

- Eedee presents -

DAYDREAMS &
NIGHTMARES

PROLOGUE

It's not going to last.

CHAPTER ONE

TIME TO THINK

Daydreams. We all have them. Maybe that's what defines us as being normal. And those who lack drive or ambition are the outcasts. You've seen them before. Those who, when you first look at them, get a sense of non-familiarity. Your reptile brain subconsciously makes you a little skittish towards these types. Survival. That's what it all boils down to. That and reproduction. But as humans, we've evolved. We've become accustomed to our mental accessories. When we sleep, we can dream. We can also dream while we're awake. Daydreams. We all have them. Maybe that's what defines us as being normal.

But me? I've never been "normal". Sure, I've had daydreams. I still do. Every day. Especially when I'm with her. She can bring a smile to my face no matter what kind of mood I'm in. God forbid, my dog could have just died, and she'd be there to cheer me up by saying something stupid to make me laugh. We've been together for the last year and a half. Things are going great. I honestly have never been happier. I've been working out too. But now that I'm working trying to save up money, I've realized how abnormal I actually was. In high school, I used to sit in the library during lunches and just read books. I never ate. I hated when people watched me eat. Despite the fact that they are shoveling food into their gullets at supersonic speed as well, I just reasoned (albeit illogically) that everyone would judge me. I wasn't very skinny. Or fit. During high school... I was more on the chubby side. Maybe that's why I thought they would judge me. But we all have to eat, don't we? Just like we all have to breath, right?

A lot of people have the same dreams as I do. To travel the world, to be passionate about something... She loves to draw. She loves to draw my face as well. It's so weird sometimes, we'd be watching a movie on the couch and she'd get up to grab her notepad and just start scribbling down lines on the paper. Next time I look, it's the outline of my face and she's drawing in the features while I watch her perplexed. Then she notices I'm paying attention, her face gets a little red, and then the cutest shit-eating grin starts to form across her face. She thinks it's hilarious. Usually I just shake my head in joking-disgust, but inside I think it's pretty funny too.

She did exactly that right before bed on a Friday night. The red face, the grin, hell, she even incorporated a little jig in between the laughing. It was so ridiculously cute. I asked her if she wanted to get up early and go see the sunrise together. She nodded towards me. Her phone buzzed. I kissed her lips and told her I'd see her in the morning. Lights out.

You should've never given me time to think. It's what I do when I'm alone. Which turns out to be the majority of the time. I don't think I'll ever get over you; otherwise I'll never be the same. Think about it, you're a part of who I am now. A piece of me is you - and nobody wants a broken person. Unless they think they can change them. Which means the hole they're trying to replace, That empty spot filled with "their" piece, is forced... Or even if it fits, it's a replica. I'll know it's not the same. And that feels bad. But I keep such bad feelings inside of me, for when other moments come, I'll have something to compare it too, to know if it's a good feeling. I ask myself if I'm worth that 9.50/hr, and it scares me I can't decide on an answer. That's why if I get cancer, just roll with it. No treatment, that costs money, go figure. This isn't what I want, six figures Just so I can pretend I was saved. No way... I'm drowning... But you're not supposed to drink holy water, but would you to save me? Cheers.

CHAPTER TWO

LET'S WATCH THE SUNRISE

I dreamt of her smile. The way she kisses me. It makes me feel so alive. I love dreams like this, but at the same time, I don't... Because even though she's right next to me in real life, I feel so distant from her. Like I've left her. What if I don't wake up? What if I never see her again? Sometimes I don't want to go to sleep... I don't want to leave her.

I hear the familiar klaxon of my alarm. Naturally I groan, but then I smack it silent. Wonderful! It's a brisk 5:30 morning outside, the sky is still dark, but it won't be for long. After doing my usual yawn-stretch, I roll over and lightly tap her on her shoulder. How can she sleep through such a terrifying noise? She remains a mystery to me, even to this day... Groggily, she opens one eye and asks me why the hell am I waking her up at this hour. I lovingly remind her she agreed to get up and watch a beautiful sunrise with me this morning. She stares at the ceiling as if for a way to escape this predicament she found herself in. Cute as always... She sighs and does a little dance with her head almost as if to say "*I know, I just don't wanna get up now.*" I let her know that, by the way, she hogs the bed like a madman. She gives me a stern look, and immediately I ask her if she'll get up if I cook her breakfast. And what do you know... the answer is yes. Her phone buzzed.

