

A Narrative

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Life of a man as he tells it. :)

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Chapter 1 - When I Met Him	2
Chapter 2 - Zephyr	5

1 - When I Met Him

I walked alone. Again, but not that I minded. I really am a loner, even if it doesn't seem so much anymore.

I was fifteen. The summer before my freshman year of high school. I was scrawny, had glasses, and no self esteem. You really could say I was unattractive.

So, yes, I was walking. I did a lot back then. The sun was going down, the air was cool. Fall will always be my favorite season.

I walked with my head down, looking at my own feet as they passed on in front of the other. I always took the same path, too. Always left at the same time.

Making my way down Pearl Street, the kind of dumpy part of the residentials, I heard some yelling from inside a house. One that was at least one hundred years by the look of it, with green shutters from which the paint peeled, curling and sharp. I was a little curious, so as I came closer to the house, I slowed down so it wouldn't look like I was loitering while trying to listen to the argument.

I pulled my long auburn hair behind my ears, better to listen with. That's when the flimsy screen door was yanked open and lithe boy, about my age, stumbled out.

He had short black hair which hung in his eyes, with a peculiar green stripe that ran in his bangs. He saw me then, because he stumbled less and made his way over to me. At this point I wasn't going anywhere anymore.

"Hey," the odd boy said to me. He smiled, which looked really nice with his angular face.

"Hi," I said quietly, my shy introvert self wanting to run and hide. At least I wasn't staring at my feet.

"You live around here?" He asked me then, still grinning.

"Yes," I told him. "I live on Eleanor."

"Do you?" The boy jerked his head to the side, getting the hair out of his eyes. "I'm Evan. Who're you?" "Karsten."

"I'll see you around, Karsten." Evan smiled once again, tipping me a wink as he walked back into his house. I watched him as he went inside, slamming the screen door again behind him, and then heard a few more yells from inside. When everything had been quiet again for awhile, I walked back home.

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The automatic porch light came on as I walked across my front lawn and to the front door. Well, not mine. My brother's.

I lived with my older brother, Marcus. He had my hair color, but other than that didn't look like me at all. His hair was short and curly, he was average height, and very muscular. The women all loved him, and he sure took advantage of it.

Anyways, I lived with him not because I had run away, or because my parents had died, but because they had kicked me out. Gotten rid of me. I had told my parents that I was a homosexual that summer. At first they didn't believe me. Then they did, and they were angry. More my father. Maybe he was disappointed, as if it were my fault. But, nevertheless, he told me I had a choice. Either I turned myself strait, or I left. I left. I also called Marcus, who was twenty at the time, and told him in tears about what happened. He said I was going to live with him.

He really was kind to me.

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The next couple of days, I changed my walking route so that I passed Evan's house at least three times. I wanted to see him again.

On the third day I had done this, people were yelling inside his narrow three-story house again, so I slowed down. Sure enough, after a minute or so and four steps later, Evan tripped out of his front door.

"Evan!" I said, but just as soon I had covered my mouth. He looked up from where he had fallen to the ground, and grinned at me. I melted.

"I told you I'd see you again," he said while he sat up. He had a black eye. "I'm genius."

"Your eye," I said. I also went to sit by him in the browning grass. The cool air stirred our clothing. "What happened? Are you okay?"

"I just don't work hard enough, that's all," Evan said.

I didn't know what he meant, and must have had a look which said so.

"Don't worry about; you probably wouldn't understand anyways. What are you, ten?" Evan laughed at me. "Just kidding."

"I'm fifteen," I said. "How old are you?"

"Fourteen." Evan looked away from me, at the sun setting.

"Who gave you the black eye?"

Evan stared at me, his eyes boring holes through mine. "My father. Don't tell."

"What? Your dad did that to you?" From what I could tell, his father was an @\$\$, just like mine.

"Yeah. But it doesn't hurt anymore, so I don't care." He even smiled then.

I just looked down at my hands, which were resting in my lap. Fathers are awful people. I wanted to keep Evan from his.

"I'm on a walk. Come with me and stay away from him," I said to Evan. "You don't want two black eyes, do you?"

"Okay," Evan said. He stood up and so did I. We talked about anything and everything as I led the both of us home.

2 - Zephyr

That summer with Evan was the best I had ever known. Eventually, he told me more about how his father abused him and how he had begun to prostitute at his young age. I was as shocked as you are. I told him that no one would ever use him again, he would never have to feel like he needed to sell himself again, and I convinced him to stay with me at my brother's house over the summer. But only that long, because once fall started his aunt was paying for him to be sent to a private high school.

