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WARNING: May contain coarse language, violence, gore or sexual content. Reader discretion is advised.

Chapter 3 "Remember..."

"This is bad," he thought. "To dash off like that - with how the mood was..."

He heard a door open.

"Hey, Soco," Shari said cheerfully.

"Auntie Shari! I brought you thum foon," Socorro replied.

"No choice," he thought as he continued to listen. "It *was* an order." His eyes wandered.

"Thank you, sweetie. Auntie wasn't feeling well today so I didn't come see you. But now that you're here..."

His eyes met and his feet propelled him towards the shutters as he stopped listening to their conversation. "Not yet," he thought and scratched his head, then tugged on his ear. As he let go of it, it darted backwards.

"...you seen thah mither dat slaved uth? Heeth my he-woh"

"I...don't know who you're talking about, sweetie."

"Dammit, kid. I'm no one's hero," he thought as he walked toward the cabinet.

Glass doors revealed just a bunch of miscellaneous jars and bottles of liquids and ingredients for various herbal mixes. They were all neat and labeled. Not that he could read them.

"He thed hith name wad Vigdor. Thoh if you thee him, gib him a biggo hug for me."

The drawers held various instruments for poking, prodding and cutting. Cloth for bandages. He peeked in the bottom doors. Larger and stranger instruments. He quickly shut the doors and shot straight up.

"He wa-thoh cool, Auntie Thari. Even with hith thamall owm with-a shielt, he waths aw *clang, pow, thwap!*"

"Oh, really? A small arm with a shield?" Shari gave off fake enthusiasm.

"Yeah, Aundie Shardi. He nedder led in bottle him 'cud hith-ront owm width a thword wath-aw *cling, shwing, pling!*"

He clenched his fists - the right one as best he could. "Dammit, kid!" He thought. "I'm not some hero in a rumor! I'm a killer!"

He saw his knapsack on the floor next to the cabinet. He stepped over and looked through it. Some of his stuff was still there. It was definitely picked through. All of his poultices were gone. Even the 'Herb of the Life Tree' some scammer sold him. He found out it was worthless when he shoved one in the mouth of his last good partner. He's still very much dead.

"I'm sure he's...a *wonderful* guy," Shari replied sarcastically.

He didn't see his sword anywhere. He glanced at the counter and under cabinets, but assumed it couldn't be in there.

"I need my sword and I need to get out of here," he thought as he carefully plodded toward the door. He eased the door open and stepped through. "I don't think it'll be in the storage closet. It must be in her room." He carefully opened the door ahead of him.

"I with you could-huff med him, Aundie Shardi!"

"Well, if he's as great as you *say* he is, I'm *sure* we'll meet someday." Very fake enthusiasm.

He looked around and found his sword leaning against the far wall. He glanced around. Bed to the right. Beyond that was a wall-length closet or something considering all the doors it had. To his left was a shelving unit with little trinkets.

"I hope tho. But, hell, he wath hurd priddy bat. I hope heeth oh..."

"Socorro!" She scolded him. "How many times do I have to tell you not to repeat anything your gram-pa says?"

"Thowwy, Aundie Shlari," the boy said remorsefully.

There was movement out of the corner of his eye. It was a mirror. A full length mirror that he could almost see his whole body in. A small dressing table or powder desk with a smaller mirror was next to that. But what really grabbed his attention was when he hunched over and looked closer.

"I wanna be like him when I grow up, Auntie Shari!"

"You'll have to ask your father," she replied plainly.

"No...you don't," he thought as he looked over his battered body full of scars and broken or useless parts. There were new scars on his chest and on the sides of his neck. The new scars on his neck were in perfect angles. The one on his chest looked like a dowsing rod. They were all thin, but had a look and feel as if they were stitched together. "Those are new."

"I godda go, Aundie Shlari. Fe-oh beddow, okay? Bye-blye!"

"Bye-bye, sweetie. Tell your gram-pa 'thank you' and mom and dad 'hello' for me, okay?"

"Ooh-kaay!"

"Wait," he thought and leaned in closer. He brought his hand up to his face. It was blurry. "Why can't I see my face?"

A door squeaked open and closed. Some thudding footsteps. A *thunk* as if something was set down.

"Now, where the hell is that thug!" She muttered, the sound of the dagger being drawn from its sheath following.

"*Remember...*," a female voice said sweetly in his head.