We both sit at the table eating our breakfast. I'm having a bowl of cereal and she's devouring the eggs and toast I made her. She's fiddling on her phone, but I make nothing of it. I finish my breakfast fairly fast and I wait for her to finish her toast.

"Ready to go?" I say, nodding my head towards the door. She nods in agreement and we proceed to put our jackets on. Hand in hand we walk out the door.

"Holy crap it's cold out here," she chattered through her teeth, "Hold on let me go get a bigger coat."

We didn't get very far down the road, so we turn back around. I'm not too cold, so I stay outside looking at the morning stars. They're faint. You know how in the early morning, the sky starts to light up slightly and the stars aren't so vivid because the sun is about to come up. I know it's going to be a good day, I can feel it. There's something in the air or the way the sun lights up the sky and we can't even see it yet, but I have a wonderful feeling that today is going to be amazing.

She comes back out through the door, grabs my hand, and says "Let's get this over with."

"That's not the attitude to have," I laugh. She smiles and shakes her head.

As we walk down the road looking for a good place to watch the sunrise, I find a majestic looking tree. It just seemed so stock and perfect. I turn to her and I comment, "How about this tree? Looks good enough." It actually looks as if it's straight out of an internet search for "*tree*". Simple and perfect... She nods and we saunter over underneath it and lie on the cold grass. I forgot my phone in my room, so I ask her what time it is. "6:17" she replies. Good, should be any minute now. I lean over and give her a kiss on the cheek.

We're snuggled under the tree, facing where the sky is the brightest. The sun should be up here any minute now. This is such a perfect moment. Two people in love just waiting for a beautiful sunrise.

And that's when I saw it. The sun started to peak out from behind the peak of the mountain. It's almost as if it went beyond shining its light down on us, I felt completely alive. Like I could see everything clearly, inside and out. I feel like our love is going to make it.

But then I pry my gaze from the sunrise and look over to you. You're on your phone texting someone, I can see the reflection in your eyes.

"You missed it. It just came out," I said to her politely.

"You shoulda said something!" she replied hastily. I let out a laugh, but inside I'm slightly angry. But I won't let it show. I'm probably just overreacting anyway. I lean over and give her a kiss.

"I love you."

CHAPTER THREE

STARE AT US

The sun is now completely shining and we're starting to warm up a bit. We decide to go back to the house. As we're walking, I turn to her and ask "Do you want to come into town with me today? I have to run a few errands, I'll probably be back before noon or so."

"Nah, you woke me up pretty early, you. I'd rather just take a nap," she smiled. I did wake her up pretty early. "Sure, why not. Get some rest and I'll be home around noon."

We arrive at the house and I give her a kiss as she lays down on the couch. I cover her up with a blanket and she closes her eyes. I grab my car keys and tip-toe out of the house. I climb inside and start the engine. I pull out of the driveway carefully and I hit the open road. I roll the window down, even though it's cold, it actually is quite relaxing. I love driving alone, alone with my thoughts, it gives me time to think.

I pull up to the grocery store and park next to this old beat up red truck. Poor thing. I lock the door and start heading into the store. Milk, eggs, bread, apples, and stuff for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Easy enough.

It's funny how everyone is on their phones all the time.

I quickly get the things I need and pay for them. I walk out to my car, start it, and I'm off to the next errand. It's only 8 o'clock. Faster than I expected.

I get to the post office and open my P.O. box to find the usual. Letters and a package slip. There's a huge line, though. I debate whether or not to jump in it, but I figure why the hell not? I have all day. One by one, the line moves forward. Finally it's my turn, so I hand him the package slip and he slips into the back to retrieve it. He scans it and hands it to me.

"Have a good day, sir." "You too."

It's addressed to her. I wonder what it could be. But it's not my business. I hop in my car and start heading home. The clock says it's 9 o'clock. I finished my errands a lot faster than I expected. I won't call her because she's probably still asleep on the couch. I hit the open road.

The drive home takes about 15 minutes. That's about normal. The sun blinds me for a second as I turn into the driveway. I grab the groceries, lock the car and head into the house.

