

Won't You Die Tonight For Love?

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/42395586) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/42395586>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/M
Fandom:	HIM (Band)
Relationship:	Ville Valo/Original Female Character(s)
Characters:	Ville Valo , Original Female Character(s) , Original Male Character(s)
Additional Tags:	Romance , Spice , Character building , Slow Build , Slow Burn , Spicy , Music , 2006 , Flirting , Eventual Smut , Eventual Romance , Angst and Hurt/Comfort , Past Alcohol Abuse/Alcoholism
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-10-15 Updated: 2024-04-18 Words: 21,006 Chapters: 11/?

Won't You Die Tonight For Love?

by [mer_mcwie](#)

Summary

A joint European tour for Lithium and HIM sets off a spark between lead singers Jaana and Ville. As the paths of their careers become intertwined, so do their lives, and soon, their hearts.

Notes

Hi there, and thank you for reading! I've first started writing this work somewhere around 2008. A lot of it was published on websites that no longer exist, but some of it has been saved and recently came back to me. In an attempt to reconnect with this nostalgic time in my life, I decided to start re-writing it. I have such fond memories of this time, when bands like HIM were high in the charts, and going to a concert would be the only thing on my mind for weeks (before and after). I'm a Serious Adult now, in a Serious Relationship (not with Ville), but reading fanfics and writing this story has allowed me to reconnect with a joyful, innocent inner child that lives on somewhere inside me.

Of course, none of us who read or write fanfics want to live in our current reality, so here are some important takeaways.

The story takes place in (or around) 2000-2004, but it's not set to a specific timeline, and for the purpose of enjoyable writing I will sometimes feature newer HIM songs. So please bear with this fictional timeline :) Ville should have been 28 here, and Jaana is 26. Jaana's band Lithium is also fictional. Their songs are sometimes mentioned and are kindly borrowed from other bands or singers; I will make sure to give credit when appropriate. You will probably find Evanescence among it more frequently, as I was (and am!) a big fan. Nonetheless, Jaana is not inspired by any existing person or band, she's a character of my own who I've been writing about for a long time. She's close to my heart and putting her out there feels a bit scary - probably because she's partly modeled after me (her personality that is, not the rockstar life.. obviously). All band members live in Finland, although they are not 'explicitly' Finnish; it was a deliberate choice to not feature long-distance relationships or other nationalities explicitly.

CHAPTER NOTES: This chapter is a bit lengthy and heavy on the back story, but I wanted to give you guys a good sense of who my characters are and what their stories are. The song is of course My Immortal by Evanescence.

I hope this story will be able to give you the same sense of comfort and joy as it did me. And I'd love to hear your comments and feedback!

Love,
Mer

All that glitters

Pre-performance butterflies in her tummy, Jaana looked at herself in the mirror as she finished braiding her hair down the middle, leaving the rest of her long black hair covering her shoulders. She usually wasn't this nervous for a show anymore, but this festival was the biggest one they'd ever played.

She did her make-up the same way she always did: foundation, eyeliner, mascara, lipstick – nothing heavy, yet outspoken. Melancholy struck as she got up to put on her outfit for the show for the last time, at least for now. Even though it was hardly anything special – a plain black top, black skater shirt, fishnet tights and her favourite pair of silver glitter Doc Martens – it had become her signature outfit throughout this tour, and she would miss putting it on each night.

The backstage area was nothing special, but that was to be expected for a relatively small band, still so new to the scene. Even though Lithium started ten years ago as a bunch of high school friends trying to put a new twist on symphonic rock, none of them ever expected to be playing Finland's biggest rock festival. Through all sorts of ups and downs and life events – breakups, children, careers started and ended – they had never lost their passion for music, and the band decided to reunite three years ago to give things another shot. A record deal and a year of writing and recording followed, and tonight's festival would conclude their first-ever European tour. It was small, sure, and they played just thirty minutes most nights, but their album was finally starting to pick up across Europe, and tonight's festival hopefully wouldn't be just the end of their tour, but also the beginning of a new phase for Lithium.

It was still early in the day – they arrived late last night, and spent the night in a nearby hotel before heading back to the venue for rehearsals that their manager had kindly arranged for them on the small stage. Only a couple of other bands were around yet, and certainly none of the big names would come and rehearse this early. They'd been messing around with the setlist, this being their first real tour and all, and Jaana really wanted to perfect it for tonight's big show.

Jaana was Lithium's primary songwriter – the guys contributed, of course, but the main themes and lyrics all came from her. It had taken some time getting used to exposing her heart on stage like that, but the audience took well to their music and Jaana's confidence had grown over these past few months. Some nights, they would skip a certain song, especially the more emotional ballads that tended to feel too close to her heart. Tonight, she wanted to give it her all.

Sitting down on the worn out sofa, a cup of green tea with honey in hand, Jaana looked around the dressing room and suddenly realized she missed home. She was looking forward to being back home in her Helsinki apartment, to enjoy some well-deserved peace and quiet. Her cats surely missed her, and with her best friend Damian moving into the same building, she wouldn't have to worry about being lonely.

The future of Lithium was a bit uncertain for now, not yet having scheduled recording sessions for the new album (or written most of the songs), but their record label was trying to secure them as support act on a major band's European tour, and Jaana knew she could always go back to teaching if this didn't work out. Not as exciting as being a rockstar, sure, but she'd always enjoyed it and the structured life that came with it. A part of her felt dread, though, at the thought of picking her old life back up again.

Altogether, the tour had taken no less than six months with the occasional breaks in-between shows. Being a new band in the scene means they shouldn't be picky, and so they toured as supporting act with two bands and accepted all sorts of random festivals and gigs. It was fun, and some time away from home had been a welcome distraction for Jaana, her last relationship ending only a week before they left for their first show. Jaana had tried to put a positive spin on it, thinking she could at least enjoy being single while on the road, but the truth was it had been difficult.

Although she didn't regret it – this relationship had been exceptionally hard on her, and she was happy she finally mustered up the courage to end it – she needed a lot of time to get to terms with her feelings and understand what happened. She hadn't been in the mood to meet new people and so she spent most nights on the bus or in hotel rooms reading and writing new songs. The past few weeks, though, she could feel the heaviness of sorrow being lifted from her slowly, and found herself having fun for the sake of fun. Life had been so serious and heavy; but she suddenly felt lighter, meeting new people and simply enjoying herself. She hoped coming back to her old life in her apartment wouldn't kill this vibe. But for now, they still have one show left, and she would give it her all.

She walked up to Damian, Lithium's guitar player, and kissed him on the cheek. "Jaana, look at you! You're already dressed up." She winked at him, saying "At least one of us is ready.". Damian and she had known each other since childhood and had been inseparable for most of their lives. People often thought they were secretly a couple, but the truth was nothing had ever happened between them – if anything, they were more like brother and sister.

She looked at Damian questionably and said teasingly: "Is this what you're wearing for our biggest show yet?" His long black hair falling loosely on his shoulders, black leather pants and a leather jacket revealing his tall skinny figure and tattooed chest. Although she never looked at him that way, she knew Damian was objectively attractive, yet he didn't care much for his female fanbase. He liked to party, but like Jaana, he was a deep thinker, too, and meaningful connections were important to him.

