

Transposed

His name is Sean. He doesn't have much of a background. He comes from an average family, has an average lifestyle, average education, and perhaps the only thing that is abnormal is his nonexistent love life. He's a senior at East Sunnyside High School, holding onto whatever grades he can with all his life in attempt to become accepted into a college with some sort of prestige. He's *that guy* you see every now and then walking through the hallways, fixated on his phone, and furthermore, provoking his own jealousy through seeing pictures of private events on social media. If you actually maintained interest in him and shifted your eyes onto his apparel, you'd see that he's wearing the same pair of sweats that he's worn for the last 3 days, and the plain T-shirt whose collar he once chewed on as a habit during his adolescence. The fact that those shirts still fit him shows just how much he hasn't grown over the years. He's never been apart of the popular crowd, but he always fantasizes about himself in that group and how much fun it would be to join them and their activities. He often describes the popular crowd as "the people who actually know what they are going to do on the weekends. The same people who actually know what's going on around them, what they're doing with their lives and who their real friends actually are." The truth is, the only person he has that he can call his true friend is his well known friend, Alex Hail.

Sean and Alex have been friends since preschool and they've been through just about everything together. Heart breaks, bullying, problems with parents, you name it, they've been through it. The peculiar thing about their relationship is that they're exact opposites. Alex has maintained a 4.5 grade point average all through high school while Sean's academic hopes and goals consist of a 3.0 grade point average and actually passing his grade-level classes. Alex isn't too fond of relationships and romance, whereas Sean would give pretty much anything he

could in order to obtain a girlfriend. Though Sean isn't included in the popular crowd, Alex is the epitome of it all. Sean often aspires to Alex as he's never seen an individual like him so sociable in his life, and through this yearning to become his best friend, everyday, he sparks his own jealousy.

Alex's face is a mixture of Ashton Kutcher and Hugh Jackman, and with that being true, he is quite possibly one of the most handsome and attractive gentlemen at East Sunnyside. HE often wears a clothing style which compares greatly to that of Hoodie Allen, consisting of tight V-necks, letterman jackets, and jeans or khakis, depending on the appropriate season. Being extremely talented and athletic, he's the leader and quarterback of the school's football team and carried them to division one last year.

Alex always felt bad for Sean because being his only friend, he didn't exactly have a lifestyle that allows him to empathize with him.

One day, Sean, whose jealousy seemed to have overwhelm him, walked up to Alex. "I'm often referred to as 'Alex's friend' because they view me in the shadow of you." Sean paused a moment as a concerned look grew on Alex's face. "I've come to realize - all of the skills that I find myself fairly decent in are always far exceeded by your talent for the same category."

Alex anxiously searched for a hole in his argument. Finding one at last, he states "Well, how about your skill in skateboarding? I can't skateboard for the life of me!"

Sean gave a half-hearted smile and muttered "Yeah, I guess you're right."

Alex, who was hoping Sean's response would last a little longer, was still rummaging around for another skill Sean exceeded himself in. Defeated, he decided to end the conversation, "Cheer up pal! You have the rest of your life ahead of you! I'm sure you'll find a passion for something you've never even thought of."

Luckily, Alex's breach in Sean's argument held true. Sean was one of the most known for his talent in skateboarding, whether it be free boarding or landing onerous tricks. In fact, he often competes in "Best Trick" competitions around his area, and wins almost every time.

Perhaps what worries Alex most about Sean is his tendency to act before thinking. If someone had been irritating him for the last few weeks and one day they say something that puts him over edge, he'll punch them straight in the face without thinking about the consequences of his actions. This exact example has happened before, and he was suspended because of this course of action. Ever since this event, Alex has been his caretaker, and he views his purpose in their friendship as stopping Sean from doing whatever unintelligent act he is about to commit.

Adding onto his anxiety, Sean's impulsive actions in coordination with his constant yearning to be apart of the popular group leads him to be the most vulnerable individual when it comes to peer pressure. Since he will do just about anything to feel accepted by the popular community, if they asked him to jump off a bridge, he would in a heartbeat in attempt to obtain some appreciation from his peers. The popular group has taken advantage of him before, making him fetch food, complete homework, and to be a messenger for them, and there isn't anything stopping them from doing it again. Alex, noticing this, often gets angry as he becomes irate when people take advantage of other people, more importantly his best friend, simply because they can. Feeling obligated to be Sean's caretaker, Alex constantly finds himself hindering these situations.

