

You feel cold. As we lie side by side, between the sheets at 9 PM, my senses are hooked to that sensation. Never mind the curvature of your chest or the scent of your hair; you feel cold. In the past three months we've been seeing each other, this is the most uncomfortable I've ever been. You cross one of your legs over mine, your left over my right, as we lay nose to nose. The sound of passing vehicles drifts through the window, and while we prepare to sleep, the city remains wide awake.

"Rena," you begin, timbre lower and huskier than normal. "How long can you go without opening your eyes for me?"

Oh, it's this question again. You and I have already had this conversation before: "What's the point in opening them? I can't see, anyways," I'd retort, and then you would huff and puff about how gorgeous my eyes must be, but I just don't know it. "You can't even look into a mirror," you'd argue, "so how would you know how they look?" And I would explain, "Sometimes, sight isn't everything," because it isn't.

"And as I've told you before, Mason," I find myself repeating, "I had an accident when I was young. I'm certain if they're not ghastly, they're at least damaged pretty badly."

"Oh, please. They'd replace your eyes with fake ones nowadays," you retaliate, irritation beginning to mold your tone. Shocked, I twist away from you, feeling the sheets beneath me shift to the best of their ability. You press further: "You know people find it uncanny when they can't actually... you know, make eye contact with you?"

I didn't know that- actually, I didn't know either of those things. I sigh "no" as you wrap your arms around me, return us to a nose-to-nose position, and proceed to cup my face. Your grip is firm, and I'm starting to get a feeling that you're not letting go. It's weirdly quiet outside; you're getting colder.

“Listen to me,” you mutter. You’re so quiet; I can barely hear you over my breathing. “I don’t believe you.”

“What?” I whisper. Chills slide down my spine.

“I don’t believe that you’re blind,” you say.

I open my mouth to retort, but your finger crosses it as you drill deeper. “I believe you’ve been lying to me, and your answer just about proved it.” Your finger brushes away from my lips.

“I-I don’t understand.”

“There’s absolutely no damn way you didn’t know about prosthetic eyes.”

“That’s your criteria? That’s why you think I’m lying?”

“You don’t open your eyes because it’s easier, because it’s easier to make friends if people feel bad for you, right?”

“N-no, that’s not... that’s not- “

“Then prove it!”

The crescendo of your accusations push me over the edge, emotions boiling over as my eyelids unveil the truth while my tears spill onto the pillows. I feel a draft where I didn’t; I can’t hear if you’re breathing. The crickets outside mock me, chanting, “She has no eyes!” and several agonizing seconds later, I slam my eyelids shut. You didn’t need to see that; no one does. You remove your grip, weight easing from the bed, and soon I hear cloth sliding across your skin. I pull the comforter over my body, flipping opposite your presence.

“I’m going to leave now,” you declare shivering, “and I never want to see you again.”

I listen to your footsteps vacate my apartment while I scan for a pillow to cover my face. “How ironic this is,” I laugh softly, sadly, into it.

I could never see you, Mason... even if I wanted to.