Just as their discussion on preparations and outfits got heated, their bass player Brandon walked into the room. Usually dressed in the same baggy jeans and plain black tee, Brandon did not disappoint or surprise. His wavy, short brown hair tucked loosely underneath his baseball cap, he put down his beer as he grabbed the bass and tweaked the strings. "Sorry I'm late, guys. Was finishing up some important business with that girl from last night." Jaana rolled her eyes as Damian snorted. Brandon's behaviour was nothing new to them, but sometimes Jaana was amazed at how many girls fell for him. Must be that rockstar-charm.

She and Brandon had briefly dated a few years ago, but their conflicting personalities quickly put an end to their romance and there was nothing between them now, aside from the occasional – but never acted upon – flirty comment. “You’re not even the last one to arrive, don’t worry,” Jaana said. “Alex isn’t here yet.” Their drummer Alex was usually the timeliest one out of all of them, but Jaana hadn’t seen him around. He wasn’t a big party animal, not since him and his wife had their first child a year ago, but he was passionate about the band and their music. Being away from home wasn’t easy for him, though, and if more tours would come up, Jaana knew he might have to reconsider his commitment to the band.

Just as Jaana picked up the mic to start playing without him, Alex walked onto the rehearsal stage. “And thank you for showing up too, Alex.” she said, a playful tone in her voice. Walking up to his drumkit, Alex explained: “I ran into some guys backstage from HIM. They had a commercial event from their record label so they got here early too. I don’t remember their names, but there were two of them. They said they saw our show last week in Espoo, and really liked our music!”

Jaana smiled. Alex was always so passionate about the band, and would feel genuinely happy and excited whenever one of the established bands knew about them or recognized them. She felt her heart fluttering a bit at the mention of HIM – in the decade or so that HIM had been kicking things up in the Finnish metal scene, Jaana and her friends had become fans of their music, and seen them live a number of times. She tried not to pay attention to any more mention of HIM now though, wanting to focus on getting into her performance. She breathed in deep and waited for Alex to kick off the song.

*You used to captivate me by your resonating light
but now I'm bound by the life you left behind
Your face it haunts my once pleasant dreams
Your voice it chased away all the sanity in me
These wounds won't seem to heal, this pain is just too real
There's just too much that time cannot erase
When you cried, I'd wipe away all of your tears
When you'd scream, I'd fight away all of your fears
and I held your hand through all of these years
and you still have all of me
I've tried so hard to tell myself that you're gone
but though you're still with me, I've been alone all along*

She looked up, realizing her eyes had been closed throughout most of the song. This was a painfully personal one, written shortly after her breakup and not yet released on album. They wanted to try and play it tonight, to give the audience a teaser of what was to come. Her music having a commercial purpose was something Jaana struggled with at times, but that’s simply how the business worked, and she felt lucky to do this for a living. Nevertheless, this song took something out of her, and she couldn’t stop the tears falling from her eyes as she sang the last chorus.

Waiting for the band to finish up the song, she grabbed the mic: “Let’s not play this song tonight guys,” she said, laughing through her tears. As she sat down on one of the speakers, she felt Damian coming up behind her, gently rubbing her shoulders. Maybe playing this

song wasn't such a good idea after all. She wanted to cherish that feeling of joy that had finally come back to her, not soak in her own sorrow. Before she could even begin to make up her mind about the song, she looked across the stage into the empty venue, and her heart skipped a beat.

Was that..? She'd seen HIM live enough times to recognize their lead singer, although she couldn't recall his name. A cigarette in hand, black beanie on his head covering up his dark curly hair, he was standing next to the exit and seemed to be staring at her intensely. Before she could sort out her thoughts, she heard Alex shout "Hi there!" from behind the drumkit. Laughing at his enthusiasm, the band greeted their sole audience member as he nodded and waved back while lurking on his cigarette.

Jaana adjusted her hair and noticed a familiar feeling, a type of butterflies that didn't seem related to the show they would be playing soon. What was this feeling? Excitement, attraction? How long had he been standing there? She knew he was exceptionally handsome – everyone in the scene was aware of the predominantly female fanbase surrounding him – and she always enjoyed his stage presence, often accompanied by inappropriate comments from her girlfriends. Before she could make up her mind about what was going on inside of her, she heard the singer go "Sounds good guys! See you later!" before exiting through the door.

A moth into a butterfly

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Man, I can’t believe Ville was here. And you did amazing Jaana. Hopefully he’ll put out a good word for us with the label,” Alex said.

“What do you mean, a good word with the label?” Jaana asked.

Before Alex could say anything, Brandon interrupted: “If you hadn’t spent so much time reading books and feeling sorry for yourself, you maybe would’ve caught up on some of the gossip. They signed HIM to our label last month.”

Although Jaana was surprised, Brandon had a point – she wasn’t one to keep up much with the commercial side of the scene.

“Do you think that’s the major band Tero was talking about when he discussed teaming us up with them on tour?” Damian chimed in.

Jaana felt that tingle again, and this time she knew it was both excitement and dread. Going on tour with HIM would be a dream come true, for sure, but she also missed home. For now though, she didn’t want to think about the next tour yet – she only wanted to focus on putting an amazing show up for her audience.

Grabbing a pack of cigarettes from her purse, Jaana walked outside and sat down on the emergency stairs at the back of the venue. She wasn’t a regular smoker, but every now and then she could really use one to help tame her tension or deal with whatever intense emotion she was feeling. Dread, excitement, sadness, happiness, it all came to her at once, and she didn’t know what to focus on.

As she blew out the smoke and looked up at the light blue sky, she suddenly heard a deep, low voice saying: “Should you be smoking before the show?” She looked to her right and saw it was Ville, whose name Alex had so kindly reminded her of, now leaning casually against the stairs she was sitting on.

“I think I should be asking you the same thing,” she replied, nodding at the cigarette in his hand.

He smirked and looked into her eyes, that same intense stare she caught him doing earlier. “I really enjoyed your performance. That was a beautiful song. I don’t think I heard it on your album,” he said.

She looked up at him, feeling surprised and honoured that he had listened to their album. Smiling softly, she said “That’s correct. I wrote it just before we went on tour and finished it

on the road. It will be on our next album, but I wanted to include it in tonight's show to give the audience an idea of what's to come. Considering how well I handled it.. I'm not sure we will be playing it tonight," she sighed, looking away.

"I could sense it was painful for you to sing," Ville said softly, eyes locked on hers. "But I thought it was beautiful and heart wrenching, and I would love to hear you sing it again."

She was taken aback by this straightforward compliment, and could feel herself blushing slightly. "You know, they always tell me heartbreak writes the best songs – I mean, it's what my career is based on," he said. "But I'm sorry you're hurting like that. Truly."

Jaana could almost feel herself starting to cry again and swallowed her tears. She was definitely not going to cry in front of the singer of a band she adored. Surely it was the time of the month, the excitement for the show, the stress of the past few months, all culminating into this one night, messing with her emotions and putting her on edge. And part of her knew it was also her letting go; how happy and light she'd felt over these past few weeks had been a blessing, a feeling she wasn't sure would come back at all. Everything felt overwhelming, and she wasn't sure if her tears had been sadness or relief.

"That's kind of you to say. I.. I haven't been hurting as much lately anymore, but I wrote this song when I did, and it just.. hits me sometimes. It's been a lot. A long tour, a lot of things happening, a lot of shows, a lot of nights with too little sleep." She caught herself rambling, and suddenly wondered why she was opening up to him like this.

