

Little Mrs. Took Too Long

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Alana's aim was shaky. The autumn wind was chilly, but she wasn't cold. The rooftop beneath her was sturdy, her stance was solid. Her target wasn't moving, Korina was too scared to dodge. She had a clear shot, they were face to face, seven feet apart, but she couldn't make the shot. More accurately, she could make the shot, she just couldn't bring herself to take it.

Alana shouted in frustration, her voice obscured through a jittery mechanized filter from the mask covering her mouth. She fired several shots at the ground as she screamed before chucking her gun to the pavement next to her, breaking it on the ground as her ears rang painfully. Alana breathed heavily, her expression morphing from anger to sadness as Korina stood uncomfortably before her.

"Congratulations," she said somberly, "you won. He's yours."

She placed her hand on the front of her mask, the mechanisms within spurring as the front detached from the rest with a steamy *hiss*.

"Can't even kill you cause I know he'd just spend the rest of his life crying."

"I don't know about that," Korina signed.

Alana raised an eyebrow, looking at her like she just asked if the sky was green. "You really don't know anything about him, do you? Then again, you were the one who disappeared and left everyone else to clean up after you."

Alana sighed and went to the edge on the roof, sitting down with her legs dangling in the air. Her back was hunched, her shoulders sagging in defeat. "You have it easy, you know that?"

Korina was hesitant, but didn't see any of Alana's usual aggression in her posture. She made her way over to her, slowly stepping towards the edge of the rooftop.

"You're just his type, even when he knows you're lying, he believes every word you say. You make the most brilliant person I've ever met act like a toddler who just dropped his ice cream the moment anything bad happens to you." Alana spoke like she was talking about a childhood friend, reminiscing on memories from half her lifetime ago.

"*He does?*" Korina signed.

"Every time. You were practically made for him." Alana looked down at the front piece of her mask in her hands, her face reflecting off its surface. "I'm too loud, too headstrong. I make too many mistakes. But you? He always says that if anyone could be perfect, you're the closest. He's wrong, but it's not like I'm any better."

Alana put her arms on the ground behind her, leaning back to look at the stars overhead.

"I wonder what happens to people like me. The people who take too long, but never go away. I wonder if they eventually die of heartache, martyrs for a cause larger than themselves."

The two stared at the night sky, the stars shimmering in the brilliant black abyss overhead as the wind blew their hair around. Eventually, Alana turned to Korina.

"You aren't going anywhere this time, right? You sure you can't just stab me this time and leave forever?"

Korina shook her head, holding her hair back so it wouldn't be in her face.

"Good." Alana smiled and looked forward. "As much as I don't want you around, I can't stand it when you're gone. You're all he ever talks about when you aren't here. It's like he wants to make us love you as much as he does. Really he just makes me hate you more."

Alana sighed. "I should be sorry for all this, but I don't think I am. You deserve worse than what I can bring myself to do to you."

"*Thank you?*" Korina signed with a confused look.

"Whatever." Alana stood up, walking away from the edge with her hands in her pockets. "I'm not gonna get in the way of you two being happy. I can't force you to love him as much as I do, but he's happier with you. I only ask that you be honest with him from now on. He's a good guy, he doesn't deserve to be led on like this. Not by someone like you."

Alana put the front piece back on her mask and walked through the door to the staircase leading back into the building. Korina stayed up on the roof, looking up at the stars, reflecting on her position, her life, her relationships. Maybe this time she could make things work.