I turn the corner and I see her on the couch. She's intertwined with another man. Shocked, I drop the groceries. They stop and look at me. Her eyes are wide and fearful, whereas I'm standing here with my jaw dropped, unable to move or say a word. Thoughts are swirling in my head like a violent tornado. I feel shell-shocked. Nobody says a word. I turn and run into our room and lock the door behind me.

I sit on the bed, nauseous. I feel like complete shit. What the hell just happened? I have my head in my hands and I'm shaking slightly. Cars drive by near the house and I can hear the Doppler Effect, and

it echoes inside my head each time. I'm staring at a spot on the wall. I don't know what to do at all. What can I do in this situation? Can we fix this? You know that feeling where you sit still for so long, you can't really feel things anymore? So I move and touch my face just to make sure I'm still here. Unfortunately, I am. I wanted you to be mine forever. I lean over and pick up a picture of us off the bedside table. I guess a second will have to suffice.

And now that time stands still, I have a moment to reflect on things. I sit and stare at the pictures of us, but now... I can see myself dissolving away inside the frames. Reflections... coupled with imagination, you only see what you want to see. I don't even know where you are right now, and I ask myself if I even care. Your smile is answer enough. I can't look at you anymore. I close my eyes...

CHAPTER FOUR

A NEW ECLIPTIC

I'm still staring intently at the pictures of us. I don't know how long I've been in the room. Time seems to have froze. Your smiling face is hauntingly beautiful. And mine, so unaware and untroubled. Just then a beam of sunlight shines into the room through an open window curtain and shines directly onto the picture. It lights up your already lit-up face. I hold back tears and laugh a little. What fitting symbolism.. the same sun you didn't watch this morning is now shining it's rays down onto pictures of us.

I've had enough. I get my things and walk out of the room. You and him are nowhere to be seen. I open the front door and start walking towards the dark clouds ahead.

It's funny that the same sun we watched this morning, is now shining its rays down onto pictures of us. Pictures of the past. We're no longer us. It's just me, and this darker yesterday...

CHAPTER FIVE

ESCAPE

I just

CHAPTER SIX

NO HOME

get lost

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MOON'S IMAGINARY FRIEND

in the moment...

CHAPTER EIGHT

TELL TALE

I came to my senses underneath a pavilion right off the sidewalk at night. Rain was pouring down. The ambience of it, the pitter patter of each drop hitting the cement beneath my feet, gave me confidence in some obscure way. I felt relieved that I was away from it all. However, I was perplexed as to why the hell I'm in the middle of nowhere in the pouring rain at what seems to be the early hours of the morning.

Everything about this seems so eerie, almost as if I was trapped in a dream.

Everything about this seems so macabre, almost as if I was trapped in a Poe story.

Everything about this seems so magical, almost as if I was trapped in a daydream.

Everything about this seems freeing...

Then it all comes rushing back to me. The guy on the couch, the pictures, the rays of sunlight... These frantic perils swoop by in a condescending wave. The mere thought of observing these would turn the most fearless heart to stone. The phone call to him, the hours of walking in the rain. Am I losing my mind? Crap.

Then I recall a certain voice mail left by him. I vaguely remember it. I think I can recall it here... Something about a door always being open? Yeah, I was pretty sure that was it. I don't even know where the hell I am at the moment. Nothing around here feels familiar. I was stupid enough to leave my vehicle at home and go out on foot. There was my first mistake.

I looked to my left and there was one of those kiosk signs. I scanned it. I'm right near a train station. *But do I have any money?*, I thought. So I pull out my wallet and count what cash I have. Turns out I have \$75 in cash and a debit card. Pretty sure I have a fair amount on the debit card... *Screw it.* I start walking towards the train station.

As I'm walking, the rain starts to lighten up a bit. Barely. Not that it matters much, I'm already drenched. Stomping and sloshing my way forwards towards this open door, I can't help but just imagine what I look like right now to anyone who could see me, in this heavy maelstrom. *I've been walking for quite a long time now it seems, should be getting close,* I thought.

I lifted my head up and I was right. I could see the train station just ahead.