Quickly regaining her composure, she put a smile on her face and said: "Anyway, enough about that. You know, I would be lying if I said I wasn't secretly a bit of a HIM fan. I've been to quite a number of your shows, most recently the one in Tampere," Jaana said.

"Really?" Ville raised his eyebrow, adding sarcastically: "And yet you didn't lose your cool for even a second when you saw me standing there just now."

Jaana smiled. "I guess my mind was caught up in other things. Plus, I wasn't even sure it was you. I heard you're usually surrounded by a horde of screaming fangirls."

Ville threw his head back and laughed, cigarette between his teeth, before looking back up at her: "To be fair, I was hoping for at least one screaming fangirl on these stairs, but I guess I didn't impress her enough during any of these shows."

Now it was Jaana's turn to laugh, before saying: "Well, perhaps you can impress me later." As much as she struggled letting people get close to her on an emotional level, Jaana tended to be playful and outgoing in how she communicated, and was always up for a harmless flirt. Plus, she had a feeling Ville could handle it – and wouldn't mind it.

He grinned and, before winking at her, said: "You'll have to come backstage after the show to find out then." Jaana smiled and stood up, putting out her cigarette as she walked down the stairs. Her face suddenly only inches away from Ville's, he continued to stare into her soul with his piercing green eyes. "Count me in," Jaana said smiling, and as she turned around to walk away, she could feel Ville's eyes on her back with every step she took.

Chapter End Notes

If you've been reading before, this might seem familiar: I split chapter 1 into 2 parts, this being the second half. New chapter coming up soon!

A lie into the sweetest truth

Chapter Summary

Jaana joins Brandon and Damian for the HIM gig. Jaana and Ville meet up backstage.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The gig had been truly and well amazing. The crowd was hyped from the first song, and even their new material – although not My Immortal, which Jaana wisely skipped – was well received. Her previous doubts and fears seemed to have taken the back seat as Jaana was riding an adrenaline high. Her head was buzzing, and she couldn't quite figure out whether it was a post-gig buzz, or her conversation with Ville - there had definitely been something in the way Ville looked at her and spoke to her that captured her attention. She realised the tour had kept her in her own little band-bubble, and although they felt like family, she was by now longing for new connections and perspectives.

Before heading out to see the other gigs, she slipped into their tiny dressing room to change into something more comfortable – she exchanged the skater shirt for black skinny jeans, and put on a simple black hoodie to go with her black top. Her glitter Docs made room for AllStars, and she sprayed on some perfume. Heading back out to the festival, Jaana and the band first said their goodbyes to Alex – while the rest of the band was traveling home tomorrow morning, he had decided to drive back home after their gig, eager to be with his family.

In the back of her mind, Jaana was worried about him – she knew he was finding it more and more difficult to be away from home, being the only parent among them. He was so passionate about the band, and yet she wondered if they did go on a major tour with HIM, whether he would be able to last. HIM was – obviously – the main band for that night, and so Jaana, Brandon and Damian headed to the main stage around 11. Brandon got them all beers, eventhough Jaana had planned to stay relatively sober, as they would be getting up early tomorrow morning to go back home.

“So this is the band we’re going to be touring with, huh? This is gonna be awesome!” Brandon shouted in her ear as HIM played “Right here in these arms”. Jaana smiled as Damian shouted back: “I think Jaana will particularly enjoy it!” She looked at him questioningly, but before she could ask what he meant, the band started playing the first notes of her (and everyone’s) favorite song – Join me in death. They had moved close to the stage by now, and as Jaana and Brandon eagerly sang (or, more like screamed) along to its famous bridge – “this life ain’t worth living” – they seemed to catch Ville’s attention.

For a brief moment, his piercing green eyes locked onto hers – that same intense stare he'd gave her earlier. "*Won't you die tonight for love?*" he sang, and Jaana could swear she caught a brief smile from him, too, before he looked away. Brandon was smirking at her as Jaana could feel herself blushing. Was he.. flirting with her? Surely it was just because he recognised her from earlier, and because she'd turned into the screaming fangirl she teased him about. But something about the feeling he gave her told her this wasn't ordinary.

"Come on Jaana, don't be lame," Brandon teased as they exited the stage. "We can go backstage for just one more beer, right? HIM will be there, and some of the other bands. We can do some proper networking," he grinned. "I'm not sure you could make a great spokesperson for the band at the moment, Bran" Jaana said smiling, eyeing the two beers in his hand – both, of course, for him. "Come on, it will be fun. Last night out and all. We need to do a proper goodbye!" "I'll literally see you next week, Bran. We live in the same neighborhood." Jaana grinned, but decided to join him anyway.

The backstage area for the main stage was crowded, and the air felt heavy with smoke and the scent of beer and sweat. Typical, Jaana thought. She was going to miss this – at least, until their next tour. She scanned the area, but – no sign of Ville. Together with Damian – Brandon had gone off to God knows where – she headed to a seating area that seemed relatively quiet. Jaana sat down on the edge of the couch, as Damian laid down and lit up a cigarette.

They chatted for a while about the band, and work – Damian was too smart for his own good, Jaana always thought, and never seemed to be satisfied with his job. He quit his job in finance right before they went on tour. Being a fulltime musician would be perfect for him – he'd get to focus on the thing he loved most, while having plenty of time to read books and watch philosophy lectures while on the road. She noticed she'd been restless, though, and while she didn't want to admit it to herself, she knew she was on the lookout for Ville. She didn't want Damian to notice, but a part of her had apparently really been hoping to continue their conversation here.

Shortly after Damian got up to get them another beer and disappeared into the crowd, Jaana heard a familiar voice behind her go: "Hey, you made it!" Something in Ville's voice seemed to indicate he was genuinely happy to see her, so she turned around on the edge of the couch to face him. "Of course I did. I wouldn't want to miss a private audience with Mr. Rockstar," she teased.

Ville smiled, but something in his smile seemed to have an air of melancholy, and Jaana wondered if she'd been too forward. "Save that title for yourself," he retorted. "I was only able to catch half of it since we headed into soundcheck, but that was an amazing performance."

Jaana smiled. "Thanks, I'm glad to hear that. We loved the HIM gig tonight as well. So much energy from the crowd."

There was a brief awkward silence between them, Jaana started fidgeting with her hair – something she only did when she was nervous, which apparently, she now was. Did he feel

that, too?

Ville smiled, replying: “Yes, this was a good one. I think we’re all tired from being on the road, and this being our last show for the next few weeks gave us the final push to give it all our energy. We have some festivals in Finland coming up this summer, but other than that it should be relatively quiet.”

What was it about his eyes?, Jaana thought. Even when he spoke of mundane things, his eyes seemed to pierce right through her, and it made her uncomfortable – albeit not in a bad way. “Doesn’t it ever get dull and repetitive? I think that’s one of my fears, that playing the same songs too often becomes tiresome,” Jaana asked.

“Not really,” Ville responded, as a loud group of drunk band members passed behind him and managed to push him closer to where Jaana was sitting. Realising he had to look down just to speak to her, she stood up and leaned against the back of the couch. “It’s easy to get used to it, but I try to remember the fans who put in time and effort just to see us play. To hear songs that I wrote. That’s still mind-blowing to me.”