He squinted his eyes and looked harder. "Remember...what?" He thought. Like a puzzle, his brain was piecing together his face.

#####

"Remember, Darijus," mom said sweetly. "Everyone, no matter how bad they are, has some good in them. Just like all the goodness in you."

She looked over at me and squeezed my hand with the biggest smile stretching her lips.

"I know, mamma," I replied and mimicked that smile.

I looked up into her eyes. The sun made her bright, golden eyes sparkle like a rippling river in sunlight.

#####

"What...in *the* hell...are you doing in my room?" The angry lady growled to his left.

He blinked. His mother's face in the mirror disappeared and was replaced with his. His left hand was against the mirror where his cheek was. His right hand was against his open maw with the claws dug into the top of his muzzle - holding on for all they had. Tears welled in his eyes and fell when he blinked. He very slowly turned to look at her.

She stood in the doorway with both hands on the handle of the dagger held in front of her waist. "I asked you a," she began and lost her angry eyes, the dagger lowering. "What happened to you?" She asked with concern.

"Mom," he whispered, "I remember." His right hand couldn't hold on as his muzzle moved and fell to his side. Tears fell one after the other as he blinked.

She loosened the grip on the dagger. Her left hand went to the middle of her chest as the right hand lowered with the dagger to her side. "What are you talking about?" She asked, choking on her words with tears welling in her eyes.

More tears fell as he blinked and looked into the mirror. "Mmmg," escaped his throat. His left hand fell and swung once before he fell to his knees. "I re-mm-ger," he choked out as more tears left his eyes.

A blurry hand reached out to him. "Oh gah...I don't..." She seemed at a loss for words.

He turned his muzzle up her way and mouthed those words.

"What?" She asked as she took off her glasses and wiped her eyes with the back of her hand. "What are..."

"I want to die," he proclaimed in a whisper.

"You will if you don't tell me what's going on!" She exclaimed with a wavering voice.

His eyes widened and he slowly pushed himself up and stumbled over to her blurry form. He grabbed her right hand and brought it up to his neck. "KILL ME!" He shouted, spit landing on her face.

She quickly brought her other hand up and struggled against his grip. "I just saved you!" She exclaimed with a higher pitch.

His jaw trembled as he fell to his knees when they gave out - causing her to shriek when he dragged her down with him. He swung his right hand up and it landed on the dagger causing the mass of hands to droop down. The tip of the dagger scratched from under his neck lump to where it stopped and dug into the top of his sternum.

"I want to die," he pleaded through a crackling voice with more tears falling.

Her lips and eyes contorted into a mix of concern and disbelief as she leaned back. He continued to pull against her, but he felt very weak.

"I just saved you," she repeated, her voice trembling. "I was never going to kill you. You're a..."

He felt his eyes turn angry. "I HAVE TO SEE HER!!! I WANT TO DIE!!!" He yelled, spit coming out of his mouth and dangling down the side of his jaw. He decided to lean in to the knife. "KIIILL MEEEE!!!"

"NO!!!" She shouted back and pulled hard against him, finally freeing the object.

The dagger slammed against the floor and slid into the other room. The force brought his head down into her chest.

"Kill me. I have to see my mom," he whispered as he sobbed, his body going limp against her.

"I can't...I don't," she stammered with her own sobs taking over her voice.

"She's the only one who ever loved me," he cried and closed his eyes.

"Mmm-ahhh-haah-haah!" She wailed as she threw her arms around his neck. She squeezed him tight as she cried into the top of his head.

"I'm sorry, mamma," he muttered. "I wasn't a good boy. I wasn't a good boy."

#####

"Hey," he heard as something moved along his head. "You awake?"

It was the sweetest voice he'd heard away from a brothel or a peddler in a long time.

He opened his eyes. They stung, but he blinked several times and the world started to become clear. He was lying on the floor with his head against something soft that smelled pleasant. Something passed between his ears and down the back of his head causing him to look up. An exhausted looking Shepherd woman was looking down at him with a warm smile. The eyes behind the glasses looked comforting. He gasped and pushed himself up to his knees.

"Are you okay now?" She asked sweetly. "You were out for some time."

She clasped her hands in her lap. She appeared to be sitting on her knees with her legs angled out to the sides. A large dark spot covered her right thigh.

His eyes widened as he wiped his mouth.

"I..," he began and stopped. "I'm sorry...I didn't..."