School started on a cloudy day in November, where Alex sat in his first period class contemplating Sean and his indifferences. All of the jealous remarks that Sean had thrown towards Alex had added up in his head and he felt it was finally time to try and involve Sean into

the popular crowd. The second the bell rang, he B-lined to Sean's next class and met him right as he was about to enter the door.

"Sean, Sean!", Alex was gasping for air.

Sean uneasily spun 180 degrees, "What, what?".

Alex's body slumped over as he clenched his thighs with his hands. "You - party! There's a party this weekend!"

"Oh, that's nice. I'm sure you'll have fun!", Sean said as he started his way back into the classroom.

Alex, lunging for his arm, exclaimed "No! You must come! It'll be lots of fun, there'll be all sorts of food, drinks, activities..." He pulled Sean closer to him and whispered "and lots of girls."

"Really? I'd love to come! I'm not doing anything better anyways."

"Great, I'll see you at five at James's house."

The door shut abruptly as the alarm sounded the school notifying everyone that they must be in their classes. Alex figured that him being late was worth appeasing his conscience. He made his way back to class, smiling at the future ahead of him.

It was four o'clock and Sean was found in his room, swinging around his bed posts while laying out all his clothes on the floor; He had to look absolutely perfect for the night ahead of him. Pencil in hand, replacing a microphone, he sang his favorite pump up song that he would always play before his skate competitions, while music blasted in the background. His mom barged into his room.

"Sean! What is the reason for all of this racket you're creating?"

"I'm going to a party mom!" Sean exclaimed as he continuously paired different articles of clothing together.

“That’s. That’s fantastic! With whom are you going?”

“My friend Alex! He’s the greatest mom, without him, I would never had been invited!”

A concerned look grew in his mother’s face as she never liked Alex. Despite his attempts to be Sean’s caretaker, she knew of what the popular group did to Sean and how Alex is extremely popular himself, thus seeing him as a negative influence.

“With Sean huh?”, she turned off the music, “Listen Sean...”.

Sean waited impatiently on the bed.

“Alex, well, I don’t believe he’s the best influence on you. I’m worried that you’ll be influenced into doing something you don’t want to -”

Sean cut her off abruptly, “Alex has never peer pressured me into anything mom! You know this! He’s been trying to stop it all these years!”.

“I understand. Please son, be careful tonight. I love you with all my heart.” A tear trickled down her cheek as she hugged her only child. She hadn’t seen her son this happy in all her life.

“Mom please don’t cry. After tonight, I’ll be popular and happy! I’ll be fine don’t you worry. I love you too!”

She wiped her face dry of tears, smiled at him, and closed the door as she walked out his room.

He turned the music back on, with a softer volume, and began to sing again while he chose his style for the night.

Alex picked Sean up in his Facelift Audi A4 at a quarter past five. Sean, slightly irritated, opened the passenger door.

“You said the party was at five, we’re gonna be late!”

Alex put his head in his hand and shook it back and forth. “Yes Sean”, he chuckled, “but no one ever shows up the early. Ever heard of ‘showing up fashionably late’?”

Sean, dumbfounded, nodded and chuckled as well. “I’m sorry, I’m new to this.”

“It’s alright” Alex said as he put his car into gear, “you’ll be fine.”

They veered off the curb and raced to the party.

They arrive at the party that is located just off of one of the steepest hills in their area.

“Alex! And uh. Alex’s friend! Welcome!” yelled James, Alex’s friend, at first sight.

“See? ‘Alex’s friend’. Great.” Sean mumbled to Alex.

Alex, still cringing at James’s introduction, said excitedly “Don’t worry man, after tonight, everyone will know your name.”

They walked up to all the people at the party where Alex immediately made conversation with ten different people, and Sean, ironically, stood in the shadow of his best friend.

“And who’s your friend?” said Kyle, another one of Alex’s friends.

“Oh him?” Alex smiled, “This is only my best friend, Sean.”

Sean stood like a deer in the headlights of fourteen sets of eyes. “Hey”, he said, in a naizily tone of voice.

Everyone broke out laughing. Kyle, who had already fallen in a hysterical manner, was now slamming his hand against the ground repeatedly. Sean looked up at Alex, and before he could let his eyes water, he began to walk away.

“I already love this kid!” exclaimed Kyle.

Sean immediately spun around with a smile from ear to ear and began to laugh along with the rest of them. He was so used to being the butt of the joke that he subconsciously thought they were laughing at him.

“Maybe the popular group isn’t as intimidating as I thought they were”, he thought.