Jaana smiled, realising she was pleased with this answer, and perhaps had unconsciously been testing him. If there was one thing she hated, it was musicians who let their fame turn them arrogant. Before she could respond, Ville took a sip of his beer and asked: “If I’m not mistaken, I think I saw you going full-on crazy fangirl in the audience earlier.” Jaana laughed, as the backstage area seemed to quieten down – finally. The group of loud drunk men – she could have sworn she saw Brandon in there too – had taken their shouting, singing and dancing outside, and the atmosphere suddenly felt more relaxed.

“Fine, you caught me. It’s one of my favorite songs. And that line gets me every time.” Ville smiled, as he leaned over to put his cigarette out in the ashtray behind her, inching closer to her face before backing away swiftly.

“It’s always funny to me to hear people sing with such enthusiasm to a song that I wrote in the depths of my despair,” he grinned, but Jaana could sense there was truth to it. “Well, you do have a way of making heartbreak sound incredibly catchy,” Jaana retorted.

“Are you always this complimentary?” Ville asked in a teasing way, a sparkle in his eyes. Before Jaana could respond, some commotion started on the other side of the room, as security personnel hastily ran after three young women who sneaked into the backstage area.

Ville gave her a look that Jaana couldn’t quite make out – he looked amused, but something told her this wasn’t the first time this happened. “Looks like they’re finally coming for you,” Jaana said. Ville put out his cigarette – once again leaning over her to reach the ashtray – and said in her ear: “If you’ll excuse me..”

Jaana couldn’t help but shiver slightly at the feeling of his lips so close to her ear, and Ville seemed to notice, as he grinned at her before turning away and telling the security guards to calm down. She suddenly felt out of breath. What was it about this man? They’d barely had a normal conversation, but somehow he seemed to have a massive effect on her. Was it the alcohol, the adrenaline high from the show? She was normally great at keeping people at a distance – she was the one who teased, not the other way around. But something about Ville

captivated her in a way she couldn't explain and hadn't experienced before. He was charming, he seemed like a nice person, and she knew from his music that he was a hopeless romantic. She watched from a distance as Ville signed CDs and took photos with the three women. He was kind, she gathered – even though they weren't supposed to be back here, he still took time to give them the experience they wanted. Jaana watched as all three women gave him a hug, and were escorted out by security.

He walked back to the couch, Jaana now sitting on the armrest, and apologised for the interruption. Jaana grinned. "What are you, like, in a major band or something?" Ville laughed as he pulled a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket and offered one to Jaana, an offer she gladly accepted. He sat down next to her on the edge of the couch, Jaana pulling up one leg to make room for him, and turning to face him. She could feel him continuing to stare her down as she lit her cigarette and blew out the smoke.

"I honestly don't mind. The fans can get a little crazy, but they mean well. What I do mind is them interrupting an interesting conversation with a beautiful woman." He said as he grabbed an unopened beer from the nearby sidetable. Jaana blushed slightly. Although she was used to men complimenting her appearance – it somehow felt different coming from him. She teased: "I bet that's what you said to those girls as well." Ville laughed and said: "You don't accept compliments easily, do you?"

Although it was meant to be funny, there was a sense of truth to it. Jaana smiled and said: "Fine, no, I don't. But coming from the man whose career is built on writing songs about beautiful women, I do feel honored." Ville smiled, too – and they both knew she meant it. "Are you saying you want me to write you a song?" He asked as he lit another cigarette.

Jaana laughed. "Now that would be an honor for sure."

The rest of the evening seemed to go by quickly, as their conversation moved into more mundane things – their shared interest in collecting rare vinyls, crazy tour experiences, movies and music. Jaana let him in on her Fleetwood Mac obsession – showing off the Stevie Nicks tattoo on her upper arm and ranting about why metalheads should appreciate rock more – whereas Ville told her all about his favorite movies, from *City Lights* to *Bambi*, and the music he'd been writing for the next album. Something about talking to him was just so easy, Jaana thought. They seemed to hit it off effortlessly, casually moving on from one topic to the next. Even when Jaana told him about her job – she recently completed her PhD in postcolonial literature and had spent the past two years teaching several classes at the University of Helsinki – Ville seemed genuinely interested, asked the right questions, and made an effort to understand how on earth she could be passionate about research and music simultaneously. Although there were occasional flirty comments from both sides, they were conversing as friends that had known each other for years.

Jaana realised she had been completely unaware of her surroundings for a while when their conversation was interrupted by Brandon and a bunch of his friends walking back into the backstage area, singing along loudly to ABBA's "Dancing Queen" that was blasting through the speakers. As they scurried through the room suddenly filled with people, Jaana shook her head smiling, watching the group of now dancing drunken males, and feeling Ville's eyes scanning her body briefly.

When she turned back around to face him, he was staring straight into her eyes. His lips suddenly only inches away from hers, Jaana realised she had no idea what to say. Before either of them could make up their minds on how to continue the conversation, Ville's manager Seppo walked up to them and patted Ville on the shoulder. "The bus is waiting, Ville," he said. "Shit, what time is it?" "It's 2:30am. You knew we'd be leaving early. See you in 5," Seppo said as he walked off.

Ville turned back to face Jaana. "I'm sorry our conversation must come to an end here, but I would like to see you again. I mean, I heard we're going on tour together, but I'd like to see you before then. You know, to discuss the tour." He said, and Jaana couldn't tell if he was joking - his pokerface stayed on for sure. "Right, tour preparation," Jaana grinned. Ville grinned back and said: "I mean it, I'd like to hear more of what you have to say. When we're both back in Helsinki, let's catch up." "Sounds good to me. I look forward to it," Jaana said. As he got up, Ville's hair brushed her forehead ever so slightly. "As do I, Jaana," he said, before turning around and walking off.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for being inconsistent in posting - life happened - but I intend to pick it up again from here on and new chapters are coming up! The first few chapters remain a bit heavy on the character background, obviously to set us up for a good story. Hope you enjoy!

Burning brightly

Chapter Summary

Jaana's past comes to light as Damian warns her about Ville.

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning: Mention of domestic violence - not explicit.

Jaana looked around the room and realised it was nearly empty. She heard some vague shouting outside, but with HIM having left, most others seemed to have left, too. She realised Damian had never come back with their beers, and felt slightly guilty for being so distracted. She couldn't quite wrap her head around everything that had happened today – and since it was close to 3am by now, it had been a long day for sure. Lithium had played their biggest gig yet, they were almost certainly going on tour with HIM – the rumours seemingly confirmed by Ville mentioning it himself – and she and Ville somehow seemed to hit it off.

Jaana couldn't quite put her finger on it, but there seemed to be an undeniable attraction between them. While she would never act upon it that fast, she was certainly curious to know if it would lead somewhere. He said they'd meet up, but then again – he was a *rockstar*, with a busy schedule, and women lining up for him. Jaana wouldn't want to be part of that. She'd learned to be careful after her break-up with Mikael. He was abusive in a way she didn't know would affect her – it always seemed to only happen to other people, until it happened to her. Throughout the three years they'd been together, he had managed to highlight her flaws consistently, make her feel bad for displaying any emotional needs, shutting her down whenever she wanted to express herself. He had fits of rage that seemed to get worse the longer they were together, and that Jaana tried to brush off as the result of stress at work.

It had been difficult coming to terms with it, and Damian and Alex had eventually been the ones to convince her to break up. Mikael's abuse was subtle, not overt, and for all his flaws, he could be kind and caring too. But he was unpredictable. And perhaps that had been most damaging. Not only did she let it happen, she didn't notice, despite warnings from her girlfriends and bandmates – something she still couldn't help but blame herself for.

