Jonny's eyes are tracking there, to his open mouth and Patrick feels that tremor again.

Fear.

It's *fear*.

Because, in this moment—right here, right now—Jonny's looking at Patrick and for the first time, Patrick thinks he knows what Jonny wants. He finally understands and Patrick thinks he knows what he wants, too.

"I've got to—" he says suddenly, moving back from Jonny and standing from the couch. He stumbles, just a bit, but he doesn't think it's from the beer. "I've got to—water."

He doesn't offer more than that, walking quickly from the room, all of it behind him and out of sight. He doesn't get water, even though he probably needs it; he goes to the front room

instead, the one they never use, designed for entertaining and whatever else Brooke thought was a good idea when they'd toured the open home.

It's dark, all the lights off and everything illuminated in dull greys from the street lamp outside. Patrick presses his back against the wall next to the door, hiding in the shadows as he remembers what it's like to breathe at a rate that's normal.

He doesn't know what's happening, what that *was*, but—but maybe he does, too.

"Oh god," he whispers to himself, pressing his palms to flat, cool service behind him. "Oh *god*."

He can't stay here, not for much longer, because that would be entirely suspicious and Patrick's sure he's already fucked up enough as it is.

Nothing even *happened*, except it did, and he never wants to be seen again.

It rolls around in the corners of his mind, soft and small and *there*. It's what he's been thinking, maybe since the beginning, but has never been able to formulate properly. He's never let it enter his mind *clearly*. It—it *can't*, he can't.

Oh god.

He forces himself back to the living room after a minute, maybe two, when he feels like he's in control. He's not, frankly. He feels like he's spinning, completely spiralling and the only thing that keeps him tethered is the fear.

When he walks back in, Jonny and Ollie are gone and Sharpy is sitting so patiently, eyes locked on the TV. Except, Patrick knows he's not watching, not really.

"Oh, hello," he says mildly, barely glancing over at Patrick. "I hope that water did a world of good."

Patrick doesn't say anything, sitting down in the seat he'd fled not five minutes earlier. He looks at the screen, too, playing a game he's so destined to lose.

"I know I pretend to know a lot of things," Sharpy says, not looking at Patrick, "but I will admit, there are some things that I can't make sense of."

Despite everything, Patrick huffs a laugh. "I know you can't make sense of anything, Sharpy. We still love you."

Sharpy hums. "And I love you, but be fucking careful Patrick."

Patrick hates when Sharpy does that, using his name. It doesn't matter if they're fifteen or thirty-five, it makes Patrick feel like he's in trouble, like he's been caught out. He looks at Sharpy and Sharpy looks back, his eyes wide and sincere.

"Don't be stupid, yeah?"

“What—what do you mean?”

“Don’t do that,” Sharpy sighs.

“What?”

“Play stupid, because you’re not.”

“I’m—” *I am so fucking stupid.* “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Sharpy lets out a grunt like he wants to hit Patrick; he definitely does. Wouldn’t be the first time.

Patrick wants to be honest with him, but the problem is—the real fucking problem—is that Patrick’s not even being honest with himself. He doesn’t know where to start, how to make sense of any of it and he’s not about to ask Sharpy to help him. He can’t do that to Sharpy, not to his best friend; he won’t ask him to accept this, won’t beg him to try.

“Alright, Peek. Alright.”

Sharpy drops it after that.

It’s not until he’s leaving later, shrugging on his coat in Patrick’s entry way when he grabs Patrick by his shirt a second later. He pulls Patrick into him, into a rough, one armed hug that’s always somehow managed to mean so much and Patrick feels folded into his web, trapped.

“Be stronger,” he murmurs against Patrick’s temple, breath warm and quiet. “And use your fucking head.”

Patrick doesn’t respond, he doesn’t know how to. He pushes Sharpy away instead, nothing but fond and his smile weak. He tells him to fuck off, to get out of his house and never come back and Sharpy’s grinning when he tries to reach around to smack Patrick on the ass.

When he’s gone, the door shut firmly behind him, Patrick rests his forehead against the wall.

Breathe . He tries to remember it, to remember how.

Patrick can hear the tick of the clock. It centres him, reminds him he’s real. One. Two. Three. He tries to match his breath to it, in and out, *inandout*, but it’s too quick. The clock is too fast.

He hears his wife breathe next to him, short, small, quiet breaths that barely invade the space. Patrick feels too loud, next to her. He feels like one jump of his hand or twitch of his leg and

she'll wake; he'll be exposed.

It traps him, lying here beneath the covers, weighed down and trying to keep time with the clock. It won't stop, won't be drowned out, no matter what he does and maybe that's a good thing because if it stops, then maybe he does, too.

One. Two. Three.

In and out.

He reminds himself to breathe.

He looks up at the ceiling, barely able to make it out in the dark; silver and grey and lifeless. Lights don't dance from outside the window, they never have, their blinds are too thick.

He can't do this. He can't.

Be stronger.

Sharpy's words rush through him like liquid pooling in the depths of an empty stomach, sloshing uncomfortably and making him sick. He's felt nauseous, ever since Jonny pressed his knuckles to his thigh and the impulse of fight or flight left him heavy.

Be stronger.

Patrick's been blind. He's been blind and he's been stupid. A complete and utter idiot.

It's been there since the beginning, something he couldn't define or didn't understand. He realises it, now. Every look, every word, every time Jonny entered his mind.

He should have realised it when Jonny entered his mind so shockingly frequently and in ways he never should have.

None of it has been normal, not since the moment Jonny stumbled, drunk and trusting, into his kitchen and his life. None of it has been normal and Patrick doesn't know where to begin, or how to stop.

He can hear the tick of the clock. Over and over.

One. Two. Three.

It centres him, when he thinks it, formed and clear and *undeniable* for the first time.

I want him.

Patrick goes to where it all began. Where it never stopped and perhaps where it will end.

He goes to his kitchen.

It's late, the world asleep and reminding Patrick that he should be, too. If it weren't a room where he spent half of his life, he'd stumble, blind in the dark and the moon filtering through the window above the sink hardly lighting the way. That's where he chooses to be, perched on the counter beneath the window, feet off the floor and shoulders hunched. It's where Jonny had sat, barely twelve hours ago.

There is no light, now. No colours rich in golds, pinks and reds. Patrick is hidden in the shadow of the moon, grey and gone.

It's illogical, completely without sense, but he feels like he *needs* to be here, like it gives him the power to change everything.

The tiny, digital clock on the oven burns red and flashes 3:42 AM when Jonny comes.

Patrick knew he would. He knew it with the certainty he holds for so many things. He knew it like he knows he loves coffee; black, one sugar. He knew it like he knows he loves hockey; always has, always will. He knew it liked the sky was blue or the grass was green or snow was white; simple, tiny, uncomplicated things that are so *sure*.