He instantaneously looked up at Alex who was smiling down at him and patting his back. The group of people, now consisting of Sean and Alex, joked around for the next two hours until someone finally brought up how fantastic of a skateboarder Sean was.

“Well, do you think you could show us some of your stunts?” said Alex, intentionally provoking some interest in his friend’s talent.

“Of course! Except, I don’t have my skateboard with me.” Sean stirred his foot on the ground.

“That’s alright.” said James, “You can borrow my skateboard if you’d like?”

“Sure!”

James bolted to his garage to get his skateboard as the rest of the group continued Sean’s interest in skateboarding.

“Here it is!” James brought out a rather old and beaten up board. The grip tape was worn out and the bearings had a hard time making a full rotation without help. Despite the condition of the board, Sean was still determined to impress his peers. He grabbed the board and performed a hardflip with a little uncertainty, but still looked professional. Alex’s friends, now gathered in a circle around the skateboarding prodigy, were clapping, cheering, and high fiving Sean.

Chad, yet another friend of Alex, had been skateboarding for countless years and was not impressed by any trick Sean could execute. He was greatly distressed by this boy as he had already been crowned “King of Boards” by all of his friends at the party. He wasn’t about to let that title go to rest.

“Look” he said, with a cocky smirk that said ‘You’re not impressing anybody’, “Tricks are cool and all, but...”, he eyed the precipitous road just outside their front yard, “I mean, no one's ever made it down that hill before. Make it down that hill and I shall crown you ‘King of Boards’”.

Sean, unaware that the award wasn't a joke, still saw the offer as a challenge. He knew he could do it as he's cleared those types of hills before with no problem. He stared down Chad, who was still chuckling at his "rhetorical" offer.

"Sure." He said, with a sheepish grin plastered on his face.

Chad stopped dead in his tracks. He turned around to face Sean where he narrowed his eyes at him and shouted, "To the hill then!".

Alex, who was previously caught up in the moment, was now preoccupied by his role as the caretaker. He reached for Sean's shoulder when he thought to himself "Sean is in the spotlight right now. He's loving this. He's getting popular. He's done this before. This is fine." His reach died out just before he grabbed Sean's shoulder, and everyone rushed to the bottom of the hill. Sean began to walk up the hill, breaking a sweat only a quarter of the way up due to the steepness of the mountain. He was only half way up when he began to question his ability to make it down the hill on this excuse of a skateboard. Nevertheless, no one was telling him to stop, so he continued to the top of the hill.

Alex, who was trailing behind Sean, was still indecisive and skeptical about this whole event. He began to whisper to himself, "What am I doing, I can't let him do this. But, everyone is loving him right now, and he has done this before! What if this is the first time he isn't able to complete the hill, what then? No, I must let him do this, everyone will admire him." He finally made up his mind, he would allow this to happen, he would allow the peer pressure to continue.

Alex and Sean stood at the top of the hill.

"Wow." said Sean, relaxed, "This is quite possibly the steepest hill I have ever gone down."

Alex, heart racing, hesitantly responded "Yeah. Yeah it really is isn't it."

“I know I can do it but -” he handed Alex a necklace that his mom gave him at his elementary school graduation ceremony. It still fit him. “Give this to my mom if I don’t make it.”

Alex immediately threw the necklace back at him, “No. Look if you’re seriously taking death into account, then there’s no way I’m letting you...”

Sean cut him off, “Alex, I’m joking, it simply chokes me while I go down these sort of hills.”

“Oh”, replied Alex with a sigh of relief, “Okay then.”

It was at this point that people from the bottom of the hill began to shout uninspiring comments such as “You’re crazy Sean!”, “There’s no way you can make it down man!”, and “You need to come back down on foot, I can’t watch you hurt yourself!”. Sean quickly caught onto the comments, and began to reconsider his confidence. He looked hesitantly at the beaten up board, and with a quick shutter, he muttered “I can’t.” He began to walk down the mountain, “This board is too beaten up.”

He was halfway down the hill when Alex shouted after him. “Wait! If you make it down this hill...” he corrected himself, as if to reassure his confidence in Sean, “When, you make it down this hill, you know all the girls down there will love you right?”

“I know, but...”

“But you let the nonbelievers bring you down, didn’t you. I understand, I wouldn’t want to prove that I was greater than their expectations either.” Alex grinned at his own sarcasm.

Sean gave a laugh and immediately sprinted back up the hill, high-fiving Alex the second he reached the top.