She'd spent quite some years in therapy before meeting Mikael, coming to terms with a difficult childhood. And while she considered herself to be relatively healed by then, it wasn't until the last year in her relationship she started to notice her childhood patterns showing up again, realising she had subconsciously been shutting down. Not speaking up when he was

angry. Refusing to express her needs. Allowing him to scream at her and harass her. Turning the other cheek, time and time again, because she was too afraid to act.

Mikael had never physically harassed her – until the night Jaana gathered all her courage and broke up with him. Brandon had been waiting outside, just in case things would escalate – which they did. If anything, this incident had exposed Jaana once and for all to his true nature, and while she had been grieving, she hadn't missed him since.

While the wound sometimes felt fresh, Jaana noticed that the past six months had started to slowly become lighter and easier. She'd been having regular phone calls with her therapist while on the road, and felt like she was coming to terms with what had happened. Being kind to herself became easier, and she was able to see Mikael for what he was rather than blame herself. While she hadn't even considered dating again, she knew she would choose a different type of treatment from men in the future. She wouldn't mind having some fun with Ville, to see where things go, but she knew she'd have to be careful. For now, though, she seemed to be getting ahead of things, she reminded herself – it was *one* conversation. Or, well, two. And before walking outside, she realised they didn't even exchange phone numbers.

Jaana walked out into the now nearly empty outdoor smoking area, the air feeling crisp and cool, and before she could take out her phone to check for messages, Damian walked up to her. “Hey, I lost you!” Jaana said. “You seemed.. busy,” Damian grinned. “So I met up with some guys at the smaller stage.” “We chatted for a while,” Jaana said, trying to be casual. “He’s nice, and apparently we really are going on tour together, so it would be good to get to know him.”

Damian was silent, his sleek black hair now tied neatly into a ponytail and his rockstar leather outfit exchanged for jeans and a Lithium t-shirt.

“I saw how he looks at you, you know,” he said after a while.

“What are you talking about?” Jaana asked, realising she sounded more agitated than she meant.

Despite being a few months younger, Damian had always been protective of her – especially since her breakup. He perhaps urged her most fiercely to get away from him, took her in after she was kicked out of their house, and who helped her build her life and herself back up.

“And I heard you talking just now,” Damian added, ignoring her question. He leaned onto the wall next to her and breathed out the smoke.

“You know I will always have your back, whatever you do. But I’m worried you’re getting into something too quickly.”

Jaana raised an eyebrow: “Based on one conversation?”

She was being defensive, and as she said this, she realised that meant he probably had a point. If anything, she herself was worried she'd be getting into something too quickly. There seemed to be a spark between her and Ville that she couldn't deny. Damian just looked at her, and Jaana sighed.

“Fine, I guess we were flirting. He seems genuinely nice, you know.”

“I know. But you know what they say about him. He's hot as fuck, Jaana. Even I can see that.”

They both laughed, before Damian's tone turned more serious again. “Women go crazy for him. It does something to a man, you know, being declared a sex icon and having fangirls surround you and cut off locks of your hair to use in their spells.”

“That's.. oddly specific,” Jaana responded.

“I read it in an interview. It doesn't matter –“ Damian continued. “He seems like a casanova to me. You can't be that popular and not have some sort of God complex. I just don't want you to end up hurt again, Jaana.”

Jaana turned her head to face him. “From the brief discussions I've had with him, he doesn't seem all that self-involved as you think he is. He's nice to his fans, he seems to care -”

“The point is you don't know him, Jaan, and six months ago you barely wanted to be alive because of how badly Mikael treated you.”

His remark was painful, reminding her of a time she'd rather forget. “You know, I thought you would be more supportive. I'm trying to enjoy life again, have some fun, make new connections, flirt with some lead singers. I'm trying to move on from being the person Mikael hurt, to being Jaana again. And this is what I do.” Jaana said as she threw her cigarette onto the empty street.

Damian was silent for a few moments. “I just want you to be careful, Jaan. I don't want you to get hurt.”

Jaana breathed deeply. “I know. I'm sorry. And I promise to be careful. We only agreed to meet up in Helsinki, and since you're my new neighbor, you can drag me away at any time you deem necessary.”

Damian smiled, but seemed a bit hurt, and Jaana felt guilty for snapping at him. “I mean it, Dame. Thank you for looking out for me. I just want to explore what it's like to be alive again.”

Jaana said, as she gave him a hug. Together they walked back into the backstage area, grabbed their stuff and headed back to the hotel, for one last night on the road.

In the heart of this autumn I fall

Chapter Summary

An unexpected text leads to an unexpected encounter.

Chapter Notes

Every time I get kudos, my heart does a little happy dance! Thrilled to know people are reading this and that this fandom isn't dead. Thanks for your support - I'd love to hear from you in the comments!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After saying her goodbyes to Brandon and Damian who decided to stay up until the bus leaves in the morning, Jaana opened the window, laid down on the comfortable but small hotel bed and breathed in the fresh, crisp air. It was difficult to wrap her head around the fact that the tour was now officially over. She was looking forward to going home – she had a lovely small apartment in a quiet neighborhood of Helsinki, and Damian would soon move in nextdoor. She was officially still on leave from the university, and although she had some papers to grade and writing to finish, she knew she had a decision to make. If Lithium would truly go on tour with HIM – their manager Tero would confirm with the label as soon as possible – then surely that would mean she'd need to prolong her sabbatical, or perhaps even consider quitting her job entirely.

Jaana continued her musings as she got up to make some tea, and grabbed her Samsung flip phone to check for any calls or messages. The blood in her veins turned to ice when she saw his name in her inbox: Mikael. For a second she felt as though she couldn't breathe and her heart was racing. She breathed in deep and opened the message. "Hope your gig went well. I miss you. Would like to see you when you're back in H. X, M" it read.

Jaana could feel her stomach churning before she could even comprehend what it said. Had he been keeping track of when she'd be playing and coming home? Had he been *here*? She quickly dismissed that possibility, as he'd never cared to show up for concerts when they were still together. Maybe some of his friends were here, or he'd been checking the band's website.

She hadn't spoken to him at all since that fateful night, and wasn't expecting to hear from him. She has made it very clear that she never wanted to talk to him again - and Brandon vouched to punch him in the face if he ever showed up. *Coward*, she thought. *Did he really think he could win me back with a simple stupid text, after all that happened?*

Without thinking twice, she deleted the message, and his number at that. Thankfully they lived in different neighborhoods, and with Damian living nextdoor, she definitely wouldn't have to worry about unpleasant visitors.

Jaana quickly realised she wasn't scared, or sad, and like *hell* she didn't miss him back. If anything, she was angry – at him having the audacity to suggest they meet up like nothing happened. And it was that realisation – that apparently his behavior towards her was not enough to make him feel ashamed, that he still felt she deserved it (and maybe a small part of her did too) – that broke something in her, and tears streamed down her face. She was so angry – at the wasted time, the love lost, the way he had consumed her and years of her life. Used her to make himself feel better with complete disregard for her needs. She walked over to the window and breathed in the fresh air, watching the traffic go by. After a few minutes she gradually stopped crying, and her breathing returned to normal. This whole experience felt cathartic - a final *fuck you* from Michael just as she was building her life back up. A small part of her felt happy at how little she was affected by it. She didn't have the urge to respond, to defend herself, to get mad at him - instead she tried to support herself through her pain, in ways Mikael never had or could.