Patrick knew Jonny would find him.

Jonny stands in the frame of the door, bathed in darkness and hidden in shadows. But Patrick can see him, so clearly; clearer than he's perhaps ever seen a thing. He's in sweats and a hoodie, soft and gentle and Patrick's sure he would be so warm to the touch.

Patrick has to squeeze his hands into fists.

Jonny's silent when the pads of his bare feet walk gently forward, so sure and confident, but he stops within arms reach and the space between them echoes.

Patrick stares and Jonny doesn't waver, brown eyes black and round and filled with everything Patrick's never been able to read. He can't speak, not yet, because he knows what he needs to say. It sits there, waiting to spill out of him without control but it doesn't come. He could try reaching for it, he could try *harder*, but his mouth remains unmoving.

Jonny's waiting—waiting Patrick out, maybe. Waiting for Patrick to run. Patrick should tell him, make it inexplicably known—he's not running. Not this time.

Jonny takes a step closer, so barely, and Patrick leans back in a movement that's jerked and quick. It feels so opposite to what he wants, what he truly wants—which is to grab Jonny by the pockets of his hoodie and pull him in until they drown from it. He wants Jonny to smother him, to make it impossible to breathe; to let Patrick choke on the material of his sweater and never see the light of day again.

It's—it's too much. All of it. And Patrick feels like he's going to start screaming.

At the first press of Jonny's palm to his thigh, Patrick feels a shudder like lightning course through every muscle of his body. It's so visible, so undeniable, there's no way that Jonny could have missed it. The temperature in the room is cool but not freezing, the central heat mild and comfortable and relaxed and Patrick is anything but. He shivers, despite feeling burnt from the inside out and it feels worse than any fever he's ever had.

Jonny's right hand mirrors his left, reaching for Patrick's other thigh and squeezing. He's close, now, close enough for Patrick to make out the scar below his lip and the soft scent of the body wash he knows is in the upstairs bathroom. It's the same one Ollie uses.

That should turn Patrick's nose, make him sick to his stomach but—but it *doesn't*.

At this angle, sitting on the counter and Jonny pushing at his thighs, Patrick feels matched to him. He's been so conscious of Jonny's size since the moment they met and from here, from where Patrick sits, he feels like finally, maybe, he's the one who looms. Yet, he doesn't. Because fuck Jonny—fuck Jonny and the way he manages to cage him, to have him boxed and trapped and powerless, even without the advantage of height on his side.

He still has to tilt his chin, so small, so barely, but it's enough that Patrick feels more equal than he ever has.

When Jonny speaks it almost makes Patrick jump, the sound too *close* and too barely there all at once.

“Tell me to stop.”

The breath that escapes Patrick feels punched out; right from the depths of his belly and tightens against his chest.

His knees are pressed to either side of Jonny's hips.

Stop. It screams out of him, claws against his throat, but what comes out is so different it shocks even him.

“No.”

Patrick could lose everything, from this moment. What happens next will write his future, undeniably; stretch it out before him in waves that crash and burn him. He could stop it, could change the ending to a book that's barely begun, with a conclusion that's *right* and if that's not terrifying, then, Patrick truly knows nothing.

He hasn't even touched Jonny, not yet, which he's so conscious of when he reaches out a hand to twine his finger around the drawstring of Jonny's hoodie. He tangles it, watches it move and he tugs; it's so featherlight, like pulling at string, but Jonny tilts forward as if he's been dragged.

Jonny's hands are gripping at him, almost resting all his weight and Patrick feels the bite of it, even through the material of his sweats. He wishes he was bare, that Jonny could press

hard enough to uncover skin it left marks. He wants the print of Jonny's hand to stay, to not be forgotten.

"I—" Jonny tries, mouth so close. So close. "You have no idea—how I—"

Patrick pulls harder at the drawstring. "Tell me."

"That first night, when I met you—" Jonny swallows. The line of his throat is something Patrick can't miss. "Here, right here—I've never wanted someone, the way I want you."

When Patrick breathes, shaky and hard, they're close enough that he can see the way Jonny shivers from it. As if Patrick's breath hits right against his skin.

Patrick pulls until Jonny's face is right in front of his own; he presses, just a bit, until his nose brushes against the line of Jonny's jaw. His skin is smooth, the barest scratch of stubble, flaming hot, and Patrick wants—everything.

It should be strange—and it is—to touch another man like this, but that's hardly Patrick's concern, not now.

"When did you realise you were into me?" It should be cocky, too self assured, but it's not. Jonny says it with such openness, such genuine want and curiosity and Patrick doesn't know how to answer him truthfully.

Patrick's lips are almost pressed right to Jonny's ear. "Tonight."

Jonny starts a bit at that, Patrick feels it in the press on his thighs. "Oh," he whispers, "I guess I figured," a second later.

How? Patrick wants to ask, but he's forgetting, slowly, what it feels like to want to speak.

Jonny smooths the palm of one hand up Patrick's side, slowly, torturously slow, and it catches on the band of his sweats before snaking around his waist. He pulls, just gently, but it's enough to drag Patrick closer. A sound escapes Patrick he doesn't recall ever having made; a small, desperate, breathy thing that feels unable to control.

Patrick's feeling reckless, completely out of control, and he feels the weight of his choices stare him in the eye when he reaches around Jonny's waist and digs his fingers into the flesh of his ass.

Jonny makes a sound to match Patrick's, strained and sharp. Patrick's heels are digging into the backs of Jonny's thighs now, too. They're almost flush, the weight of Jonny's chest melting against his own until he feels crushed by it.

Jonny's ass is just how Patrick knew it would be; firm, hard, *impossible*.

With his cheek pressed to Jonny's, Patrick feels hidden. He feels like here, in the dark and bathed in shadow, he can say things he'll never be allowed to say. If he doesn't look at Jonny, maybe this won't be real.

“Maybe I didn’t realise it, until tonight,” Patrick whispers, “but that doesn’t mean—it doesn’t mean it wasn’t there.”

He can feel Jonny dragging back, like he wants to look at Patrick, properly look at him, but Patrick’s grip is firm and insistent, keeping him where he is.

“None of this is making sense. I’m—Jonny. I—”

“It’s okay,” Jonny sighs, like an affirmation.

Except, it’s *not* and Jonny has to know that. He has to know.

Jonny doesn’t stop. “I’ve thought about you, every day. Even when I’m not here, you’re all I fucking think about.”

“Jon—”

“I can’t fucking stand it sometimes, Patrick. I can’t focus. It’s worse when I’m here, when I have to see you. But I can’t—I can’t stay away. I keep telling myself I’ll stop coming round, that I’ll stop putting myself through this, but—”

Patrick’s fingers curl into a fist around the front of Jonny’s hoodie, tangling in the drawstrings and warm material.

