

"Izzy."

"Yes, Jay," I said sweetly.

"Have you watched the YouTube video at all?"

"I've been trying not to," I said honestly. I'd seen clips of it, but it was hard for me to watch.

"Well, I've seen it. Many times. And if I didn't know any better, I'd think I was watching a completely different person trying to sing right now, than the one in that video."

"Jesus, Jay. I'm doing the best I can."

"No, you're not." He sighed and rubbed his cheek. "Can I ask you something?"

"What?"

"Do you relate to this song? Even a little bit?"

I swallowed, thinking of the words. *I'll try to fix you*. Yes, I related. The song was about us. I'd known it all along. That's why it was so difficult to sing it.

"Turn around," Jay said.

"Why?"

"Just turn around so that you're not looking at me. I want you to close your eyes and forget that I'm here. And then I want you to sing to whoever you picture when you hear the lyrics. Sing like you're the only two people in the world; like your whole heart is hanging out there."

I did what he said, but it seemed silly since the one I pictured was standing right behind me.

"Ready?"

I nodded, closing my eyes as the first guitar notes kicked on. I sang the first verse, harmonized with his pre-recorded part. I squeezed my eyes tighter and clenched my fists at my side as I listened to the words in his solo verse. They affected me. *I can't be what you need me to be*. I finished the song, and the room was silent. I tried to gather my wits before turning around. He hadn't stopped me, but he hadn't told me it was good either.

I turned around slowly, thinking I'd see him behind the glass, adjusting something or other on the sound board. But he wasn't there. He was standing right beside me, very close. I reached up to take off my headphones, but his hands covered mine and we lifted them off together. He tossed them aside, his emerald eyes never looking away.

We stood toe to toe, our bodies just a hair apart, but not touching. If he was waiting for me to do something, he might be waiting a while. This time I was following his lead.