

## Untitled

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The walk home was a bad one. Jason switched between kicking random things on the street angrily and thinking about how to get out of this - but there really was no way. He looked down at his report card like it was the spawn of Satan. He'd hardly passed social studies. Of course he passed health. Everything else was awful. So far, no one was cutting him slack for being from another state, which in his opinion was not fair. *"You'll just have to get used it,"* Tom had said. Tom said he wasn't really trying. Thomas said one semester was enough to get used to things. But honestly, Tom said a lot of crap that Jason didn't listen to.

Jason stomped on a puddle angrily. He held his report card out in the rain in a feeble attempt to ruin it. It didn't work.

Getting bored with his anger, he tried to think about better things.

He would have his first concert with his band on Friday - if he wasn't grounded. Jason sighed. He would be grounded. There was no denying that. This made him more angry, so he moved on.

He was supposed to meet Lynn on Sunday. That would also likely not happen. This disappointed Jason. He felt that she was the only adult in his life that was worth trusting, even though he didn't know her all that well. There was something about her that was... comforting,, but he had not yet placed what it was. She was the nicest person he had ever met, but he had met plenty of nice people who were not like Lynn. she was incredibly ordinary, but there was something underlying difference in her. Along with the comfort she brought him, there was also

a familiarity to her that was small, but infuriatingly unceasing. He had not placed what that was either.

Jason was now standing at the doorstep. There were no more puddles to angrily stomp on, no more cans to kick, and no more time for thinking. He simply had to ready himself as he unlocked the door. As he wiped his shoes on the inside mat, he expected Tom to yell at him to use the one on the outside instead. Then Jason would say okay irritably in repliace. Then Tom would criticize his tone. It was their daily ritual, though Tom saw it as obnoxious.

Today, however, Tom was not in the living room. Having heard something else, Jason looked around the corner to see Tom and Eric in the kitchen.

Tom was visibly upset, picking up the table and slamming it down, knocking over a chair.

“Take it,” he growled at Eric, pointing to prescription bottle of medication he’d been trying to get him to take for weeks. “Take it!” he screamed.

And just like that, like his own father had done to him so many times, Tom hit him. Eric fell out of his chair.

Tom was still saying things, but Jason was not registering what they were. A part of him wanted to scream at Tom and hit him with such a force that he would be hospitalized. That part of him wanted to protect Even, who was incredibly young, and not as screwed up as Jason. There was still time to fix this. To fix *him*.

But what he saw stirred something in him. This fear that he had not experienced for nearly a year. It brought up many of his memories from the time with his father that he seemed to

relieve all at once. This part of him made Jason want to run away from Tom and get as far away from him as possible.

Jason dropped his report card accidentally, and the paper slid forward into the room. The movement caught Tom's eye, and he turned around. The seconds became elongated. Tom stared at him with his cold, blue eyes. The same as his father's. Tom's expression was of incredible rage, and as he had experienced so many times before with his own father, he felt that Tom might kill him.

He would not fight back.

Jason dropped his bag, turned, and ran.

He ran for his life. Out of the driveway, into the road, and away from Tom. He did not know whether Tom was running after him, jumping in his car to chase him, or leaving him be. Jason was not looking behind him.

As he ran, anger surged through him. He was not sure who in particular he was angry at, but all he knew was that what he felt was almost too much to bear.

He had everything from his previous life swept from under him, only for it to be replaced by this. This was nothing better. This was the same. It was his old life wrapped up in a different way. He couldn't believe he'd restarted - only to have *this*. Only to be running again like he'd been for years with his father.

He turned out of the neighborhood sharply, his lungs burning. He crossed the road without caution, causing one car to swerve, missing him by inches.

Jason was not only angry because of his current situation. He was also incredibly pissed because he was miraculously compelled to pray. The only time he'd ever done that before was around two years ago, in a circumstance where he felt his life was in danger.

That was why he was not fighting back. Fighting back was the reason he had scars on his back, and why he was so adamant on escaping. That was not happening again.