“What—” he tries, cutting Jonny off. “I don’t understand.”

And he doesn’t. He doesn’t understand a lot of things.

Jonny laughs so gently against him, almost like the air is spilling from his lungs. “I’ve been staring at you for the last couple of months, practically screaming it at you whenever we’re in the same room, how much I’m into you and you look at me like I’m nothing.”

And that’s—that’s not *fair*. Patrick feels the anger simmering in his blood, the same way it so often does when Jonny speaks to him and it’s so familiar and so terrible it gives him the strength he needs to face this.

He doesn’t move his grip, not from Jonny’s hoodie or his ass (because, how could he possibly), but he puts the space between them just enough to bring them face to face. It’s confronting, completely, to have Jonny holding him, to be touching him like this and to see him so openly. It’s dark, too dark, but Patrick thinks he can see the light of the moon reflecting in Jonny’s eyes.

“I’ve never thought that, that you’re nothing” he says finally, too harshly. “I can’t look at you because—fuck.” He sighs angrily, unable to help but tighten his legs around Jonny’s hips. “Do you know how—how *overwhelming* it is, for me to realise all of this? I’ve had about five hours to accept the fact that I want to—”

He stops himself and Jonny looks like maybe he could set them both on fire, if he concentrated hard enough. Patrick hopes he can.

“That you want to what?” Jonny bites.

Patrick bumps his nose against his cheek, almost angrily, unable to help himself. Jonny chases the movement, pushing when Patrick pulls. “My fucking wife and kid are right upstairs, you know that, right?”

Jonny doesn’t even have the decency to look guilty. “Yeah I got that, thanks.”

Patrick shakes his head. The heat between them is turning insistent, unable to ignore, like a palm pressed to the side of a heating kettle. It will be boiling, soon; it will leave them burnt, if they don’t pull away.

Jonny’s the one to move first, to tilt his head forward and catch Patrick’s lips with his own.

Patrick doesn’t let him.

He turns his head, just enough so that Jonny’s lips find the corner of his mouth. Jonny’s breath is hard and dark against him, both hands he has on Patrick turn impossibly tight.

“I *can*’t,” Patrick whispers, not turning back. His eyes fall shut, almost squeezing.

“Please. Don’t tell me you don’t want me,” Jonny whispers right back. His lips are still so close Patrick feels the brush of them against his skin.

“It’s not about not wanting you,” Patrick answers, the words startling. He hasn’t said that out loud, not really, not yet. He thinks Jonny realises that, too, huffing a whispered groan against him. “It’s about what’s—”

“If you say ‘what’s right’, I swear—”

“Well it is about what’s fucking right, Jon. Holy fuck.” Patrick’s mad now, undeniably. “You can’t just do whatever the fuck you want and not expect there to be consequences.”

“I know the fucking consequences.”

“Do you?” Patrick laughs, sarcastic and dry. “I will lose *everything*.”

Jonny’s face doesn’t waver, not even an inch. “Pat—”

“You’re *seventeen*, Jonny.”

The moment he says it, Patrick realises he’s been too loud. Their conversation until now had been no louder than breathless sighs and sparking whispers, but Patrick’s composure is slipping. His gaze darts quickly to the entryway, as if simply looking at it will make him more attune to the sound of a door, a step on the landing, a sign that he’s been caught.

Patrick hears—nothing. It’s quiet, to the point it’s almost disconcerting. All he can hear is the sound of Jonny’s soft breath, mixing with his own.

When he looks back, fear turning his bloodstream cold, Jonny doesn't give him a chance to run.

Maybe Patrick never had a chance, anyway.

It takes a second, one beat of his heart before it stutters, before Patrick realises—

Jonny's kissing him.

And Patrick, god. Patrick is so many things. A father, a son, a husband; a good hockey player (he hopes he's allowed that, still), an expert at replicating his grandmas lasagne, a master at beating Sharpy at poker and still able to run a mile in under ten minutes. He's smart and he's kind and he's funny and he cares so fucking much about so many things and—he's perhaps the worst person who has ever thought to exist.

Because—

He kisses back.

Patrick kisses back.

It should be inevitable, really, that once Patrick starts he can't stop. That once he got a taste of Jonny, of those soft, plush lips, he never stood a chance but to sip at them until he was floating.

He never stood a chance at all.

Jonny kisses like Patrick knew he would—like he means it. If Patrick hadn't noticed before how Jonny had wanted him, every single day, he notices it now; he feels it now. It's eager, too much, so different to any way Patrick has ever been kissed before and he doesn't think he'll ever be able to go back, now. Because it is eager, it *is* too much, but it's everything Patrick never knew he wanted; everything he's ever needed.

Patrick grips at the side of Jonny's neck, the skin impossibly warm. He's angling Jonny up to him, pressing his thumb right into his pulse and he can feel the breath being stolen from beneath it. Jonny tastes like toothpaste and honey, sweet and warm and turning Patrick dizzy. He's thankful he's sitting, he wouldn't have lasted a second on his feet.

Both Jonny's hands at his back tangle in the material of his old, faded Sabres shirt, the one that gives too much in the shoulders and smells like home. He pulls, hands in fists, and it's enough for the collar to pull back and press against Patrick's throat like a kiss.

His legs are wrapped around Jonny's waist properly now, squeezing tightly and bringing them close, too close, together. His fingers, the ones that had been splayed over the warmth of Jonny's ass, now dig desperately into the muscle just below his shoulder blade.

Patrick should—he should panic, when he feels the length of Jonny's cock press against his own, but—he doesn't.

He's gone beyond panic.

Besides, Patrick thinks perhaps he's been hard since the moment he saw Jonny step into his kitchen, undeniable and irrefutable when Jonny's hands had clung to his thighs.

He feels Jonny moan, right into his mouth, and the sound makes him want to mirror it. "You're so—" Jonny tries, caught up in Patrick's tongue, "you're so hot. Want you."

That, respectfully, shouldn't be hot. But—but it *is*. *Fucking hell*.

Patrick's fingers rest on Jonny's jaw, thumb pressed in a gentle control against the column of his throat and the soft strength behind it makes it easy for Patrick to tip Jonny's head back.

Jonny goes easily, exposing his throat to Patrick, and Patrick can't help but tighten the lock of his thighs. He looks—beautiful. Exposed and trusting, eyes closed and soft and lashes like ink brushing against his skin.

When Patrick bites down against Jonny's neck, into the patch of skin right beside his thumb, he feels the tremor rock through Jonny; from his shoulders, the muscles of his stomach and his cock, most of all. It jumps against Patrick, with an insistent need that Patrick doesn't know how to ignore.

"Want you to fuck me." It spills out of Jonny, so quiet and impossible and yet, Patrick's never heard anything clearer.

