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Peyton Corinne is a *USA Today* bestselling author of romantic fiction with high emotional vulnerability, angst, and heart. She has been telling stories since before she could read, and has never stopped pursuing a life in writing and authorship. If she's not currently dreaming up new worlds and characters, Peyton is at home making another cup of coffee, listening to new music, or reading every type of romance she can get her hands on.

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Unbound

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**HODDER &
STOUGHTON**

PROLOGUE

ONE YEAR AGO: Frozen Four

Toren

I can't see.

My stomach cramps, eyes shutting as my head hits the brick behind me. Something wet hits my cheek—either the blood still dripping from my eyebrow or from my coach spitting in my face through his screaming. I don't know. I can barely keep my own head up.

“—so goddamn stupid, huh? This is ridiculous. It's an embarrassment. You're lucky they didn't arrest you for that—”

Where's my dad? I can't see anything.

The voice of the player I'd hit is stuck in my head, an echo I can't drown out. I can't get the picture of him to disappear either—Rhys Koteskiy hitting the ground face-first, sprawled on the ice. For a second, I thought he was dead.

My hands rise to my ears, feet slipping on the concrete, before Coach Anders, the head coach at Mt. Hart, grabs for my suit coat lapels and slams me back against the wall. My head snaps against it hard, and something about it feels like penance.

“Are you even listening to me?”

“I am.” I try to spit the words back, but they're barely a wheezed breath. The bus is loaded by now. I was the first one on, trying to escape the line of cameras by sneaking out the back, thinking that

might save both teams some of the issues. But Coach Anders nearly dragged me off by my hair, spitting mad, as he laid into me off the side of the back entrance to the arena.

It's April, perfect weather in the Twin Cities with a crisp chill keeping my skin cool enough to help me fight the near constant urge to vomit.

"I don't think you are, Kane," he growls. His fingers tighten in my jacket again, shaking me, and I slam my hands over his, trying pathetically to break his hold.

"Get the fuck off me." It's more of a plea than anything aggressive.

My body feels almost numb with exhaustion, like even reaching my hands to wipe at the blood dripping into my eye again is too much effort. I can't do it.

Anders looks at me like I've assaulted him with my pathetic begging words. He's been down my damn throat for thirtysomething minutes now. I deserve it, I *know* that I do, but all I can see when I blink is Rhys Koteskiy sprawled on the ice, older memories threatening. And every ounce of my body is strained, fighting exhaustion and pain and the urge to do something. Maybe I should . . .

What? Show up at the hospital and check on the guy you might've killed? Turn yourself in to the police preemptively?

A flash of the moment hits again—a clean hit. Hard and fast, sure, but I didn't hit him in the numbers. It was clean. I'm always careful.

Are you?

"It was a clean hit." I cling to the words.

Was it? I shake my head. My hand ghosts down like I'm going to reach for my knees. I can still feel the ache where his cage rocked against my pads. Can still hear the sound of him hitting the ice.

It's my fault. I hit him, playing distracted and angry, and alone as I always seem to be on this team. On the last one too. A bitter laugh etches from my throat, as I shake my head.

A buzz in my pocket brings it full circle.

The fucking texts. I shouldn't have checked my phone, knowing it was never anything good. What did I think? It was a fucking *Good Luck!* text? From who? I don't have family, no real friends who would be reaching out.

No, it was worse.

A ghost from my past with an offer that, knowing how the next few minutes will go, I can't refuse. And the thought of being right back to square one, with only one pathway out offered by the hand that pushed me here in the first place, makes the sickness in my stomach, the swirling in my head, worse.

Bad enough, part of me thinks I might have a concussion.

I'd hit the ice hard enough to bust my lip open, but it didn't matter. No one cared enough to pull anyone off me. If I'd cracked my skull, fine, I deserved it, right?

"They said it was a clean hit," I repeat, lost. Terror's claws sink steadily into my spine. I can't even see my coach standing in front of me anymore. Everything is lost in the fog clouding over me.

"Didn't look fucking clean to me when they had to stop the game to stretcher the kid *off the ice*. Or when they spent the next fifteen minutes cleaning up his blood and deciding whether to throw you out or not."

"They didn't. You took me out—"

"Oh, I'm very aware of what I did for you, Kane. What I did for my team." He steps closer, shoving his hands into his pockets and shaking his head.