“You’re crazy man! Don’t let Alex talk you into anything!” yelled a voice, echoing from the bottom of the hill.

“Hey, I thought you were supposed to be my caretaker?” said Sean to Alex, doubtfully.

“I am, and as a caretaker, I want to make you accepted by the popular crowd. I know you can do this man, that’s why I don’t think it’s a stupid decision.”

Sean gave a nod, smiled, and took a step onto the board. He eyed the entire hill, looking for any bumps or cracks he would have to avoid. At the end of the cliff like drop was a turn in the road that could not be seen due to a couple of trees blocking the line of sight. Sean planned on checking that corner out first, but he figured that if he walked back down, the crowd would talk him out of the deal. He didn’t bother to wear a helmet as he didn’t want to have the least bit of doubt that he could make it down the hill. The sides of the concrete road were paved with bushes and debris that layered the dirt ground, fallen from the oak trees that guarded the fences. He ran his hand through his hair, and simultaneously stepped onto the board with his other foot, beginning his trek down the hill.

The board ran better than expected, and he was picking up a large amount of momentum. He leaned his body forward and put his arms in V-like form behind his back, just as he would on his own board. Ten miles an hour, twenty miles an hour, thirty miles an hour, his velocity was only increasing. The board swerved from time to time, the trucks on the board were too loose. Forty miles an hour, fifty miles an hour. The board was uncontrollable! Sean clenched onto his board for his dear life in any attempt to stop the shaking!

“Car! Car!” yelled Kyle. Sure enough, a grey Toyota Tacoma had just pulled around the invisible corner at the bottom of the hill; no one had accounted for this factor ahead of time.

Sean couldn’t look up, he was too busy fixated on the pattern of the board’s speed wobbles. Sixty miles an hour, seventy miles an hour. The board was bound to flip out from under his feet at any second.

“Jump off the board!” Alex shouted with a roar that seemed to shake the ground. He began to sprint after his friend in a hopeless attempt to stop him. “Jump off the goddamn board!” The car was about thirty yards away from Sean, now screeching on the breaks.

Sean finally heard his best friend, and looked up just ten yards before impact with the intimidating truck. “No.” he whispered to himself as a deafening crack sounded the area.

“Sean! Sean! Sean!” cried Alex, hysterically. Clenching onto the necklace Sean had just given him, he sprinted down the entire hill.

The crowd, previously anxious about Sean’s decent, was now running around in complete and utter anarchy. Screaming and crying were the only two audible sounds at the bottom of the hill. Sean’s body was still in tact, but his face was slightly deformed as if his skull caved in on one side.

“Sean! Sean!”, Alex was now sobbing at the top of his lungs, tripping over himself as he continued to race down the hill.

The truck driver, having immediately thrown on his emergency brake, dashed out of his car the broken boy. The second he saw his face, he jumped back with a shutter and began to shake his head from side to side as his eyes began to water.

Alex finally reached the bottom of the hill. “Someone call 911 right fucking now! Sean! Sean! Are you with us man! Sean!”. He cradled his friends collapsed head. “No. No! No it can’t be! Sean! Sean! We’ll get you fixed buddy! Everything will be okay! Sean!”, Alex tear drops began to wet Sean’s torn shirt.

The truck driver bolted to his car for his cell phone and began to call 911. “Please, please come quickly. A boy just ran straight into my car and there was a crack of some sort. Oh god, please, please come immediately!”

“Sir please calm down!” explained the emergency services, “We need the specific details of what...”

“How the fuck do you expect me to calm down! I just killed a goddamn human!”

Alex, whose body was now numb, heard what the truck driver said. “I just killed a goddamn human” rang in his ears as he hugged and rocked his friend's bleeding body. Vision completely blurry, he looked to the skies for any help he could possibly receive.

“Emergency care is on their way.” the emergency services calmly stated, as they proceeded to give instruction on what to do.

“Sean. Please don't leave me man. We've been through everything together. Please, please don't leave me.” Alex whispered to the lifeless body of his best friend. “Please don't go.” He repeated this for the next ten minutes until the emergency vehicle showed up. “Please don't go.” Screams still rang from the rest of the people who just witnessed the scene.

“Please sir, let go of him.” said the intensified man from the ambulance.

“No! He's fine! He's done this before, he's done this before!” Alex was still hysterical and wasn't thinking properly.

“Sir, we need you to let go of the body.” the medic said, as he attempted to pry Alex from Sean's body.

“Don't say he's a body! He's alive I tell you! He's alive! He'll be fine!”, Alex's eye sockets were now a very darkened shade of tan.