No matter what he *tried* to say, nothing would come out. He was in a situation he didn't know how to get out of and, he realized, said words he'd never spoken before.

"It's okay," she said calmly. "Just this once." Her head angled a bit to her left and she had a big smile on her face. "Only because this hurts something fierce," she said as her whole face scrunched up.

He brought his hand up to scratch his cheek as he looked at her puffy eyes. Her face fur looked like it'd been through a hurricane. It was darkened and dry with tears, but his eyes latched on to the dagger in the other room behind her.

"Oh," he sighed and brought his hand back down as the original circumstances returned to him. "Right."

He slowly turned away from her and brought his wide open hands behind his back against his pelvis. His eyes caught the sight of his short sword against the wall. "Kik," his tongue clicked as he squeezed his eyes shut and looked down. "I must resist," he thought as he waited.

"Just this once," she groaned out. It sounded like she was sliding something against the floor. "Not necessary."

He opened his eyes and glanced over his shoulder.

She looked to be in pain as she rubbed her outstretched legs. "Ow-ow-ow," she whispered.

He turned his head and looked back down at the floor in front of his knees.

"You're incorrigible," she whispered. "OW-ow-ow," she cried.

He quickly looked over his shoulder.

She was standing up with her hand against the door frame for support as she shook out one of her legs.

"GAU!" His stomach cried out.

"That's right. You *still* haven't eaten," she said.

He heard limping footfalls behind him.

"Come on," she said.

He glanced over his left shoulder to see her - her right hand on the door frame with her body facing the dining area. She was leaning back and looking in the room at him with a half smile.

"I'll warm up dinner," she said and shuffle-limped down the hall.

"I don't understand. Is this okay?" He genuinely questioned as he stared at the doorway.

"It won't be if you make me say it twice," she called back.

He brought his hands around to his sides. He pushed up with his left arm and stumbled to his feet. Another head rush caused him to pause until it cleared. He heard a few grinding noises like flint and metal striking. The smell of burning corn husk followed. His right leg felt like it was being stabbed by needles.

"I better hurry," he thought as he limped in a circle and made it through the doorway.

He kept his eyes on the dagger in the other room. He looked over at her. She was blowing on the fire to get the wood catching. "This is *not* a good idea," he thought and limped into the room.

It took some painful steps and an even more painful kneel down to pick up the dagger. He shuffle-turned and made his way into the dining area. He paused and flipped the dagger in his hand so he was holding the blade. He continued to limp down the short hall.

"It's going to take the stove top some time to heat up, so," she said as she turned toward him. She stopped speaking when her eyes met the blade in his hand.

He limped over to the table and set the dagger down, then slid it toward her. He groaned as he sat on the bench and rubbed his left knee.

"So let's start with the veggies," she finished saying, sounding relieved. "I know they're cold and have been sitting out all night," she muttered as she stepped over to the table. "Oh," she began and moved the dagger to the counter top. "A little boy brought me his leftovers and a couple of rather large bread rolls."

He looked over at her and said, "I heard. So-...the little one that was humming on his way over," he remembered.

"Yeah," she said plainly. "How did you," she began to question, but sighed instead. She leaned against the counter and folded her arms across her stomach. "Seems *someone* made quite the impression on him about a week ago," she said flatly.

He looked away and down at the floor. "Not my intent," he muttered.

"Yeah, well," she began matter-of-fact, "Regardless of intent, responsibility must be taken."

He looked back at his plate of cold food.

"Yeah," he whispered.

She sighed. She reached down and closed the front of the stove pit. She clasped her hands and held them against her lower stomach. She dragged her foot as if moving a dirt pile as she looked down.

"It may not be my place," she began and paused, still toeing the floor. "What was your mother like?" She asked as she looked up.

His good ear flattened against his head as he looked at her with anger.

She pushed her behind off the counter and brought her hands out in a surrender pose. "I'm sorry...I didn't mean..."

He looked at his plate, then the floor as he eased his expression. "Not," he started and cleared his throat.

"No, no! That was insensitive of me. It's too soon. I'm sorry," she apologised, grabbed the back of her left hand with her right, dropped them by her groin and leaned back against the counter. "I lost my mother, too." She looked down at the floor.

He glanced over to her and back. The image of his mother - the complete image - flashed in his head with that healthy smile and sparkling eyes. Despite his best efforts to hold back, a tear fell from his left eye.