CHAPTER NINE

ONE WAY

My flight is almost over. I can see the soaked wood sign welcoming me to the train station. Alongside the building is a row of cars. I see an old beat up red truck. As I entered the metal doors into this new life, I looked up and saw the edge of the rain clouds. It was almost over.

I bring my head back down level and let my eyes adjust a bit. The train station, this beautiful cathedral, opened up before me. All its grandeur and homely qualities contrast in a vivid complexion. The whites grinned wildly at me while the soft hues slyly grinned me forwards. A slight hum of 50's music was chanting in the background; barely a whisper though. I was drawn towards it all in its vastness.

I look for a ticket booth so I can purchase one. Looks like they're over by the vending machines. I start to wander on over and tap on the booth's glass windows.

"How may I help you, sir?" says an old man through the window.

"Yeah, thanks. I'd like to purchase a one way ticket, please," I reply, giving him a slight smile. It felt as though he could see all the pain I was in, in the brief moment when our eyes made contact. He saw through the portrait.

"Where are you going?" he whispered to me in this sudden demonic tone. I was startled.

"Excuse me?"

"Where are you going, sir?" he calmly replied in his voice before. It was almost as if nothing happened. What's going on?

"Away from here," I tossed back, mind slightly off-balance.

"That's not an answer, son. Where would you like to go?"

"I don't know, anywhere that's not here. Away from here."

"You want me to pick a random destination for you?" he peered back, sarcastically.

"Yes. I-I mean no. Shit. Yeah, no. Take me to Fairbanks. Yes. One ticket for Fairbanks, please." I stuttered. The open door.

"Alright, son. Here you are. That'll be one hundred and seventy-nine dollars." he replied.

"Can you run debit?"

CHAPTER TEN

FALL

Grasping my ticket out of here, I walk over to the vending machine. This was going to be a hard choice. What do I want? I stuck in a dollar and pushing in *C4*, and the bag of nuts dropped. I'm going to need some protein. I popped a nut in my mouth. And definitely some water after this.

I stroll over to the soda machine and fetch myself a water and gulp half of it down at once. I glance at my ticket and notice my gate is also *C4*. Interesting coincidence. I start to walk over to the gate. It wasn't too far at all. Suddenly there, I find myself a seat across from a woman. Behind her is an open window, and a slightly orange-ish sky. The sunrise. I got here just in time.

The sun begins to peak out from the peak of the mountain. I'm blinded by its new light. I can see rays of sun going every which way, and I start to follow one back into the station. It glides gently along and stops on top of the woman across from me. I get a closer look at her. Beautiful blonde hair. A cute face. But then I stop at her eyes. Crap. She's looking at me check her out. What a freaking dumbass. No wonder I have horrible luck with woman. I'm just some creepy guy with a bag of nuts staring at a random woman. But I decide to go over there.

I get up and walk over to her. She's obviously a bit perplexed by this as shown by the look on her face. I sit down and say, "I noticed you noticing me," and smile just a bit.

"Yeah, I thought you might've. I was just looking at your nuts."

"You were wh-"

"I didn't mean it like that!" she injected, hitting the top of my knee with the bottom of her closed fist. But with a smile.

"I know, I know. They're pretty good. Do you want some?" I ask as I pour her a handful.

"So, where are you going at 6:20 in the morning?" she asks me.

"Fairbanks. I'm getting away from here," I reply shortly.

"Me too. I saved up for this ticket since I was a little girl."

"Really? A hundred and eighty dollars took you that long? My sister could teach you a lesson in fundraising, I tell ya," I retort jokingly.

"Well, I didn't really have the most profitable upbringing. Dad left when I was three." I gulp, this just got heavy... "Then it was just Mom and I, she had to work two jobs and all that crap just so we could get by. I would save up any coins I found in the parking lot or between the seats. I told myself I'd save up for a ticket out of here too. To Fairbanks."

"I see. That's quite the promise to yourself. Why Fairbanks?" I reply.

"That's where Dad is. I want to talk to him."

"Interesting. Are you sure you're ready for this? I mean, I don't know you, but this has got to take a lot of guts." I tenderly suggest.

"You're right. But I think I'm ready. How 'bout you? What troubles are you running from?" she offers.