All summer we did the things we wanted, and with Evan I became much less shy, maybe even obnoxious. My glasses were gone and I was starting to be able to see muscles on my arms. In other words, I looked a hell of a lot better. I wasn't a geek anymore.

Evan even got me to show off my singing ability. He came with me to an audition for a college choir, and I became a member. This was probably the best thing he could have done, because it started me on a path for the rest of my life.

Evan and I spent every hour of every day together. We became very good friends, and nothing more, even as I began to fall in love with him. And that was okay with me then.

Fall came around, and embarrassed myself by crying continuously on the day Evan was to leave. He tried to comfort, that sweetheart. "Don't worry, I'll call, we'll still be friends, good God, get a grip on yourself, I'll write to you, I promise." I never heard from him again.

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Three and a half years later, I'm eighteen and a quarter into my last year of high school.

Things had gone fairly well for me so far in my high school career. I got decent grades, had a group of good friends, and had started a band.

I of course was the frontman, the vocalist, the writer of lyrics. The garage band consisted of three of my friends (Rob, Isaiah, and Sophia) and myself. We were called Venice Queen.

But my love life was something else. I'd had a few boyfriends, sure. But nothing serious. I think this was because people genuinely didn't like me. I was like an alien. I still had my auburn hair grown out past my shoulders, and had started getting many maroon tribal tattoos. I also wore a lot of leather. People tend to stay away from that, you know?

But the first day of the second quarter of my senior year, and had an art class last period. I'm not much of a drawer, and I'm not a good drawer, but I thought it would be fun. It turned out to me a good choice, because I found the most beautiful creature in the world behind its doors.

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His name was Zephyr. He was probably almost a foot shorter than myself, and thin. He had curling white-blond hair which went to his shoulders, and fingernails that looked like glass.

Now, I was very bold at first, so I took a seat right next to him.

"Hey," I said, trying to be casual about it.

"Hello," he said almost too quietly for me to hear. He lifted his shoulders a little and cringed inwardly like he thought I was going to hit him. He didn't look at me.

"I'm Karsten," I told him, holding out my hand.

He shook it lightly. "I know. I'm Zephyr."

"What?" I said. "How do you know my name? We've never met."

Zephyr looked at me finally, but his look said 'you're an asshole'. "We've been in the same grade for years."

"Oh," I said slowly. I don't think I've ever been more embarrassed than I was then. I'd honestly never noticed him before.

I saved from saying something that would upset him even more when our teacher began to speak. Soon after I put my head down and sighed.

Once we had to get our materials and begin, I caught Zephyr by the arm when he stood up. "Hey, man, I'm sorry about before. Really, I am. It's just a lot of times I'm just out of it."

"It's okay," he said, and smiled at me. Smiled at me! "I get it a lot, actually. People don't care about me much."

With that, he yanked his arm back and went to get pencils.

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The rest of that week, I pretty much felt rotten anytime I tried to talk to Zephyr. He was nice, he was polite, but I could just tell he was sad. He was a lonely person. So on Friday I invited him to my house, to sit in on a jam session.

"You have a band?" Zephyr asked. "That's so cool!"

I smiled. "Yeah. We're really not too good...but we try."
Zephyr laughed and asked what I played.

"Oh...I don't play anything. Not talented enough. I sing."

"Sing?" He gave me a weird look. You don't seem like a singer to me."

"Whatever," I said. "So...you coming?"

"For real?" Zephyr asked me with these wide-eyes. What was he trying to do, get out of it?

"Yes," I said, laughing at him. "For real."

"Sure I want to go!"

The bell rang then, and I grabbed Zephyr by his sleeve. "Come to my locker, everyone else will be there."

I dragged him along the crowded hallways, pushing through the giant mass of bodies, making my way to my locker. Sophia and Rob were there. "Where's Isaiah?"

"I don't know," said Sophia. "Probably getting high outside of the band room again."

Rob was an interesting character. He had thin light brownish hair that he had cut so it always hung in his eyes. In addition to playing drums in Venice Queen, he also played with the school band on trombone. He liked to call it his boner.

"Go get him, then!" I said to Sophia. "Come on, Zephyr, we can wait in the car."

He and I left the school and made our way to the piece of junk my brother called a vehicle. He had given me his old car once I got a license.

"Wow, you have a car, too?" Zephyr said when I told him to sit in the front seat. "You're lucky."

"If you think that's lucky, listen to this: I live with my brother. No parents."

"Living with my mom is okay, I think." Zephyr's parents were divorced and he hadn't seen his father in years. The sad thing was that he actually missed him. "I'll be glad when I move out, though."

"I'll probably stay with Marcus a while," I said. "Free rent, you know."

Zephyr smiled at me. I was really beginning to like him.