She reached into her pockets – if there was ever a time for a cigarette, it would be now – and realised she'd smoked her last one with Ville earlier tonight. Oh right – *Ville*. For a brief moment he'd completely disappeared from her consciousness, and she realised he'd been on her mind in one way or another for most of the day and night. She grabbed the phone that she'd thrown onto the bed just a few minutes earlier, and called Brandon.

“What's up Jaan?” he answered in his usual cheery fashion, sounding drunk as hell.

“Where are you guys? I need a smoke,” she said, sniffing as she wiped the tears from her eyes.

Brandon must have heard something in her voice, as he said: “We're still outside of the hotel, waiting for Tero. Are you okay?”

“I'll meet you down there,” Jaana said, as she grabbed the key to her room and headed out.

Jaana walked down the stairs into the small yet cosy hotel lobby, adjusting her hair on the go, when suddenly she froze in her tracks. There he was, sitting in an armchair in the lobby, flipping through a magazine. *What on earth is he doing here?* she thought. She admired him for a second – black beanie pulled up over his curly hair, dark jeans and a plain black t-shirt – when suddenly Ville looked right at her.

His green eyes caught her blue ones and for a second time seemed to stand still. Suddenly Jaana realised she was still standing there, frozen on the stairs, and felt slightly embarrassed. She wasn't lovestruck or starstruck, but just surprised – how many times can you possibly run into the same person in one day?

Short one this time. Thanks for reading :)

Also - the previous chapter lost a paragraph while copy pasting - I updated it now (right before Seppo interrupts them). It contains details about Jaana's work, should you get confused when reading about it here.

As the night drowns in dawn

Chapter Summary

A twist of fate brings Jaana and Ville together in the hotel lobby.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ville smiled as he put the magazine down, leaning back in his chair as Jaana walked over. She hoped whatever was left of her mascara wouldn't reveal the fact that she'd been crying only a few minutes earlier. Jaana smiled as she approached him, asking: "Are you actually stalking me now?"

Ville grinned and said: "I know this looks creepy, but I swear I didn't know you were staying here. Our bus broke down and we needed a place to stay. Seppo is over there arguing with the manager to get us rooms." Jaana looked over and saw Seppo, Linde and Mige in a heated discussion with the hotel manager, who seemed unlikely to cooperate.

"What are you doing down here?" Ville asked, a hint of concern in his voice.

"I.. I really needed a smoke, and I ran out earlier, so I was looking for Brandon or Dame." Ville studied her carefully for a few seconds, before saying: "I can help you out there. I make sure to never run out of cigarettes. But – are you okay?"

Something in the way he looked at her made Jaana tear up again. *God, I'm tired*, she thought to herself. Lack of sleep was common for her, but always made her feel more unstable. Combined with everything that had happened today, and the text just now.. she was trying her hardest not to break down completely.

"Yeah, no, I'm.. fine," Jaana said, and she couldn't stop the tears welling up in her eyes and her voice cracking as she tried her best to sound fine. Ville sat up straight and gestured towards the armchair next to him.

"God, I'm sorry," Jaana said softly as she sat down next to Ville. "I know it doesn't look like it, but I don't usually cry multiple times a day in front of strangers," Jaana said as she wiped the tears from her face, sensing Ville studying her carefully.

"I just.. it's been a rough day, and a long tour, and I never get enough sleep, and I got a text from my ex who I wanted to completely erase from my memory, and on top of that I ran out of cigarettes." Ville smiled, but there was something in his eyes that seemed to be genuine concern – sympathy, even. Something about him made her open up – made her want to open up to him. On some level, Jaana thought, maybe she knew that he was to be trusted – that he would understand, and wouldn't judge her.

To Jaana's surprise, Ville leaned over to her and grabbed her hand – lightly, gently, but his touch felt warm and nice and somehow made Jaana tear up even more.

“I'm sorry,” he said, his green eyes staring into her mascara-covered ones. “I know what it's like – how tiring it gets, the touring, being on the road, the lack of sleep. It can make it much harder to take care of your emotional wellbeing. And texts from horrible exes.. I've had my share of those, too,” he said, a wry smile on his face.

Jaana used her free hand to wipe the tears from her face. They were both silent for a brief moment, as Ville's thumb gently stroked her hand.

“I broke up with him right before we went on tour. That song you heard earlier today – it was about him. I still can't sing it properly. And the tour has been so.. healing, in so many ways. I was completely over him from the moment we broke up, and the tour allowed me some room to breathe, to have fun, to escape. To get out of the city where we were together. And now that I'm finally looking forward to going back home again, he decides to be selfish and remind me he exists,” Jaana said.

She realised she was rambling, but it felt good to let it out to someone who she didn't have any history with. Ville continued to look into her eyes as she was speaking, a soft look on his face. “Why did he text you?” he asked.

Jaana snorted: “I don't even know. He wanted to see me, he said. When we broke up it got so bad that he actually hit me – “ Ville's thumb stopped stroking her hand briefly, as he seemed taken aback, anger flashing on his face.

Jaana continued: “He hit me, and Brandon had to come and basically rescue me from his apartment, and then he texts me asking if I want to meet up when I'm back in Helsinki?” “Fuck..” Ville said softly.

At this point, Jaana no longer worried whether she was a burden to him, whether she said too much – his words seemed sincere, and the way he looked at her felt.. *real*. Her hand in his was.. intimate, but somehow felt completely natural.

“Thank you for hearing me out,” Jaana said as she softly squeezed Ville's hand.

He smiled, saying: “You don't need to thank me. I'm just glad to be of any help at all, and you can keep talking for as long as you like.”

The kindness in his voice was enough to make Jaana tear up again, and she couldn't help but laugh at herself. “God, I'm a mess, I'm sorry. Can we go and have a smoke, please?” Jaana said, as they both stood up to head outside. “Of course,” Ville said, and before she could do anything, he pulled her into a hug, arms wrapping tightly around her.

God, she smells nice, Ville thought. He tried his best not to inhale her scent too obviously, arms wrapped around her as her head rested on his chest. But there was something about this woman – how she felt in his arms, how she'd looked at him earlier, as though she could see right through him. She didn't seem to treat him differently because of his status, like most women he met – if anything, she knew what it's like, to be so consumed by band life. She'd

joked about his fangirls, rather than seem jealous or upset. And she didn't keep him at a distance, wasn't starstruck or thought he was just a shallow romancer – she'd poured her heart out to him, listened to him go on and on about his interests, and now she let him hug her. It felt like a privilege to him, to be able to be this close to her – a familiar feeling, one that both scared and excited him. Was he falling for her already?

Jaana leaned into him, her head on his chest. Something about this felt right, and while a part of her grew terrified at that thought, she mostly just felt the comfort she so desperately needed. Ville's arms held her tightly as she breathed into his neck. She felt safe, held, *secure* – and tried to savor that feeling as they both gently released each other. "Come on, let's go outside," Ville said, as they walked out and he opened the door for her.

"God, this whole day has turned out even crazier than I expected," Jaana sighed as she lit the cigarette Ville handed to her.