"My girlfriend of almost two years just cheated on me. I walked in on them this afternoon. I locked myself in my room for a bit and then I just left. I started walking along the street. It started raining, time flew by, and next thing I know I'm under this pavilion, with everything just rushing back. A friend called me back and it went to voice mail. He said his door is always open. So I'm going. It's away from the chaos. The darkness. The confusion. It's all back there. And I'm here, going away from it. I don't need that in my life."

She nods slowly, looking at the floor. "I know what you mean." I laugh and let my shoulders fall.

"You wouldn't happen to own a really old and beat up red truck, would you?" I ask her.

She quickly looks at me and lifts an eyebrow. "How the hell did you know that?" "I saw it in the parking lot. Lucky guess, I suppose." I reply grinning.

"I didn't get your name." So I tell her my name and she tells me hers.

"Nice to meet you," she says. "Nice to meet you too," I reply, giving her a smile. Just then we can hear the train whistle. It pulls up not a minute later and we're allowed to board.

"Mind if I sit with you?" she asks nervously.

I pause. After all I've been through today, after all the walking and thinking... I ask myself if I wanted to take the fall on this one. I look at this girl and I can't help but say, "Yes."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NIGHTMARES

We saunter over to a quiet row in the back. We both sit down next to each other. She gives me a smile and I grin back, no doubt looking like an idiot. The train takes off moments later. It starts to build speed and you fall into that lovely doze, with the train bumps just making you float ever farther. The scenery starts to rush by outside in a vibrant array of colors and textures. There are slight streaks of rain on the windows still. It must still be sprinkling out there. But the sun shines through.

"So how long are you staying in Fairbanks for?" I ask, turning to look at her.

"I don't know. However long it takes me to figure this out," she replies with a frown.

"Well, I wish you nothing but the best," I smile back.

She nods and puts her hand on top of mine. "Thank you. I really appreciate that." Then she gently starts stroking my hand with hers.

"I was in love just a day ago..." I start.

"I know. But sometimes light pops up when you least expect it. When it's the darkest. I saw you sitting there and I couldn't help but feel drawn to you. All my pain, all my drama, all my past ghosts, and all my fears are scary to face. But I saw yours and I just felt like, I want to face them with you."

"You know you sound crazy, right?" I said fully aware that what she's saying applies to me too.

"I know. But then you came over and your baggage drowned me. I could see it behind those eyes, you. I could see it. The misery. The loneliness."

"Probably wasn't hard to see. I've had a rough day."

"I know. So I'm sorry. I just had to get that out. You were in love just a day ago. What about now?" she asks.

"I'd say it's so," I say back with a smile. I grab her hand. She puts her head on my shoulder as I look at outside passing by.

I close my eyes. I fall asleep almost instantly. I start seeing visions of a couch, of the pavilion, of the rain pouring down on some disfigured shadow straddling down the wet street. Into nothingness. Into the abyss. Empty picture frames dance around my head, bouncing off the inside of my forehead.

I wake up short of breath. I quickly turn to make sure she's still there. She is, quietly snoozing on my shoulder. Good. I don't want to lose her.

I rest my head against the chill window pane and close my eyes. The past day starts replaying in my head. It's so haunting and powerful that I open my eyes. Nightmares are the coldest of sins. Given life behind joy's back, living in the darkness until it clings on. It's funny how drastically things can change in such a short period of time. Well, maybe things haven't changed all that much. Obviously they have, but

what I'm feeling right now... It's weird for me. It feels good. It feels like this is how things were supposed to play out. I put my hands in pockets and I feel something round. I sigh.

"Thought so."

"Thought what...?" she says groggily. I woke her up.

"Sorry," I said, "I found the ring I was going to give her."

"Don't lose that. You might need it soon," she laughed.

I re-pocketed the ring and let out a big sigh. "I'm going back to sleep," she says, and rests her head back on my shoulder. "Or should I be awake for all this?" she adds pointing to me and the ring, back and forth.

I smile and look in her eyes. I can see that she believes she'll find her answers up in Fairbanks. I think I already found mine. I kiss her forehead.

"Sweet dreams."

EPILOGUE

The scenery rushes by. Mountains in the background steadily inching their way across the window. A quiet fog of chatter drifts through the train car. I feel at peace. Escaping the darker yesterday through this open door.

Always dreaming...

~ Dedicated to Tucker Smith ~