And Patrick's a liar, he will be a liar, if he tries to tell himself for a single *second* that those five simple words don't hit him like a fist to the stomach.

He sees it, just for a beat, Jonny splayed out beneath him; naked, bare, beautiful, trusting. He feels the arch of Jonny's back beneath his palm, can imagine how it would feel, to make that spine curve like a bow.

Patrick's not a teenager anymore, not like—not like Jonny (holy *fuck*), but the thought alone is enough to make him feel like one rough push of Jonny's hips against his own will have him coming in the front of his sweats.

He brushes his thumb against Jonny's windpipe, harsh enough in a way that catches Jonny's attention. He wants his eyes on him for this.

When Jonny looks at him, lids heavy and eyes dark, Patrick forces himself to speak.

"No."

Jonny's eyes open wider, just a bit, and Patrick can see the thought barrelling like a train behind his gaze.

"Not—" Patrick continues, swallowing roughly, "not until you're eighteen."

If Jonny's shocked by it, he doesn't show it, but he does part his lips wider in what Patrick knows will be an attempt to argue. Patrick kisses him, covers his mouth with his own, to stop him.

Jonny melts into it easily, like he can't help himself, and god—Patrick can sympathise.

Part of Patrick can't believe he said that, that he's even *offering* that, but the other part—the part that's making his vision blur—is fighting the urge to push Jonny down onto the kitchen floor and fuck him right into the polished hardwood.

When the heel of Jonny's palm presses directly against his cock through his sweats, too rough and too *good*, Patrick's mouth goes slack. He gasps, right onto Jonny's tongue and Jonny answers with a bite into his bottom lip.

"I think—" Jonny murmurs, curling his fingers, "we've already gone past the point of no return."

Patrick can't—he can't *think*. Not with the way Jonny's moving his long fingers, not with the way the mere *thought* of what he wants to do to Jonny is rattling around him like a bird in a too small cage; it's all too much and not enough and Patrick doesn't know what to *do*.

"I'm—I'm trying to be—" *good*.

"Stop trying."

Patrick groans, from the heat pooling and sparking down to his toes, from Jonny's petulance, he can't tell the difference anymore. "I—we—we *can't*."

Jonny's hand is rough and sure and Patrick can't *see*. "You won't fuck me," Jonny murmurs, biting it against Patrick's mouth, "is that it?"

What do you mean is that it—you—

"What if I fuck you?"

Patrick falls into Jonny, then. Jonny catches him, taking the weight Patrick brings with him when he drops his forehead to Jonny's shoulder. His fingers practically claw at the side of his neck, hard enough to have bite and his other hand holds against Jonny's back like he'll fall apart if he doesn't.

Thing is, *thing is*, Patrick can picture that, too.

Jonny's sure fingers against him, taunting and teasing and cruel until they gave Patrick what he needed. He'd open Patrick up like he was born to, bring him apart and put him back together again like clay remodelled. He thinks he'd be left begging, that Jonny would get off on hearing it, until he'd be holding Patrick by the back of his neck and pressing him face first into the mattress.

If—if Patrick's going to be fucked, he doesn't want it to be *easy*. He wants it rough and hard and punishing because maybe it's what he deserves. Which is so blindingly selfish because the punishment, is also undeniably the reward. It would be giving himself to Jonny, completely, and the thought of it alone is—

“Christ,” he whispers, bringing the material of Jonny’s hoodie between his teeth. He doesn’t bite, not really, more mouths at it, mouths at Jonny. He wants him damp.

Problem is, Patrick can’t do that, either. Let himself be fucked. He can’t offer that to Jonny, not yet, but he thinks Jonny knows that.

“I know,” Jonny breathes back, Patrick’s curls at his lips. “But can I—please—I want.”

It doesn’t make sense, not even a proper sentence, although none of this is making sense and Patrick doesn’t see how he’ll ever be able to screw his head back on right. His brain has muddled somewhere over in the corner, forgotten.

Which is why he can’t help but release a small, strangled cry when Jonny steps back from the counter and uses his strength to—to *take Patrick with him*.

Patrick’s legs wrap instinctively tighter around Jonny’s hips, clinging desperately at his shoulders. He’s curled around Jonny, utterly, entirely, and Jonny’s just holding him like he’s *nothing*.

Both Jonny’s hands grip at the backs of his thighs, right at the bottom of his ass and Patrick tilts his neck back so he can match Jonny’s gaze. Jonny’s smirking, because of course he is and Patrick’s—

Shit.

“Could carry you around in my pocket,” Jonny whispers against the corner of his mouth, the laughter so clearly playing on his lips. And it’s one of the most ridiculous things anyone has ever said to him and yet—it turns the grip on his chest tight.

Patrick’s never been carried, never been held like this, in his life. He’s lifted girls before, countless times, let them wrap around him as he fucked them up against the wall, the—shit—the kitchen counter; let them cling to him before he threw them down on the bed. It always felt *good*, to have control. It felt good to be strong and powerful and lift them like they were weightless.

But—but this feels—

It doesn’t last long, not really, Jonny only moving as far as the counter that sits in the middle of the room and placing Patrick gently down on it. Patrick’s going to ask (if he remembers how to fucking *speaking*) why this is any different, what Jonny’s thinking, what—

But then Jonny splays his fingers across Patrick’s chest, wide and sure, and pushes him backward until he’s flat on his back against the counter. It’s too cold, the marble biting against his back through his shirt and he whines from it, from the shock of the temperature (which is what he tells himself, anyway).

Jonny looks—he looks impossible.

“Let me do this,” he whispers, pressing a hand to Patrick’s hip, pushing.

Patrick's legs are still wrapped around Jonny, subconsciously (or maybe completely and entirely consciously) trying to drag him closer.

Do what? Patrick should ask, he should, but he—

He nods.

Jonny ducks down to kiss him, as if he can't help himself, and Patrick is happy to allow him this. He lets his fingers tug at the hair that sits gently at the nape of Jonny's neck. It's too short to really tangle, to *pull* like Patrick wishes he could, but it's grounding all the same. His hips have to lift slightly off the counter to accommodate them both, to let Jonny press against his chest with his own. And god—he'd be happy to kiss Jonny, just like this, on the counter where he eats fucking *breakfast* and shit, Patrick should remind Jonny of that. But. Well. Jonny eats breakfast here almost every morning, too, so if they're going to burn they'll go down in ash together.

The angle can't be great to Jonny, can hardly be treating him kindly, which is entirely his own fault for being so tall. How dare he. How dare the height of the kitchen counter, really.

Jonny should have carried him to the living room, splayed him out on the couch and slotted between his thighs like it was where he belonged.

Jesus. Patrick needs to get a fucking grip, but Jonny's also sucking right on his tongue and pushing his hands up under Patrick's shirt and he can feel their cocks against one another between their sweats and—how could he possibly get a grip on fucking anything anymore.