And because it's the only thing I can think of, like some stupid form of protection, I mutter, "We won the game. It isn't—"

"We won that game, not because of you, but in *spite* of you," he cuts me off, leaning in even closer. "You are nothing but a goddamn leech to this team, an infection that I've let fester for too long."

A leech. An infection.

Scholarship kid on the prep team.

The fucking stray.

"You don't belong here."

I've heard it enough times, it eventually stuck. I wish that meant the words from my coach now rolled off my back like it didn't matter. But they don't.

He steps away, staring at me for several seconds, before blowing out a breath. "You're off the team."

There it is.

"Find a ride back to the hotel," Anders continues. "Give the team and me some time to celebrate. They don't need you messing up their moment."

There's a bitterness then, sprouting into thicker vines and sharper thorns, growing up and around me. It doesn't matter that I scored three of the five points that won us that game. It doesn't matter that I'm scared and hurting and desperately need *someone* to fucking help me.

He's gone, and I'm here, scrambling with how to pull myself back together. *Again*.

No choice. Not that there ever has been for me, since the moment I stumbled too close to the Haunted House on Hawthorne Street. My hand shakes as I start to reach into my pocket for my phone, chest so tight I'm sure I'll pass out before I manage to dial his number.

Instead, I sink down on my heels, jacket threads catching on the brick, slipping down to cover my head with my hands and bite back the steady flow of tears.

"Stop fucking crying," I grit out, swiping at my eyes, before pushing myself to stand. "Fucking focus. Stop crying. Stop crying. Stop—"

"Hey."

A soft, quiet female voice carries over my shoulder on the wind outside, making my lungs burn with the quick breath I suck in,

like I can vacuum up all the evidence of my crying. I wipe at my cheeks harshly, keeping my chin ducked away from whoever has entered my pathetic space. "Are you okay? Oh—sweetheart, you're bleeding."

I look up at the woman standing just in my view; she's wearing jeans and a sweater but definitely looks like she could be someone's mom. Her dark brown hair and umber skin are glowing in the streetlight, brown eyes soft as she looks me over again, and I'm too tired and broken and . . . *scared* to hide anything like I would.

"It's nothing— I just—"

She rummages through the giant bag on her shoulder, before procuring a plastic package, unopened. Tissues. "Here. I don't . . . I wish I had some bandages, but I don't. I bet they have some in one of the locker rooms; let me just—"

"No," I cut her off, reaching for her hand briefly, before slumping down and opening the package. Definitely someone's mom. "It's fine. This is good. Thank you."

"How about some water? I have—" She looks back in her Mary Poppins-style purse and pulls out a plastic bottle. "Well, it's Diet Coke, but that's got to be at least some percent water."

There's a light simper of a laugh in her voice as she says it, handing me the bottle.

"It's unopened," she offers as my hand reaches out to meet her. "Promise."

"Th-thank you," I manage to stutter out, before unscrewing the cap and taking a few slow sips.

"Did you play today, sweetheart?"

I swallow another sip as it burns my throat, tempted for a moment to say no. But my bag is right there at my feet, easy enough to recognize. I nod, not trusting my voice.

She smiles wide. "Mt. Hart? Congratulations." The words make me feel sick. "What position?"

"Defenseman." A grimace works its way onto my face. "But I don't play for them anymore. I'm just going to call a rideshare."

She keeps looking at me, and her eyes are all sad and warm. It makes my chest tight.

"Can I give you a ride? I'll take you wherever you need to go."

My brow furrows and I carefully avoid her gaze, shaking my head already.

"I'm not a weirdo." She laughs, but it's nervous, shaky. "My name is Sahara. I just . . ." She says sharply, "I don't think you should be alone right now. I was . . . Well, I heard you and your coach and—"

Shaking my head harder, I shove myself up to stand.

"Yeah. Well, it's my fault anyway. Don't worry about me, I'm fine." I keep my voice low and calm, moving as slow as I can. If she heard, then she knows, and I don't want her to be afraid of me.

I turn, deciding the only way out of this is through the damn arena, praying it will be empty enough to make it out alive. Maybe if I grab my sweatshirt out of my bag and slide it on, hood up, no one will recognize me.

Only when I turn—he's right there.