"First I run into this famous guy," she said jokingly, making Ville laugh as he exhaled, "... then Lithium plays at our biggest festival yet, then said famous singer invites me backstage and wards off his fangirls to talk to me, then I burst into tears.." Jaana went on, as Ville laughed.

"Are you saying I surpassed your wildest expectations?" he asked. Jaana grinned: "Well, I definitely wasn't expecting to run into you twice today. What kind of twist of fate is that?"

Ville smiled, dragging on his cigarette, smirking as he said in a joking way: "Maybe the universe just really wants me to give you advice on how to turn your broken heart into a career.."

"I will be sure to take you up on that, but I hope this is the last time my heart will be broken in the near future." Jaana was sure he felt it, too – that they were not saying *something*, something they both felt – that it wasn't a coincidence for them to run into each other.

Ville lit another cigarette as he stared into her eyes. "I think a heart like yours doesn't deserve breaking anyway." Jaana blushed and was taken aback by the fluttering in her stomach. She smiled softly, saying: "You must be quite the expert on that.." – knowing full well that she was only trying to joke to hide how she was truly feeling.

Ville smiled back, but his tone was serious as he added: "I mean it. You know.." He paused briefly, seeming to gather his thoughts. "I'm not sure if I've known real love – I've been in love, the kind that sucks you in and eats you alive, and yet there is always.. distance, envy, conflict." He sighed, drawing on his cigarette. Jaana watched him speak, feeling grateful that he was now opening up to her.

"And something tells me that's not how it's supposed to be. Maybe I'm a hopeless romantic, but I think love should lift you up, not pull you down, no matter the circumstances. My point being.." Jaana studied his face as he inhaled – his expression soft, yet somehow melancholic – sadness hiding in his words. "I'm not sure what my point is," he grinned sheepishly. "But I hope you know that any man who treats you the way he did is not worthy of your love or even attention. You have a kind heart. You deserve the same."

Jaana smiled at him, hearing Damian's words in the back of her mind - and realising Ville was nothing like how he described him. He wasn't a casanova or a womanizer – he was kind, he thought about what love means, he seemed to care for her and wanted to make her feel better. “That’s sweet of you to say. Thank you,” Jaana said as she smiled and looked back into his eyes, putting her cigarette out on the street. Before either of them could say anything, Brandon's voice echoed down the street as he and Damian walked towards the hotel entrance.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! Thanks for reading :)

Death's in love with us

Chapter Summary

As he says goodbye to Jaana, Ville reflects on his romantic choices.

Chapter Notes

It's been a while - hi! I've had a crazy busy time at work but I'm finally inspired to write again and intend to post a bit more in the coming weeks. I'd love to hear from you - thanks for reading!

The four of them continued chatting outside the hotel for a while – both Brandon and Damian seemed to take a liking to Ville, and Jaana was relieved that Damian seemed to think more highly of him than he'd done during their chat. Her thoughts occasionally drifted back to the brief intimate moment she'd shared with Ville earlier – the way his arms had felt around her had somehow felt so soothing and comfortable, familiar even, as though she'd been there many times before.

It was hard to believe they'd only met some twenty-four hours ago, yet nothing about him felt truly foreign or unfamiliar. Even when she had opened up to him and cried in front of him, he didn't neglect her or feign interest just to make her feel better: the way he looked at her and talked to her seemed to come from a place of genuine concern. Part of her still felt embarrassed, yet her protective mechanisms somehow seemed to be taking the back seat around him. Jaana definitely wasn't planning on dating anyone anytime soon, but she couldn't help but notice there was something going on between them that was more than just casual friendship – if anything, there was at least a spark of attraction. Aside from the occasional look or brief touch, Ville had been a complete gentleman, and yet part of her couldn't help but wish he wasn't.

Ville threw a quick glance at Jaana out of the corner of his eye, just as she and Brandon burst out laughing recalling some high school memory. She looked much more casual now, as she'd clearly been getting ready for bed – her long black hair tied back in a ponytail, glasses on, wearing simple jeans and an oversized hoodie – and yet he still found her equally gorgeous. There was something about her that seemed to make his heart beat faster, and talking to her made it feel like they'd known each other forever.

Despite being a hopeless romantic, he hadn't been lucky in love thus far – the few women he'd dated over recent years usually seemed to be with him for his status and fame, and ever since HIM rose to fame so quickly, it had been nearly impossible to make a meaningful

connection. His most recent relationship had ended a bit over a year ago now, and for the first time in his adult life, he'd intentionally stayed single for longer than a few months.

He'd definitely needed some time alone to recover from his ex, who seemed to be a culmination of all the poor choices he'd made in romance: she'd been demanding, jealous, and increasingly focused on the material benefits of being with him. While he'd made perfectly clear what she was getting into, it seems she couldn't come to terms with his career being an all-encompassing factor in his life. Staying up late to write music – often the hours where he'd find himself most inspired to create something new – had become nearly impossible as it upset her that he couldn't stick to a 'normal' rhythm. Not to mention that every time he'd been away from home for shows or touring, he'd often had to console her or deal with angry texts as she couldn't handle the distance.

Dating him wasn't easy, that was true – he knew he could be difficult, could occasionally get too caught up in writing and creating and spend too little time on his significant other, and being away from home so much was hard for most of his past partners to accept. It had been anything but a healthy relationship, and his friends had more than once tried to open his eyes to this reality: that she was asking him to make sacrifices he couldn't possibly make, and offered little in return.

Yet he was loyal and a hopeless romantic, and not one to give up easily or turn down demands of the woman he loved, no matter how unreasonable they might be. So, when he finally ended it he'd promised himself to stay single for a while, focus on himself and the band. And while it had been peaceful, a part of him had been growing increasingly lonely.

He couldn't help but feel like he had so much love to give, like he wanted to share his thoughts and struggles with someone who would get them, not someone who would dismiss him. The chat he had with Jaana backstage seemed so casual, and yet it meant much more to him than it might to others – being able to connect to strangers who treated him as more-or-less equals was so refreshing, and his soul was in dire need of this type of connection.

He could tell she was fiery, and yet he'd been equally endeared at how vulnerable she was with him earlier. And yet it was obvious that she was still hurting, and the last thing he'd want to do is take advantage of that. When she told him of the abuse she endured, a part of him burned brightly with longing to treat her the way she deserved to be treated. And yet – he knew he'd have to steer clear of any romantic thoughts about her.

He was definitely one to get carried away by love, to get in too deep too fast, and for his own sake he wanted to be more careful than he'd been in his past relationships. Nevertheless, he knew he'd wanted to see more of her – at least as friends, if nothing else. With her teasing comments and the looks she gave him at times, he had a feeling the flirting was at least mutual. He was nothing like the womanizer the media sometimes proclaimed him to be, but he definitely took pleasure in flirting with the right women. It was a game, but not one that he played simply to get a woman into bed – he wasn't one for one-night-stands at all. But romancing and flirting with beautiful and interesting women was definitely something he didn't shy away from. And while he'd occasionally been growing tired of life on the road, the prospect of a tour with Lithium – of spending time with Jaana every day – sparked a joy in him he could not yet explain.

The rest of the night seemed to go by quickly – they stayed outside chatting for another hour or so, before all deciding to finally catch some sleep before their buses left in the morning. Upon seeing the looks exchanged by Jaana and Ville as they debated how to say goodbye, Brandon and Damian quickly said their goodbyes and headed back to the hotel. With Jaana leaning into the wall, Ville’s face was suddenly only inches away as he moved closer to her.