They sat in silence. The crackling log was the only sound until a feral animal called out in the distance. Another clicking sound started up - one that sounded like nails being picked at - entered his ears. When he forced his hand to stop moving, the sound stopped.

"My chest feels so tight," he thought. "What are these feelings?"

He pondered for several minutes until he saw his host moving. His ear and face relaxed as he watched her move in the dim light. "This woman," he thought. "All these new feelings..."

He watched her take the covered dish and place it on the stove. Then she brought a thin metal spatula over to the table and scooped up his fish and her remaining half and eased them on the flat top.

"I don't understand them," he thought.

"You know," she said, slightly startling him. "You kind of remind me of Socorro with how intently you're watching me cook."

"Aht!" He exclaimed. Surprise took over his expression and he felt a warm sensation in his face. His ears felt as if they were on fire. He buried his hand in his lap and looked down at his plate.

"*GRAU-ah!*" His stomach butted in.

She giggled as she walked over to the table. She picked up the flat-looking spoon and gently set it in front of his plate. "Eat," she commanded politely. "No fork just yet," she said and walked back to the stove. "I still don't trust you," she muttered.

"Understood," he said and reached for the spoon.

It was a bit of a chore, but he butted some vegetables together and slipped them onto the spoon. One fell off as he maneuvered the utensil to his mouth and closed his lips around it. He pulled the spoon out so as to not drag against his teeth and began to chew. The vegetables were a bit mushy but still had a good crunch to them. They were good. Not like the sloppy mush ones served with most dishes he'd had.

"Hmm-hmm," she chuckled. "I take it they're good or you wouldn't have hummed," she said happily.

"I didn't think I did," he thought, his face contorting and beginning to heat up. "Y-yeah," he replied and went in for a second bite. "What is wrong with me, all of a sudden?" He pondered.

"Take one of the rolls, too," she mentioned. "They're good, but sooo much better when they're still warm out of the oven," she cooed.

He reached over and took a bite of the roll. It was good. "Hmm," escaped his throat until he realised it, "Mmp!". His face had *just* returned to normal and was now hot enough to cook on.

Again she gave a short chuckle. "Nir and his father are good bakers, huh?" She asked, sounding as if not expecting a reply.

He stopped suddenly and perked up.

"What is it?" She whispered.

"Someone's coming," he whispered.

She sighed. "Not again," she said, defeated. "Please hide," she whined.

He quietly got up and stepped into the short hall with his hands on the wall.

"No one's going to frisk you," she whispered and made her way around the table.

His face reignited as he brought his right foot forward and leaned close to the wall as he looked at her.

"Are you modeling now," she whispered and giggled as she walked past him.

He felt his heart quicken and a wave of warmth seemed to pulse away from it. His face felt so warm. She opened the door and stepped out.

"What is this?" He asked in thought. "Why is this happening?"

"Shari!" A younger man called quietly. "I saw a light coming from the window and thought I'd check to see if everything was okay."

"Thank you, Nir. I woke up and felt hungry," she replied. "Thought I'd step out as it warms up."

"Nir," he thought as he scanned the floor. "That's...the baker's son. Shari mentioned him before with Socorro's and...another name. Why did I remember their names?"

The young man continued. "That's great to hear. Everyone's still on edge. Me and pa have been waking up an hour earlier and patrolling the town to give people a sense of security."

"Thank you. And thank your father for me. That's very kind of you."

"Well, if we had another 'hero' here, as Socorro likes to say, we wouldn't have anything to worry about."

"If one shows up I'll try and persuade them to stay for a while. But, who knows, maybe there's one hiding in town."

"I'M NO VILLAGE GUARD AND DEFINITELY NO HERO!!!" He screamed in his head, his brow furrowed with anger.

The young man laughed. "Don't say that too loud around Socorro or he'll be out here with a dough roller and cake sheet pretending to be this 'hidden hero' in town."

She giggled. "No worries. Any time the subject comes up, I turn him to you or his grandpa."

"So...Nir is Socorro's...father...?" He thought and shook his head.

The young man laughed again. "That's good. He gets so fired up talking about the 'hero' that I swear he's going to fit that tongue in his mouth before he grows into it."

"Hoo-hoo, that's cruel," she replied. "I happen to adore that tongue squishing out of his mouth. And when he calls me 'Aundie Shlari' my heart melts," she cooed and chuckled.