Coach Nate Harris, standing just up the stairs of the back entrance into the building, looming over me and cast half in shadow, only backlit from the windowed doors behind him. He's in the same suit, a crisp gray with a navy tie that looks rumpled and worse for wear now.

Swallowing, hands shaking, I dart toward him before I can think too much about it. My stomach swirls like I might throw up, but I manage to keep it down as the words spill out, "Is he okay? Rhys—I . . . I didn't mean to hit him that hard, I swear. I didn't even know we were so close to the boards. I'm so fucking sorry." I wince as the curse leaves my mouth, before apologizing for that too.

"Just . . . I know I shouldn't be allowed to ask, or maybe you

can't tell me, but I just—I'm really fucking worried about him. Is he okay?"

My breaths are heaving by the end of my question, an almost dizzying sensation making me sway.

Harris doesn't say anything at first; he only watches me, and then his eyes flicker carefully to the woman still hovering behind me. Maybe the mom of one of his players.

"You're bleeding, kid," he says.

I raise the cloth to wipe at my lip and my eyebrow, both coming away red before I curse a bit and hold the tissue against each cut as we stare at each other.

"He's in the hospital. That's all I know right now." He clears his throat. "He wasn't . . . he didn't regain consciousness before they took him in the ambulance—"

A noise I didn't intend to make leaves my mouth as I step backward, nearly tripping down the stairs, as I head toward the bushes and throw up.

Again.

It's mostly water and embarrassingly loud dry heaving because I haven't eaten anything since lunch hours before the game. Carefully slipping to my knees, I wipe my mouth with my sleeve and then pull my suit coat off, the back of my neck slick and sweat-damp.

"Hey." A low, gentle coo alerts me before a hand presses lightly to my shoulder blade. It's Sahara, looking over my kneeling body with heavy concern. And Coach Harris, just behind her, his hand on her arm, watching *her* with heavy concern.

My stomach somersaults again.

Not just some woman, then. Harris's wife.

"Why don't you let me drive you wherever you're going? Nate needs to ride back with the team," she says, still in that same, calm placating tone. "What's your name?"

"Toren," Harris says for me. "I'll drive you both back to the hotel. Johnson and the other coaches can manage the boys. I need to head to the hospital afterward anyway."

I'm already shaking my head. "No. It's— It's fine. I need to—"

Harris steps forward, catching my swaying body in his grip. I don't have it in me to fight him as he holds me up.

"Breathe, Kane. Everything is going to be okay. Just breathe." My eyes burn and I rub at them again, trying desperately to keep the sob from bursting out of my chest. "Take a breath and just come with me, okay? We'll get it all figured out."

"I didn't mean to—"

"I know."

I swallow and close my eyes tighter. "I hit my head on the ice. I think I have a concussion."

"Did anyone look you over?" I shake my head and Harris curses under his breath, then says something quietly to his wife, before speaking softly to me again. "Fucking Anders."

I want to laugh, but I can barely keep my body upright in his grip. I'm too large for him to hold me, but he is, and I feel like a kid. Sahara pulls a car up to the emergency lane and pops out of the front seat, helping her husband usher me inside the back seat.

Head pressed against the cold window, I start to drift off to the distant sound of Mrs. Harris's voice. "You should've heard what he was saying to the kid. He's got nowhere to go, Nate. Let me take him back to Waterfell, just for the night . . ."

Closing my eyes, I focus on the same little pocket of dreams in the back of my brain, letting the images of a small redheaded girl in a garden play over my mind's eye.

"Lily," I breathe. A sigh, prayer, and plea all at once.

Lily. Lily with paint on her cheeks and a grin too broad to be real—I graze my fingertips over her lips just to be sure.

Lily at seven years old, finding me in a rainy garden scene, leading

me to a playhouse, and putting a bandage over the cut on my cheek. Kissing it briefly, *"Because that's what makes it heal. Like magic."*

Again, at twelve, my first fight in a hockey game, my body on lilac sheets while she puts antiseptic over scrapes and tends to my bruises. Thirteen and cutting my hand on the brick and trellis climbing into her room, my only solace. Fifteen and busting my knuckles on the face of some preppy kid who called her weird. Sixteen, dancing to Jeff Buckley, distracted by the desperate thing in my chest thumping like it might reach out and wrap her into my skin.

Part of me feels like I did, that she lives inside me.