"I really want to blow you," Jonny says eventually, after Patrick felt like his lips were starting to go numb.

Patrick moans from it, from just the *thought*.

Jonny's thumb brushes over Patrick's bottom lip, a soft swipe that spreads the wetness that had been glistening there. The pad of his thumb pushes at the corner of his mouth, just a bit, just enough that it catches his teeth.

"God," Jonny sighs, leaning back enough to look down on Patrick properly.

Patrick's eyes don't blink when Jonny puts his thumb in his mouth, sucking gently for just a *second* like he doesn't want to forget how Patrick had tasted.

"You're—" Patrick tries, realising it's the first time he's spoken in what was starting to feel like an eternity. "You're—" Unreal. Incredible. Insane. "Unbelievable."

It's filled with too much raw want and awe to be perceived as anything less, even if Patrick had meant for it to be disbelief. He is, in disbelief that is, of Jonny's mere existence, but it's starting to mix with something heavy and uncertain and he's not sure how he'll be able to put any of it into words. Hopefully he'll never have to.

Jonny merely hums, spanning both his hands over Patrick's sides, pushing up against his shirt until his thumbs catch on bare skin. It's enough to make Patrick twitch, to make his abs

tighten and Jonny doesn't miss a second of it.

"Look at you," he muses, like he's trapped in his own head.

Patrick doesn't want to imagine what he looks like; splayed out and open, cheeks flushed red, looking up at Jonny like—

"This," Patrick whispers, trying not to falter. He's grabbing at the hem of Jonny's hoodie, has to lift himself up slightly to manage it. He feels like a child grabbing at a toy, begging to play with it. "Take this off."

Jonny looks like he's never been so pleased to oblige a request in his life. He reaches for the back of his sweater over his shoulders, but not before he pauses, just for a second, to squeeze at Patrick's wrists. Patrick let's go, almost regretfully, but that feels so blindingly insignificant when Jonny's left towering above him, sweater dropped to the floor, bare and *wonderful*.

Patrick has never—in his life—stared at another man's body and felt himself want it. But he *wants*, now, undeniably. He wants to touch Jonny everywhere. Down the flush of his neck, the wide span of his shoulders, raking over the hard panes of his chest and mapping out each line of his abs with the tip of his fingers. Jonny is built and hard and so completely masculine and Patrick feels like he's falling apart. He *wants*.

"You're so fucking beautiful," he says suddenly, like it's taken from him without his consent. He reaches for Jonny's hand, hoping it will ground him when he tangles their fingers together. It does.

He's so caught up in—everything. In Jonny. In the want. In the fear.

The want is insistent, undeniable, impossible to ignore. He's not ignoring it, either. He's giving this to Jonny, in the small way he'll allow, and he hopes Jonny is thankful for that. Which, *god*, even thinking that, feels so horribly selfish it makes Patrick want to frown but—the truth remains, however conceited. He doesn't view himself as a prize, not something to be won. If anything, one part of all of this he may never wrap his head around, is trying to begin to understand *why* Jonny wants him. Patrick's not a prize, he shouldn't be, he's going to be Jonny's—mistake? That feels awful, even for Patrick.

Jonny will be a mistake. Jonny *is* a mistake, to Patrick.

Because Jonny's everything Patrick doesn't deserve. Jonny represents everything that Patrick will be throwing away if he does this. Because through all of it, through all of the want that's making his vision hazy, Patrick can't ignore the feeling that twists in him when he realises, he can't have it all.

He can't have Jonny and a rational sense of self.

Because choosing Jonny, choosing to take the steps he's inevitably taking, is choosing a life for himself where he—

This will make Patrick a bad person.

And he wishes he could feel it in a way that was more eloquent, more assured and clear but—but he doesn't know how.

It doesn't matter if he has some fucked up moral compass that he thinks will be tilted right if he waits to have sex with Jonny. He could have sex with Jonny tonight, tomorrow, the next day, next month, next year, but it doesn't—it doesn't *matter*. Because the choices he's making, the ones he's already made, condemn him down the path that isn't *right*.

And Patrick—

Patrick doesn't *care*. Holy *fuck* he doesn't care because in this moment and maybe for forever, Jonny is the most beautiful thing he's ever laid eyes on. And it's selfish, the most selfish thing Patrick has ever done, but the path he travels is one he thinks is glorious; a path where for a moment, just for a night, Jonny can be his.

"You're getting lost up in that head," Jonny says finally, tapping his finger gently to the spot between Patrick's eyebrows. He smiles when he says it, almost like maybe Patrick's the most beautiful thing he's ever seen, too, and that's—Patrick doesn't know what to do about that.

Patrick doesn't say anything, partially because he doesn't want to and also because he'd rather continue to pull Jonny apart and leave them both in fragments on the kitchen floor. He takes Jonny's hand, the one where his finger still presses between his brows, and brings it down his face. Jonny's touch brushes down Patrick's nose, guided by his hold and Patrick doesn't want Jonny to look away when he parts his lips in the promise of a sigh and takes Jonny's index finger into his mouth.

Both hands grip at Jonny's, pulling him closer and feeling no hesitation, absolutely none, when he takes Jonny's finger down to the knuckle.

His mouth is tight, unyielding, and he lets the feel of Jonny's skin play on his tongue. He pushes, just an inch deeper.

Jonny looks stunned into silence, into disbelief and Patrick feels drunk with unruly power when he grins, just a bit, teeth biting so gently.

"Holy fuck—you—" Jonny says quickly. His free hand presses hard against Patrick's rib cage. "Stop. Stop."

Patrick let's Jonny's finger pull from his mouth, unable to help but keep his lips tight when he does.

Jonny's hand is across Patrick's mouth, finger wet and his eyes impossibly wide.

Jonny shakes his head, his breath hard. "Sorry, I just—you're so—I swear, I was going to fucking come."

Patrick grins properly this time, Jonny's hand still splayed over his mouth so the movement feels trapped. He pulls at Jonny's wrist, just enough so he can speak.

"Do you reckon you could?" He says, almost teasing. "Just from that?"

“Let’s try it one day,” Jonny smirks back, resting his weight further on Patrick’s chest.

That’s so—it’s all so—

“You’re so fucking hot.” Patrick almost groans it, like he’s *angry*. He is, angry that is, that Jonny can just *stand* there and make Patrick feel like he’s been set on fucking fire. It’s not fair.

“I’m beautiful, I’m hot,” Jonny says slowly, leaning down closer so he can bump his nose against Patrick’s cheek. It’s teasing, light, like he’s reciting a list and Patrick’s so turned on he feels like he might start choking from it. “Pick a lane, Mr Kane.”

And that—that’s—

Fuck.