The medic finally pried his hands free from the body, and rushed him into the ambulance. The ambulance took off within seconds of Sean's body entering the vehicle.

Alex curled himself into a fetal position where he stared at the necklace Sean gave him. He pulled the necklace closer to the body, and hugged it as he rocked back and forward.

The truck driver began to yell, “Why? Why must you put this on me god? Why?”.

The rest of the crowd was now sobbing and seeking guidance from Alex who was unresponsive.

“Alex! What the hell do we do now! Will he be alright?” yelled James, “I can’t have this event traced back to my house! I’m reliable for this incident! And you caused it! You made him go back up the hill! You did all of this!”

Everyone realized James was right. If it wasn’t for Alex, he wouldn’t have gone down the hill. They started to pull away from their leader.

Alex looked at James for a second, chuckled in a psychopathic sort of manner, and squeaked in a high pitch voice, “I don’t know.”

He was in no emotional position to talk clearly. He began to whisper his response to himself as he clenched Sean’s necklace to his heart, “I don’t know. I don’t know. I don’t know.”

Alex rushed over to the hospital the second he thought he was emotionally in a better place. The second he got there, he found out a surgery was undergone because Sean’s skull was dented and pushed in towards his brain.

“The only outcome we can offer you is that if the skull was cracked to a great extent in any area, he would suffer permanent brain damage or death due to the exposure of air to the brain.” said one of the doctor’s assistants, whom was sent out to calm the flock of witnesses. “However”, he added, “if there is no crack, he should be fine to go home after a few months of medical attention and surgery.”

Alex didn’t respond, but simply nodded, and hurried to the door in attempt to escape Sean’s parents. Coincidentally enough, right as he was about to leave through the door, Sean’s parents entered. Sean’s mom’s eyes were drenched with eyeliner that created a line down both sides of her cheeks. Her hair was tangled and unkempt, and she had just dressed into her

pajamas as if it was going to be a relaxing night, knowing her “little boy” was happy. The dad, more stern than the mother, was also weeping. He had to ditch his job in order to get to the hospital, so he was still dressed in his work clothes. His arm hung around his wife’s waist.

The mother spotted Alex, where there frightened eyes met with a tension so strong that Alex began to cry again.

“I’m so sorry”, Alex sobbed, “I’m so very very sorry.”

The mom pulled apart from her husband’s arms and clenched both sides of Alex’s head, where a fierce “Slap!” sounded the room. There was fire and pure hatred in her eyes that glared at Alex’s hopeless soul. All the sudden, her firm grasp began to weaken, as her eyes began to clench up and her ferocious face turned into that of a depressed teenager. She began to sob uncontrollably as she clenched Alex’s body to herself, only squeezing tighter and tighter the louder she cried. Alex, with Sean’s mom still wrapped around him, fell to his knees in sorrow, but was unable to produce any more tears. Sean’s father came behind them and wrapped his arms around them creating a trio of mourning. The mother’s clench began to loosen as Alex eased himself out of her grasp, stood up, and walked out the main doors whilst looking back at them. No words were spoken after Alex apologized.

Weeks went by as Alex shunned his parents, friends and education. His parents and school allowed this, they gave him two months to recover from the incident. He spent a great deal of time in his room, looking at the necklace, twirling it back and forth as if there was a hidden meaning he had to discover. He didn’t feel like crying anymore, but rather sitting and doing nothing, a deep state of depression. He would constantly look out the window in his room where Sean would always surprise him when they wanted to hang out. He’d always sneak

under the window sill, and jump up while making a loud noise that startled Alex half to death. At last, Alex couldn't take it anymore, he had to go to the hospital and receive the analysis.

Alex raced out of his house where he squinted at the sun. He hadn't witnessed sunlight in over 5 weeks. He continued into his car, and frantically took off towards the hospital. He raced through the doors, past the counter that was shouting at him to stop, and to his best friend's hospital bed.

"Sean! Sean! I'm back! Are you okay?" Alex exclaimed as he pummeled through the door with excitement. The room's lights were off and the bed looked untouched. Crushed, Alex fell onto his knees with a pain he hoped would never come back.

He yelled at the ground. "Why? Why, why, why, for god sakes why?"

"Why what?" sounded the voice of an angel so beautiful, so recognizable that it sent Alex bawling on the dot. He whirled around, *in an uneasy 180*, to see his best friend with blurry eyes dressed in a patient's gown.

Fin