I focus there, smiling softly, and I swear I can feel her hands on my skin again, gentle and careful with me in a way no one else ever was.

But it's not real. I'm concussed and delusional.

And I'll never have her again.

CHAPTER 1

*SENIOR YEAR, January**Toren*

"Toren Kane . . ." Coach Harris sighs, flipping a page over again on my record.

We've been sitting in restrained silence for the last several minutes, but neither of us cracked. So he's taken up a new tactic.

"Transferred between three schools in the last two years, up for NHL draft sophomore year, passed over after being benched by your team for showing up to a game drunk—underaged. Multiple fights with teammates, one resulting in another player withdrawing from the team."

I smile, reaching up to wipe a small amount of blood dripping from my split lip.

"Every time I'm in here you read me the list—big fan of my work?"

My words have their intended effect, igniting the slight fury beneath the calm outer shell of our always even-keeled coach. Most of the other coaches I've played for would've resorted to physical violence with me by now.

Somehow, Coach Harris hasn't. Yet.

"Your ego knows no bounds, Kane." He sighs again, but it doesn't have the intended effect. Disappointment from authority figures—

hell, anyone really, means nothing to me. "You could've been playing in the NHL at eighteen, Kane. But you—"

"Don't," I snap. He backs off, hands raised.

"Fine," he says. "You broke McKill's nose, Toren. I can't just sit back and do *nothing*."

I knew I'd hit Mason McKill hard; still, I didn't think it would break anything. Besides, I'd only hit him because he'd been shit talking me on the ice all goddamn morning and I couldn't take it anymore.

"*Shouldn't you be in a prison cell?*" I'd let that one go, staying focused on prepping, stretching out my muscles, pretending my headphone volume was loud enough not to hear what the junior defenseman was spouting.

"*C'mon, Kane,*" he'd tried again on our way down the hall toward the lockers. "*Share your side with us. Maybe we won't hate you so fucking much, huh?*"

There was a laugh, one that made my shoulders tighten, like a hand grabbing me by the back of the neck.

It was when he finally gave up, annoyed I'm sure with my lack of a response and practiced steely composure, that he turned back to the two sophomores he was walking with, not dropping his voice a hair as he spat, "*It's not just Rhys he hit. I heard the girl hasn't shown her face in years. Must've scarred her up real bad—*"

My fists were flying before the thought fully crossed my mind, and once it did, it only made me want to see his blood spill more. Maybe this was worse. Maybe this was only proof that I am exactly what they say that I am.

Still, even the memory of the way he cowered back from me as Bennett Reiner and Connor Mercer, the goalie and backup goalie, respectively, grabbed me off him is enough to pull a smile to my lips.

"How long am I out for?" I ask, itching to get the hell out of here,

reaching forward for a few Kleenexes to catch the blood still flowing freely from my nose. "A game? Two?"

The papers in his hand crunch and he looks up.

I know Coach Harris has a soft spot for me, but I'm not sure why. He's tried harder than all the others before him, going as far as allowing me to live in his basement because I transferred too late to apply for housing.

Maybe it's part of the reason I push him, to see how far that soft streak stretches.

"If I could, I'd bench you for the season."

The smile withers from my face, and I slump back heavily in my seat. I feel like a kid in the principal's office, scolded and embarrassed.

"But"—Coach rubs at his eyes—"I've got too many changes coming in, and with the new staffing I don't want anyone questioning me."

Code for: *I don't want anyone asking me about you, about your behavior, and why I tolerate it.*

I know why he tolerates it. I'm the best defenseman he's had in the last ten years. He's told me before, when he tried encouragement as his main tactic to get through to me. That one didn't work much either.

My reputation wasn't always this. Once upon a time, I was the best defenseman. The top prospect out of high school, most people thought I'd go number one pick in the draft, and if not, a top five slot was nearly guaranteed. And then it all disappeared, the rug swept out from under me by the same man who'd laid it there for me in the first place.

I'm still just as talented on the ice, enough that coaches have taken chances on me they might not have with other players. But there's a piece I'm almost sure I'm missing when it comes to Harris, an underlying reason he pulled me here, knowing what I'd done to his captain, to his entire team, during the last Frozen Four.

I didn't want to come here, but I didn't have a choice. And I think Harris knew that.