“Oh,” Jonny says quickly, mirth dancing over every inch of his beautiful face.

Patrick feels—he feels exposed. Caught. Because Jonny’s smirking down at him like he’s done just that, *caught* Patrick.

“Do you like that?” Jonny whispers, brushing his lips over the corner of Patrick’s mouth. “When I call you that?”

“No,” Patrick grits through his teeth.

Liar.

“Liar,” Jonny affirms.

And—yeah—Patrick’s not even going to touch that. He doesn’t want to and he’s thankful when Jonny doesn’t push, even if he can see the desire to dance behind his eyes. Patrick can’t help but feel it won’t be the end of it, either.

Jonny saves both of them when he ducks his head down to press his lips to the bare skin of Patrick’s stomach, just left of his right hip. He’s got Patrick’s shirt pushed high to his chest, bunching under his arms. Patrick uses the word ‘save’ liberally as he equally feels like Jonny is on a quest to destroy him. That’s okay. If Patrick’s going to be destroyed, taken apart and maybe never be put back together again, he wants Jonny to be the one to do it.

Jonny’s murmuring something against him, something completely unintelligible but something Patrick feels desperate to hear.

He grabs Jonny by his hair, fingers tugging in a gentle pull to bring him off his skin. He doesn’t say anything, doesn’t ask, but he brushes his thumb over the shell of Jonny’s ear and watches him shiver from it.

“Angle sucks,” Jonny says finally, turning slightly so he nudges against Patrick’s wrist. “Not good for—”

He doesn't finish that train of thought, and Patrick would ask, he really would, but Jonny's standing a second later and Patrick's fingers have no choice but to slip gently from his hair.

Patrick bites down on a sound he doesn't even know how to begin to describe, when Jonny grabs him by his hips and uses the ease of the marble to slide Patrick into him. His legs had never left Jonny's waist, keeping them loose but Jonny secure to him; his hold goes impossibly tight, now.

Because Jonny's grasping at him, to the point where it's rough and wonderful and angling Patrick up and into him. And—Christ—the noise, the one Patrick still can't describe, spills out of him when he feels the hard length of Jonny's cock press up against his ass.

"Shh, baby," Jonny whispers, voice so sure and confident. Patrick has to bite into the skin of his wrist.

"Could fuck you like this," Jonny continues, voice low and dark. "Could fuck you right here."

He's rolling his hips, languid and agonising, and even through the layers of their sweats that separate them, Patrick feels the drag of it almost like they were bare. Jonny shoves, just a bit, holding Patrick to him and Patrick's—he's whining from it.

"Problem is," Jonny muses slowly, like there's nowhere else he will possibly ever need to be, "I don't think you could keep quiet."

"Fuck you," Patrick replies, practically grunting it. His arm still hangs by his face, muting the sound.

Jonny hums, fingers digging into Patrick's thighs until it bites. "Problem is," he says again, like he's taking a moment to think it through, "if you did—fuck me, that is—I *know* I couldn't keep quiet."

Patrick—Patrick thinks he might fucking *hate* Jonny, in this moment. It shouldn't be surprising, and it's really not, that Jonny would be a fucking tease. Whether Patrick knew it at the time, whether *Jonny* knew it or not, he's been teasing, taunting Patrick since the start.

Every time Jonny smiled, every time he came into a room, all broad shoulders and soft eyes, he's been begging this from Patrick. He's been pushing, waiting for Patrick to crack, waiting for the inevitable moment where it all became too *much* and Patrick was left with simply no other choice.

Because, he doesn't think he has been, left with any other choice to this moment. To the moment where Jonny has him moaning, on his kitchen counter in the shadows, from nothing more than a roll of his hips and a flash of his smile.

Patrick's going to snap, any second, tell Jonny to quit it and—shit. He's going to do none of that, they both know it, but Patrick thinks if he lies to himself just one more time, just *one* more, then maybe he'll start to believe it.

Arguing, or even the hope to, becomes impossible, anyway, when Jonny drags Patrick toward him by his hips until he's coming off the counter. It takes less than a second, for Patrick's legs to fall from their vice around Jonny and be brought to the floor.

Patrick feels shaky, blood rushing to his skull, swimming there and disconnecting the feeling in his knees. He doesn't want to give Jonny that sort of satisfaction, that all it takes is a bit of making out to make Patrick weak at the knees like a fucking teenage girl. But. Jonny knows it, senses it, not holding it against him when he supports them both by keeping Patrick pinned, lower back pressing against the hard line of the counter.

When Jonny steps back, just an inch, Patrick finds himself reaching for him like he doesn't have any other choice. It's an impulse, almost, to reach out and grab at the hard, bare skin of his hip and attempt to drag him back. That, perhaps scares Patrick more than anything. The impulse. The part he can't control. The part that's clawing for Jonny, whether he likes it or not.

Jonny has other other plans, anyway; Patrick only catches the smirk on his lips for a *second* before he's grabbing him by the waist to turn him around roughly.

He shoves, hard, crowding into Patrick's space until no shred of light could sliver through them; not even a whisper. Patrick feels him—everywhere. The press of his chest against his shoulders, stomach against his back, cock firm and hard and heavy against the base of his spine. It's overwhelming, Jonny's skin blazing hot and inescapable.

Patrick's wishes his own shirt was off, too, so he could feel Jonny, skin to skin, nothing left to hide.

Jonny hooks an arm around his waist, pushing at the hem of his t-shirt to splay his fingers across bare skin and press, firm but gentle. He holds Patrick there, secure, other hand raking through his curls, feeling the way they must be an impossible mess, before he's fisting the hair at the nape of his neck; tight, close, relentless.

"I've thought about it," Jonny whispers, voice so *close*.

He starts to rock his hips forward, knees bent slightly so he can push right up into the curves of Patrick's ass. Patrick's palms fall flat to the marble, his fingers spread so wide it almost hurts, trying to grip at nothing.

"I've thought about you fucking me, so many times," Jonny continues, lips now at the skin of Patrick's neck. "I'm not so good at keeping quiet."

Turns out Patrick isn't either, because he's breathing so loud it's starting to settle into his skin, into the walls, into all the empty spaces. It's too *loud*, all of it, everything, and Patrick's only getting worse.

"I think about it every time I look at you. Every time you look at me, I have to stop myself from—from—*shit*."

Jonny pushes harder, pulls at his hair tighter.

“I get off just to the thought of you. To the thought of what you could do,” he bites against his neck. “I’ve jerked off in your shower before, just upstairs, because all you did was come home from work in a suit that was too *tight* for you. You won’t remember, you’d never remember, but it’s grey, soft looking; you were wearing a tie that matched. And when you wear grey it matches your eyes.”

Patrick’s caught in a moment where that feels oddly—sweet. Strangely endearing. Which perhaps feels partially insane and incomprehensible and so out of sorts with the way Jonny is grinding up against him, breath coming out in short, hard, stolen groans against his skin.