The young man laughed. "He's stolen so many hearts around here." The young man turned serious. "The rebuilding effort...the families sleeping on the pub floor," he said and cleared his throat. "I wish that hero stayed around to help out. Everyone's at their limits trying to rebuild. Especially with the possibility of another attack lingering in the back of their minds. They could use that sense of security, at least."

Her tone matched his seriousness. "I know what you mean. I didn't sleep well for a week. I wish I could help, but I'm already busy with...well," she said and trailed off. "You know my hands: They work on a much smaller, delicate scale." A brief pause. "Oh!

Maybe I could, sometimes, help make lunches with my father or bring them refreshments," she said with a more cheerful tone.

The smell of burning fish. He hoped she hurried up. He didn't dare move and cast a shadow. That kind of fuss wasn't worth salt-cured seafood.

"I'll pass the word on when I see him later. I'm sure he'd like his daughter to stop by. He was whining this morning about how he hadn't seen you in over a week."

He perked up and began fitting the pieces of the family puzzle together.

"Uh, yeah. Just been busy mixing more medicine. That really emptied my stock," Shari continued, chuckling nervously. "OH! Not that I mind. I don't want to sound like I'm complaining."

The young man laughed. "No-no. Everyone is eternally grateful for your donation. Everyone healed up nicely and were back at it in no time."

"That's so good to hear. I've been cooped up so I haven't interacted with many people since then. It'll still take some time, but you'll see this frazzled face pop out more often soon."

"A lot of folks would appreciate that." A short pause. "Well, Shari, I think I've kept you long enough. I hope your food's still warm."

"OH! SHOOT! It's still on the stove!"

"Take care, Shari."

"Take care, Nir. Tell that cutie to stop by anytime."

"I'm not signing any marriage certificates for many more years. Adoption though..."

"Hush you. If he grows up looking like you, all bets are off."

"Oh-hoo! Now who's cruel?"

She giggled and opened the door. "Bye, Nir."

"Good night, Shari."

He peeked from around the corner and tried to draw her attention to the stove.

She looked over at him and whispered, "I know that, you creeper!"

She hurried over and flipped the fish. "Shoot!" She exclaimed quietly. "Shoot! Shoot! Shoot!" She quickly pulled the pan off the top with some thick cloth squares and set it on the table. "Even with one log, it burned!"

Her whole body showed frustration as she clenched her fists at her sides with wrists bent out, stamped her feet, scrunched her face and growled.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"It's fine," he whispered back as he peeked around the corner.

She sighed. "Are you trying to out-cute Socorro now? You've a whole body makeover and a long way to go to compete."

"I guess," he whispered.

"I'm sorry. I'm just frustrated." She sighed heavily. "That pup took the time to bring me food and I ruined it. Plus, you haven't eaten in two days...", she said apologetically.

"It's fine," he plainly stated.

"Still," she said and sighed heavily again. "I'm just exhausted. It's exacerbating my mood right now." She held her right elbow in her left hand and rubbed her eyes.

He quietly stepped over to the table and sat down. "Smells good."

"It smells burnt, but thank you for trying to cheer me up," she strained to say as she continued rubbing her eyes.

"I wasn't," he began and looked up at her scowling face. "Yeah," he said instead.

She yawned and made her way to the stove. She served the fish and placed a serving spoon in the pan.

The fish was dark on the top, but it just reminded him of campfire fish. Fish, salt and char: All the ingredients he was used to. He propped up his right arm and used the

bread to corral the vegetables until they were gone. He glanced over as she scooped some of the pan food onto her plate. She scooped again and placed some on his plate in the now empty space.

They ate in silence. He heard her yawn several times between the sounds of her chewing. It broke the silence other than the log turning to embers in the stove pit. The silence brought his thought back to what the young man said about the town and the rebuilding. He did, maybe, want to help. He didn't have anything else to do. He wanted to bring it up to her but wasn't sure how. He ate until only the bread was left. He took a drink of his water.

"Um...Shari?" He asked, feeling his face warm up.

She yawned. "I'll allow it, though I don't know what to call you," she said and glanced at him over the rim of her tankard.

He thought about what to say as he bit into the bread.

He chewed and swallowed before finally saying, "Vik-..." He caught himself again. He was becoming more aware of when to and not to say certain things around her.

"I assume that's not your real name. So what *is* your real name?" She asked as she began collecting dishes.

