

# A PLACE WHERE NOTHING MATTERS ANYMORE

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The horns of traffic blaring in a tangled melody makes up for the dullness of the southern California day. Luke sits on cement in the sky. He drags his sweaty palms across his wrinkled jeans, thinking back on his life so far. He knows that what he wants to do is the best solution for his problems. He shuts his heavy eyes and inhales the warm polluted air. He holds in the smog; all the engines and horns fade to a muffled hum.

Luke hears a soft groan from his right and his eyes slowly open to a dim lit ceiling. The groan is repeated closer and he turns his head over to his right. Long, wavy, red-orange hair, the shade of a fox's fur, is spread out on the pillow next to him. He follows the hair with his tired eyes to a girl's light-skinned body facing the other direction. A grin of relief spreads from the corner of his mouth when he recognizes the figure as his girlfriend, Julia. Her freckled back is bare and smooth, her slim shoulder blades expand with every breath she takes. She reminds Luke of a divine creature. An angel. He reaches over and runs his hand slowly down Julia's back. The movement of his arm pushes down the warm blanket covering both of their bodies. Luke glides his hand over to wrap around her waist, but stops suddenly at a strange sensation. He moves his hand around her torso and liquid gushes between his fingers and all over his palm. He pulls his hand from under the covers, dripping with blood. Luke's spine sends shock through his body, tightening all of his muscles. He forces his eyes back onto her, his throat is clogged with an overflow of words. He fights with his paralyzed arm and manages to gain enough control to move it. He slowly reaches his trembling hand towards Julia's shoulder to turn her over. His fingers make contact with her skin and a hoarse voice screams into Luke's left ear, "Ay! What the fuck ya doin'?"

Luke opens his eyes suddenly and gasps; he's back up above, the grotesque sun shining down on his sensitive forehead. He grabs his chest and coughs out an exhale, choking on the air filling his lungs.

"I said, what the fuck ya doin'?" repeats the raspy voice.

Luke, still trying to catch his breath, wheezes, "God damn it Damian! You scared the shit out of me! What the hell do you think I'm doing?" He turns over the hand on his chest and inspects it, seeing flecks of dried blood.

To his left, Damian groans, "Well I'd just assumed you'd put some

thought into this. You've been wantin' it for so long, Luke, didn't think you'd be stupid enough to fuck it up now"

"I wasn't fucking anything up okay!" Luke runs his fingers through his thick curly hair, tearing through tiny knots on the way, "I was just getting lost in my head."

"Yeah, I noticed."

"Then why are you questioning me?" Luke exclaims, "You know why I'm here and you know I want you gone!" Luke looks up in frustration at the sky and sees a single bird flying as if it's chasing something that isn't there. He hopes silence is the next thing that comes out of Damian.

"Ya know I'll always be here for ya Luke," Damian sneers, "All these years and ya still haven't gotten rid of lil' ol' me."

"I know I can't, But that's why we're here isn't it?" Luke looks back down below at the city. "You went too far this time Damian. I loved her."

Damian scoffs, "Oh relax ya baby, there's plenty of bodies in the cemetery," he chuckles, "that girl shoulda known better than to affiliate herself with a weirdo like you."

"I told you her fucking name was Julia! And I loved her!" Luke slams his fist against the concrete under him.

"Luke, ya aren't even capable of loving yourself. If you loved yourself we wouldn't be here right now, overlooking a world you couldn't love either."

Damian boasted

"She wanted to help me...she was going to help me get rid of you."

Luke can feel the urge to cry. He pushes back the tears and squeezes his eyes shut. "I didn't deserve her. She was too good for me."

"Well shit, now she's gone. No way she'd be able to help ya now, especially not after what you did." Damian giggles.

Luke tightens his fists, "Don't you dare blame me for that! We both know that was all you, just like all the other times you've made me hurt people" his lips start trembling, "It...It's always you...every fucking time." He gasps, "Oh god." his heads falls into his hands and he fights back his tears again

"No Luke. You, and only you, know that it's me. What we both know is that no one is going to believe ya."

Luke holds his palms against his eyes as salty tears make their way down his nose. Violent images from as far back as his childhood cloud Luke's mind. Dead animals, injured people crying from either physical or emotional pain, all caused by Luke's inability to control Damian. Luke tries to accept that Julia is his fault.

"She is your fault," Damian interrupts, "ya should've known there is no helpin' ya."

Luke wipes his eyes and snuffles, "Well.. it's not gonna matter for much longer." He focuses his blurry eyes to the view down below.

"As long as you're here it matters, but down there is where it no longer

matters, where nothing matters." Damian pauses, "but you're still here, and here everything matters."

Luke inhales smog and exhales it back into the world. The blaring of car horns fill the hot summer air. "You're not gonna hurt anyone ever again."

"Ya know there's only one way to do that. Sure ya haven't bitched out?" Damian bellowed.

Luke looks back up for the bird, but it's disappeared. He shuts his heavy eyes and opens them back to that bed, under a soft blanket, close to Julia again. He stares at her and lifts his hand to reach out to her, but stops. Luke pulls his arm back and sighs, "I'm... I'm so sorry." He closes his eyes and reopens them to the building looking over the city. "I'm ready."

Luke hears Damian's sigh and harsh voice in his head, "I'm ready if you're ready. Ya know, I'm gonna miss ya kid."

Luke sits up and takes a deep breath. "I wish I could say the same fucker." He leans forward and leaps off the building with his arms spread open, embracing his freedom.