“You came into the living room, when we were watching TV, and just fell back into the couch next to me. You hadn’t even taken your tie off, but you kept playing with it, getting your fingers up under the collar, like you didn’t notice.”

Patrick thinks he may be panting. He’d grant that that’s mortifying, because it undeniably *is*, but all he can focus on—in a void that is otherwise running blind—is the feel, the heat, of Jonny’s cock.

“I noticed—I noticed. I wanted to rip that tie from your neck and have you bind me with it, just wanted you to put me on my knees and keep me down there. I thought about you fucking my throat, taking what you wanted. Because you can take it, Patrick. You can take everything. I’m yours.”

Patrick feels like he’s falling; falling over the edge, endless, *endless*, like he can’t see the bottom. He doesn’t know where this ends, how to begin the ending, because all he feels is—nothing. Everything.

He can hear it, the words being said over and over until they turn desperate. They’re clawing, biting, until it hits him, like lighting to concrete, it’s *him* that’s speaking.

“Jonny, fuck—oh *fuck*. Please.”

Patrick’s begging for something he doesn’t know how to want. He doesn’t know how to want Jonny, how to even begin to try.

But Jonny’s holding him so *tightly*, like he’s afraid Patrick will slip from his grasp if he doesn’t, like Patrick’s water he has to cup in his palm at the fear it’ll spill.

“Baby,” Jonny’s gasping, over and over, “baby. *Baby*.”

Patrick’s spilling, all over the edges.

“Had to finger myself, in your shower—”

Jonny’s pulling so hard at his hair it *hurts*. Patrick barely notices.

“—it’s not the first time I’ve done it, but I’ve never felt so desperate for it. My fingers weren’t enough, but I think yours could be.”

“Jonny—”

“I want you to fuck me. I’ve wanted you to fuck me from the moment I met you.”

Jonny’s pace quickens, roughens, grinding up against Patrick over and over and over and—

“Please—Patrick—say you’ll fuck me.”

Patrick doesn’t think he can say anything. He’s floating. Gone.

Jonny bites down on his pulse. “*Say it.*”

Patrick’s hands ball into fists against marble, head tipping forward until his shoulders arch. He breathes. Once. Deep. Finding air in the space that screams.

“*Yes.*”

Jonny’s mouth closes over the top of his spine when he comes.

Patrick feels it, in the way Jonny’s hips stutter, losing rhythm. He feels the staccato of it, the pause, all of Jonny’s resolve crumbling as his hands grasp and his teeth bruise. Patrick’s going to be left with marks when tomorrow comes, but he can’t find it in him to care.

Jonny’s grunting, moaning, with Patrick’s name pouring from him without warning. It’s quiet, it *has* to be, but Patrick can feel the way his breath dances, right over his skin. Jonny’s clutching at him, fingers in his hair tight and hand around his middle tighter; he’s trying to pull Patrick closer, which doesn’t even feel *possible*.

“Oh *god*,” Jonny breathes finally, his hips still moving in a slow roll. It feels unhurried now, calm, like they’re moving through the eye of a storm. “Oh *god*.”

It takes Patrick a second to realise—a truly *oh shit* second—he’s chasing Jonny’s hips with his own. He’s pushing back, rolling back, grinding his ass into Jonny’s front that causes them both to make sounds that appear completely undignified.

Jonny grunts. Patrick moans.

Patrick’s chasing the release, the end, he can’t make sense of it. He’s so hard it hurts, which is clear and undeniable and he’s not going to hide it, but—but he’s never felt this *need* before; the need to get off and crumble from it.

He takes one hand from the counter, fingers stiff from being clenched so tight, to bring to his front; his head drops back when he has a hand on himself. Jonny’s still mouthing at his skin, tasting him, tongue gentle. He lets his fingers slip from his hair, head turning slightly to let Patrick fall back on his shoulder, accommodating him there like finding the corner piece of a puzzle; satisfying, connecting.

Patrick feels like he could come apart, just from this. Just from his hand working over the strained front of his sweats, Jonny at his back and lips on his shoulder. It feels better, like this. Feels like if this is all it takes, he’ll allow it; if he doesn’t let Jonny touch him—like *that*—he can save a shred of guilt. Not much, but some.

Jonny's voice against his ear startles him, centring him to the space directly between them. "I got you, baby. Right here. This is where we are. Just us."

Patrick doesn't know if that even makes sense, but it hits him; he feels it in his ribs, each one, settling in their cage. He feels it through his fingers, sparking in his belly, running down his legs and curling in his toes. He feels—he feels Jonny *everywhere*.

When Jonny's hand at his front runs down his middle, he jumps; Jonny holds him tighter. The tips of his fingers slip beneath the band of his sweats, so barely there, not even to the knuckle, but Patrick feels his teeth sink into his bottom lip, fighting the urge to whine from it all.

"It's okay," Jonny murmurs against him, pads of his fingers moving gently, lower. "Just us."

Jonny's thumb curls around the band, and the soft tug he gives feels like a warning, like a second he's allowing for Patrick to say *no*. And Patrick could, he knows that. He knows all he would have to do is shove Jonny off him, put the space that part of him desperately *needs* between them and tell him *no*. But—but Patrick—Patrick *can't*. He wants this. Undeniable. All consuming. He wants to be better, to hold his resolve, but it's gone, all of it. Jonny's stripped it from him.

In one measured moment, Jonny manages to pull down his sweats with one hand and cover Patrick's mouth with the other. Patrick should—he shouldn't allow that, should question *why*, should do many things, but he can't deny that if it weren't for Jonny's hand covering him, his mouth would spill out a sound too *loud* for the otherwise silent space they've created for themselves.

Because Jonny's fingers wrap around his cock, with next to no warning, except, Jonny's been warning him for this since the start.

Patrick could say no, but he won't. He's not.

The sounds that wish to spill from his lips are caught in his throat, coming out like a rumbled whine. It still feels too *loud*, but he doesn't know how else to manage it, how to manage anything.

Jonny uses his thumb to run over the head, collecting the pre-come that felt as if it had been gathering every time Jonny's fingers had dug into his skin. It makes it easier, smoother, less harsh, when he drags down Patrick's length. It's so—slow. So unhurried. Which feels so desperately different to the need that's firing in Patrick's blood; he needs to crash, to fall over the edge.

He reaches a hand around to grab at Jonny's ass, needing to hold onto something, needing to feel Jonny *push* against him.

He feels the breathless laugh Jonny spills against him. "Trust me."

Patrick's not sure he does, because he shouldn't, logically. But that feels deeper than—this. This, right here, right now, is a need; pure and simple. And he thinks Jonny knows that.