The question made him pause. "Not sure," he lied, protecting himself just in case.

He decided, rather, to finish off the bread than answer properly.

"You're not sure?" She asked, flatly with disbelief. "Your mother had to have given you a name."

He glared at her. "I just," he began and eased up. He pondered a moment as he looked at the empty plate. "No."

"I see," she said reassuringly. "It must be very precious to you. Especially if it's the only thing you have left of hers she gave you." She sounded sad, but understanding.

"Yeah," he whispered and finished off his water.

"Hmm. How about a compromise?" She asked with hope. "A mix of both or bits of both and some...random letters thrown in," she said and finished clearing the table.

He sat for several minutes thinking about it. Shari stood across the table from him.

"Well, there's Viktor," she began. He glanced up at her with narrowed eyes. "So how about 'V' and 'I' or 'O' and 'R' with a couple of letters from your real name?"

He thought out loud, "Maybe 'V' and 'I' so it's similar, but not the same as to avoid too much confusion. Then, add 'U' and 'S'?"

Shari shot a glance of intrigue at him and mouthed something.

He sighed. More silence filled the room as they continued to think.

"Vil-kus...Vilkas," he finally said.

"Vilkas! Good enough," she hurriedly said and clapped her hands. "I'm going to bed," she said and pulled something from a drawer behind her.

She moved to, then opened the stove pit and held what looked like a candle against the embers. She pulled her hand back when it sparked and carried it over to the end of the counter. It appeared as if she pressed it into a carrier. She turned around, the light of the candle illuminating her face.

He stared at her face. He felt compelled to remember every detail of it.

"Can't stay here. Shoo-shoo," she said as she flipped her free hand in his direction.

He snapped out of his daze and nodded. He stood and made his way to his cot. He looked at the bloodied sheet and shrugged. He sat on the edge of the bed and yawned.

It sounded like she was using the toilet.

"It's not polite to listen to a lady do her business...pervert!" He heard her say through the wall.

"No choice!" He called back.

"Someone's sassy tonight," he heard her mutter.

"Coming from you," he muttered back.

"I hate you," he barely heard her say.

Water ran in the toilet. She seemed to wash her hands and do some other business.

He laid down and got comfortable. He sighed as he looked at the dark ceiling. "These are good people," he thought. "I could live a bit longer, then die here." He sighed defeatedly. "If they'll take a life-long murderer."

She stepped into the doorway. "You seriously sleeping on those bloody sheets?"

"I've slept in worse," he said back.

"Ick. Forget I said anything," she said and walked into her room.

He heard her rustle some things around.

"Uh. Um," she whispered. "G-good...night?" She said as if wondering if it were appropriate. "Sorry, this doesn't feel right," she whispered and closed her door.

"Yeah," he said and tried to sleep.

#####

The same awful dream. Those same awful images. The battles. The fighting. The death.

This time it included the new girl. Shari. That awful face she makes when she's angry. The killing intent in her eyes. It felt so different compared to the glimpses of the men he's killed. A different kind of hate.

"Remember..."

A silhouette of his mother's hand engulfed all the images and reached out to him.

He reached back and grabbed the hand as it vanished.

#####

He sat up sharply and breathed heavily. He felt a sinking feeling in his chest. "The hell is this?" He thought as he grabbed his chest.

"Mmm," he heard to his right.

"What is going on? WHAT IS THIS!?" He screamed in his head as he saw her.

Shari was sitting on a stool, head resting atop her right arm on the cot. She was loosely holding his right hand with her left.

He felt warm. So warm he was sweating. He looked ahead and saw he was covered in a blanket. His breath caught up in his chest. He could feel how cool the air was. He grabbed the blanket, lifted it up and twirled it as he reached to his right. The thin blanket gently fell atop the sleeping Shari.

"Mmm," she groaned as she stirred. "I still hate you," she muttered despite a quick smile.

"Yeah," he whispered and slowly laid back down.

"Hmmf," she chuckled. "Try to keep the screaming down next time," she said softly.

He glanced over at her.

She sleepily opened her eyes and looked up at him.

He looked back up at the ceiling. He attempted to squeeze her hand.

"Yeah," he said and closed his eyes.

He didn't get to sleep for some time. His face was burning, his heart felt as if it was forcing its way out and he couldn't keep his thoughts from screaming...

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND!!!"