He'd spent the summer working with me privately, while I waited for the other shoe to drop. It just never did. One full semester in, and I think he's nearly sure he made a mistake bringing me on. He needed a defenseman, and I was desperate. But I know at any moment, he could find someone else, get rid of me easily. It kept me constantly on edge, too afraid to relax, to get comfortable.

I'd made that mistake one too many times.

There's a knock at the door, Coach calling lightly for whoever it is to enter.

Golden-boy Rhys Koteskiy, our "can-do-no-wrong" center and captain, who plays just as well off the ice as on, enters the room. Hockey protégé, son of an NHL Hall of Famer. He's had a silver stick in his hand since he could stand on ice.

It's safe to say we don't get along—and never will. Not just because of our chafing personalities, but more because of my infamous hit on him last year during the Frozen Four.

Like it always does, my stomach rolls at the sight of him—a mix of fury and something else I don't dare try to name. For a moment, I can almost hear the sound of him hitting the ice. Of his team screaming—

I close my eyes tight and shake my head. *Stop. Focus.*

"Sorry to interrupt." He grins, dark brown waves damp and tucked back behind his ears, face clean-shaven like he just finished grooming up. I want to ask him if he did his nails, too, but I bite my tongue nearly until it bleeds.

"What do you need, son?"

Son. My fists clench against the wood until my unhealed knuckles break open again.

I've tried desperately to shut it down. To kill the piece of myself that attempts to flourish when Harris calls me that word. But to hear

it applied to Rhys burns out all the warmth that lingers when it's just Harris and myself.

"New staff is here for your meeting. I let them know you were busy . . ." He lets his eyes glide over me, but I keep my attention on my hands and tearing the bloody tissue to bits. Of course he did. If allowed, he'd throw a parade for every one of my screwups.

Fuck him.

"Where's your pretty little figure skater?" I finally turn in the chair to look at him. "Need any rescuing?"

I know Rhys won't blow up; his calm demeanor is ingrained in his very being. But Sadie, his girlfriend, is *very* off-limits. His hand holding the door displays white knuckles enough to know I've gotten under his skin. Now, I want to see if I can make him crack.

"Enough," Coach mutters, standing up and huffing. "Koteskiy, get everyone in the locker room, clothed please. Kane, you too; we'll finish this another time."

Rhys is gone as soon as he gets the order, but I stay for a moment, hefting up out of the chair slowly.

"Toren," Coach Harris calls, before dropping his voice to a whisper. "Please, just keep the fighting on the ice. You're too valuable, and you'd make a hell of an enforcer in the league. But, if I'm going to try to scout you, I need you to keep it together."

I hate the way I can't swallow, his expectations like a weight on my already heavy shoulders. I hate even more that I want to please him. That part of me that secretly imagines what it might be like to have his approval. I try to shake it off. *I don't care. I don't care.*

"Got it," I say. "Only beat up the guys who aren't wearing our colors." I then quickly leave the room before something truly snarky and rude slips out.

. . .

"All right, kids," Harris claps, grabbing the attention of the locker room. Everyone is dressed in their practice gear, a few with their skates on, while I barely had time to change into my compression pants and long sleeve, pulling up my socks as he entered. "Going to get through this quick so you all can get to your next drills."

Relaxing back with arms crossed, I eye Holden Dougherty, my right defense partner, as he slithers in late, gliding behind the coach and into the slot next to me.

"Sorry, Coach," Holden says. "Slept through my alarm, car wouldn't start, and then—*huge* accident on the freeway."

"You live on campus, Dougherty," Coach huffs.

Harris told us once that we looked quite ridiculous next to each other, like two sides of a coin. Holden, with his dirty blond hair, peachy pale skin, and rounded baby face. And me, with black hair, olive skin, and a soul most people believe I sold to Satan.

"As you all know we have a few introductions for today. We have two new interns for athletic training—our coaching interns will be coming in over the next few weeks, so if you see any new faces around, behave."

As he takes a step back to allow the heads of each department to introduce each new intern, I zone out. Head back against the stall, eyes nearly closed from the headache I'm nursing.

"One more thing," Coach Harris calls, resuming his center positioning. "We have a new assistant coach, to focus on our defensive pairs."

Holden perks up beside me, like a homeless puppy acting well trained in front of a new possible family. I roll my eyes but can't stop myself from looking up. Johnson hated me easily, and part of me wants to think Harris got rid of him because he saw it. The fantasy in my head—that he was protecting me. The reality is probably that it had *nothing* to do with me.