“I can’t wait until you let me do all the things I want to do,” Jonny whispers. “I think I’ll blow you, first.”

Patrick groans and Jonny’s hand grips tighter against its cover of his mouth.

“You can have it anyway you want, Patrick. But I think I’d like to be on my knees. That’s how I’ve always imagined it. I just want to make you feel good.”

Patrick can feel himself moving with the pace of Jonny’s hand, bucking into his grasp, silently begging for him to go faster. Jonny gets it, gripping tighter, wrist moving quicker.

“I want to fuck you, if you’ll let me.”

Patrick’s eyes squeeze shut.

“I could do it, just like this. Holding you. Bringing you apart. Just want to be inside you. I want to do everything. I’m going to need to have you all to myself for at least a *week*. We can see who likes taking it more.”

Even with Jonny’s hand over his mouth, Patrick feels himself being too *loud*. And that’s—that’s a problem. But. Patrick doesn’t know what else to do.

“Shh baby,” Jonny breathes. His teeth nip at Patrick’s ear. “You can let go, now.”

Patrick has never, in his life, been told he can come. But—but.

But.

He does.

Holy *shit*.

The crash feels relentless, head first; the only thing keeping him tethered is Jonny. Jonny’s hands, Jonny’s chest blanketed against his back, Jonny’s breath warm against his neck, Jonny’s—*Jonny*.

That’s all that’s barrelling around in Patrick’s mind, filling every corner. He’s thankful for the palm over his mouth, because without it, Jonny’s name would be yelled and etched into every corner of the room.

He feels it already is, anyway.

Patrick can feel an eternity stretching before him, one where he feels reckless from the high, unable to come down. He wants to sink to the floor, taking Jonny with him and falling so deep they never resurface. That would be okay, to disappear. He wants to disappear into this moment with Jonny.

He thinks he has.

“So good. So perfect.”

Patrick's vaguely aware of Jonny speaking, murmuring against him. His hand slows, dragging out the last feeble whimpers from Patrick's lips, jerking him once, twice, before releasing his grasp and pulling his sweat up. The material feels harsh against him, he feels too sensitive. He just needs—a minute. Fuck. He needs a thousand minutes, just to make sense of any of this.

He just came all over the side of his kitchen counter—that—

He needs a fucking minute.

Jonny takes his hand away from Patrick's face, too, most likely confident Patrick's not about to start yelling.

Which, is most likely accurate, but Patrick feels like he could just start yelling now to help categorise what's rushing around in his skull. He feels so overwhelmed, to the point where screaming about it seems like a viable option. Maybe the only viable option.

Kissing Jonny seems viable, too.

Patrick pushes back from the counter, just enough from where Jonny had him trapped, and curls his fingers around Jonny's wrist, the one he'd used to keep him silent. He brings his hand to his mouth, where it had just been, and kisses the pad of each finger. He keeps his eyes closed when he does it, lingering on Jonny's thumb. He brings it into his mouth, wrapping his lips, just for a second. It's the same thumb Jonny had sucked on earlier, he wants to chase the same taste Jonny had been wanting to learn.

"Please," he murmurs finally, voice dry. "Don't go."

Patrick isn't sure what he truly means by that. He feels like he's asking Jonny to stay, right here and now, in this kitchen as long as they are allowed, at least until morning, but—but. It feels deeper than that. Patrick feels like he's asking Jonny to wait, to be *okay* with what he's offering; the promise of soon, because it can't be now.

Jonny turns Patrick in his arms, so gently. Patrick feels light on his feet, like his equilibrium has been fucked out of him.

When Jonny's face is in front of his own, Patrick allows himself to open his eyes. He feels so small, looking up at Jonny like this. And that—that somehow, more than anything, is fucking Patrick up from the inside out. He's so conscious of being older, of how young Jonny is, and he truly can't forget that—but he feels this overwhelming sense of security, like being here in Jonny's arms makes him feel small and safe. He doesn't necessarily feel *younger* than Jonny, just because he's smaller, but he feels like maybe he can *forget*, just for a minute.

"You okay?" Jonny asks eventually, one hand around Patrick's waist and the other brushing over his cheek to hold him together.

And that's—that's so *ridiculous*. Patrick can't think of any other word for it. Because—*shit*—if anyone should be asking the other if they're *okay*, it should be Patrick asking *Jonny*.

Patrick's the *bad* person here, no fucking question, and Jonny shouldn't even be *looking* at him the way he is, it's—

Patrick kisses him, just to stop the train of thought that's barrelling ahead with no brakes.

He has to take Jonny by the back of his neck to manage it, to angle him down so he can press up against him with his lips. Jonny takes him, accepts him, gladly. He kisses back like it's a relief to do so, like he was worried Patrick wouldn't allow this. Simply this.

Patrick feels like he's staring head first at an accident. One of those ones by the side of the road, where people slow their cars down to a roll just to get a glimpse. People don't stop, no one *stops*, but everyone wants to stare. He's always thought that's sort of fucked up; to see the flash of red and blue lights and turn one's neck so fast to see—what? Horror? Gore? Evidence of catastrophe.

He feels like he's at the edge of it, not necessarily driving past, not the one hurt, just—watching. Hoping to help. To fix it. To fix everything.

He's not qualified to, doesn't know *how*, but he feels like he's faced with a choice that's going to leave him heavy with consequence.

Stay or go.

Fight or flight.

He wants both; he wants a world where he can have *both*.

Patrick wants a world where he can have Jonny.

That world doesn't feel *possible*.

When the light of morning comes, Patrick will let this consume him. The choices, all the ones he's made; bad. Good. He doesn't know if he deserves to define any of them as *good*. But—he's finding it hard to question that, when he's perhaps felt better than he has in a long time. A very long time.

Being here with Jonny, now, in this moment, makes Patrick feel like it's all he will ever need. Which feels so immeasurably terrifying he has to brush Jonny's pulse beneath his thumb just to remind him they're both exactly where they are.

It feels too much, to think that. To think that the choices he's made in such a *short* period of time have set out the definition of maybe, quite possibly, the rest of his life. Because it doesn't matter what happens with Jonny, it matters what *happened*, and Patrick doesn't know how he can face the light of morning when he knows what he's done. He feels like he'll be trapped. He does feel trapped, by the kitchen walls that groan with the secrets of his shame.

But—

It's not even *about* Jonny, not really (even though perhaps everything comes back to Jonny). It could have been anyone. Maybe. Possibly. (It is probable that that is *impossible*.)

It's what Jonny represents.

Wrong choices and bad decisions and something sort of fucking wonderful in between it all.

There's so much Patrick needs to say, and he will say it, but not now.

Now, he'll kiss Jonny. He'll take everything from Jonny that he doesn't deserve, just for a moment.

Just a moment.

End Notes

surprise ... there will be a part two. how could there not?

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