"Everyone, I'd like you to meet Coach LaBlanc," he announces and my heart drops.

Sitting up quickly, my eyes narrow. *No fucking way.* I watch as he enters.

Polished brown loafers, sleek black slacks, and a crisp blue button-up, complete with a brand-new Waterfell Wolves navy tie that is perfectly centered, straight on. His belt cost more than an entire year of tuition at this damned private school, but it's pocket change to him. His thick brown hair is graying on the sides, but still perfectly trimmed and styled, the lines around his blue eyes pulling, like he's spent his life smiling and laughing—a fact I *know* to be false.

He's barely in the room, but my entire body feels like it's on fire.

I stand before he can speak, eyes connecting with his across the room. His are already trained on me, like I knew they would be, because there's no way he didn't know I was here before he took this job. He wants to ruin my life, my career, and anything else he can—

"Kane," Coach Harris admonishes, his voice making my thought spiral and stall out, but only for a moment. "Sit down."

"I—" My voice is shaking. I can't control my own goddamn words. "I quit."

I don't know if I mean it, but I have to get out of here before I explode with something worse, the burning in my skin heightening to a new, uncontrollable level. If I don't leave, I'll start fighting every person too close to me just to get it out.

Grabbing for my bag on the floor, I toss in my skates and pads.

"Jesus," someone mutters. "Another Kane blowup—thought we hit our cap on those."

"Relax," Holden smirks, but I can see cautious worry etched into his eyes. "Kane threatens to quit every few weeks, it's just his time of the month."

I can't even laugh at the joke because just breathing feels like taking in more smoke in a burning building.

"Settle down, son," Coach LaBlanc chuckles, peppered-brown hair slicked back across his head, the portrait of calm dignity.

And I'm fucking losing it.

"Don't fucking speak to me," I growl out, hands weaving into my hair. Turning to Harris as I step closer, I drop my voice into a low whisper. "I won't skate under him. I'll fucking quit before I ever listen to a goddamn word he says."

I feel like the boy who cried wolf, because now when I really need them to understand, no one believes me.

Coach Harris is bright red with his own fury. And I know, this is embarrassing to him; I should probably be embarrassed myself but all I can feel is the suffocating pressure of years of anger.

"Sit the fuck down, Toren," Coach Harris whispers into the sudden silence of the locker room. I open my mouth to protest, but he cuts me off. "We will discuss this issue in my office as soon as this meeting is over."

"You just love being in there, huh, Kane?" a freshman mouths off, but Holden smacks him hard on the back of the head.

"Coach LaBlanc," Harris says, and the sound of that name from his mouth makes something in my chest burn. "I apologize. Please continue."

"No need." He sighs, eyes still locked on mine for a beat before he trails around the locker room as he speaks. I can't hear what he's saying over the pounding of my own heart, the roaring of blood rushing in my ears.

This can't be real. This can't—

"You good?" Holden whispers, eyes locked on our new coach. I shake my head, not bothering to lie.

"No. I have to—" I swallow down the rasp of emotion in my voice. I won't even give him that.

Holden tries to grab my arm, but I jerk away, skirting the room and slipping out the door without any of my belongings. Desperate to escape, *again*.

CHAPTER 2

Lily

Trying to smuggle a box from the old house into my new town house was a more difficult feat than I planned for. But it worked—the large, pristine, royal blue box that once held a pair of Stuart Weitzman leather boots is now sitting just beside my knees where I was about to push it underneath my bed.

Two strangely distinctive types of anxiety race through me as I look back and forth from the box to the door.

Just check, really fast.

I pull open the box carefully, as if it contains crystal and glass—not piles of canvas, paper, and hidden sketchbooks. Paintings that are rolled, never to be stretched over wood. My fingers sweep across swirling colors and lumpy masses of oil paint, across the thin pencil lines of my sketches, across the textured feel of the paper.

Checking over them all once, to make sure none are damaged or crushed from the bumpy ride over, I sigh in relief.

In my chest, it turns into something more like grief, my fingers carefully touching each painting and sketch with a near desperate longing to—

A knock sounds at the corner of my door; it's my dad with his arms crossed, taking up much of the doorway.

I jump, hands fumbling to shove the open box and the lid unceremoniously under my bed.