“Well, unless you’re planning to hide out in my hotel room, I’m guessing this will be the last we see of each other today,” he said, lighting the cigarette in his mouth.

Jaana raised an eyebrow: “What kind of suggestions are you making, Mr. Rockstar?”

Ville grinned – part of him desperately wanted to retort with an equally flirty comment, but he didn’t want to give her the impression he was after anything indecent – not yet, anyway.

So he pulled himself together, saying: “I suggest noting of the sort, Miss Fangirl,” – Jaana laughed – “but if anything, I would like to see you again.”

Her blue eyes seemed to twinkle right back at him as she responded: “I’d like that too. Here, let me give you my number,” she said as Ville pulled his phone out of his pocket, handing it to her. A silence passed between them – it wasn’t awkward per se, but both of them were clearly considering how to say goodbye. After a brief pause, Ville pulled her in for a hug, mumbling: “I guess this is goodbye for now, then.”

Jaana cherished the feeling of having his arms around her once more, wondering if it would be the last time - a part of her secretly hoping it would be the start of many more to come, but she quickly turned those thoughts away. "Thanks for today, I had a lot of fun. Talk to you soon, okay?"

"Talk to you soon." Ville confirmed, as he watched her turn around and head into the hotel.

Let's fall apart together now

Chapter Summary

Back home in her Helsinki apartment, Jaana's evening takes a surprising turn.

Chapter Notes

This chapter was fun to write! Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A couple of days later, Jaana woke up in her sunny Helsinki apartment. She was immediately greeted by her two hungry cats, so she got up to get them breakfast – and make some coffee for herself. It felt odd to be home again after being on the road for so long. She'd spent the past few days in solitude, speaking to friends on the phone but leaving it at that – she felt she desperately needed some time to herself.

So much had happened these past months, let alone the last couple of days on tour, and she definitely felt she was still processing it – Mikael's text still bugged her every now and then, and Ville frequently slipped into her mind. She realized she kind of missed him – or at least, longed to talk to him. She'd given him her number but hadn't asked for his, and so all she could do was hope he would text. It occupied her mind more frequently than she liked – so she kept telling herself that they only spoke for a couple of hours, he must meet women all the time, maybe Damian was right, you shouldn't have *cried* in front of him, of course he is busy, he must think you're ridiculous.. And still, she felt *something* whenever she thought of him: she was attracted to him, for sure, but there seemed to be another feeling growing, one that she was absolutely not ready to feel again.

Sipping her coffee, Jaana looked around her apartment, the many plants carefully watered by her friends while she was gone. It was a small apartment, but she was happy with it and felt it reflected her personality perfectly: warm hues with the occasional gothic elements, and lots of books, CDs and vinyl. It had been almost 6 years ago since she bought it, and thankfully she'd been able to sublet it in the brief period she lived with Mikael.

Jaana absolutely adored this apartment: it was a 1900s townhouse split in two homes, situated in a cute, centrally located neighborhood in Helsinki. She'd carefully decorated the small hallway behind the stained glass front door with gothic chandeliers, lots of plants, and some pictures on the walls. Upon entering, the kitchen could be found to the left, decorated by a large vintage wooden table and black velvet chairs.

Opposite the large room was the sitting area by the windows – a large, comfy red couch, with a side table and a small TV in front of the windows. Her apartment looked out over a park at the back of the building, and she was always grateful to have such a green and open view.

The reading corner, tucked between the kitchen and bathroom, was perhaps her favorite part of this house: not only had she managed to fit a large armchair and two tall bookcases, it also housed her vinyl collection and vinyl player, the walls decorated with her favorites. Her bedroom and bathroom were at the back of the apartment, decorated in mostly dark red tones, with her queen-size black iron bed graced by a Queen Anne wardrobe and matching dressing table. Anything vintage that she could get her hands on tended to find its way back to this apartment somehow.

Jaana spent the afternoon unpacking and cleaning the apartment, having been so tired the past few days that she hadn't gotten around to it yet. Being home meant she was much better able to catch up with friends, and so she spent most of the afternoon on the phone to one of her closest friends Sanna. She'd known Sanna almost as long as she knew her bandmates, and while they saw each other much less frequently, their friendship had always been strong.

They obviously had a lot to catch up on – Sanna's recent engagement, the official upcoming opening of her bakery restaurant, and of course Jaana's experiences while touring. Admittedly Sanna went a bit crazy when Jaana mentioned the upcoming tour with HIM, making some comments about the lead singer being hot, but Jaana bit her tongue. She didn't mention Ville, and she wasn't sure why – something about her wanted to figure out what she was feeling herself, first, before allowing someone else into the conversation.

After stocking up on groceries, Jaana cooked herself some risotto and curled up on the sofa with a book, and a Depeche Mode vinyl playing in the background. While she was enjoying the peace and quiet of being at home, she couldn't help but feel restless. Adjusting back to normal life after months filled with traveling, late nights and constant company was not easy, and she knew it might take a while for her to feel back to normal.

Luckily she'd have some things to focus on in the coming weeks – Sanna's bakery opening, a meeting with the band's management in two weeks to discuss the tour and their new album, and a research paper she needed to finish – which *also* meant coming to terms with her other career as an academic. She'd never really decided to pursue one over the other: she enjoyed both, but when the opportunity for Lithium's tour came along, she knew she had to go with it and see where it would lead. Taking a break from teaching and finishing several jobs on the road had been fine for now, but when the possibility of touring with HIM presented itself, she knew she'd have to make a final decision sooner rather than later – another issue that had been keeping her thoughts busy these past few days.

Just as she got up to make herself a chai latte, Jaana's phone buzzed. She grabbed it from the sofa and her heart skipped a beat: an unknown number on the display. Could it be..?

“Just realized I never gave you my number. How's being home treating you? -Ville”

Jaana smiled. A simple message, and yet – it meant that he was thinking of her. Without thinking much, she typed a response.

“Well, let’s see - the cats are happy I’m back. Homecooked food and clean showers are nice. But it’s a little quiet. How about you?”

A few minutes later, her phone buzzed again.

“What’s homecooked food like? I’m struggling with the quiet, too. My poor soul is not used to it anymore.”

Jaana grinned. *“Lemon risotto tonight. You’re happy to come try it out sometime,”* Typing it made her pause briefly. Was she being too forward? But if anything, she’d like to be friends at least, and surely there was no harm in dinner.

“Dinner and company? Where do I sign up?”

“At any given restaurant in Helsinki, I guess – you will have plenty of fangirls excited to keep your company.”

“Are you always this funny? It’s your company specifically I’m interested in.”

“Well, the offer stands, and I feel honored. Depeche Mode is keeping me company tonight.”

Jaana smiled as she put her phone back on the counter and started boiling water. Just a minute later, her phone buzzed again – longer, this time, and she realized it was an incoming call. She could see it was Ville – a nervous feeling flashed over her – but as she answered it, she didn’t hear his voice. Rather, she heard static, and then familiar music playing over his speakers.

*I feel you, your heart it sings
I feel you, the joy it brings
Where heaven waits, those golden gates and back again
You take me to and lead me through oblivion
This is the morning of our love
It’s just the dawning of our love*

“Depeche Mode! What a coincidence!” Jaana exclaimed, smiling.

“Yep. I’m not sure I mentioned I’m a huge fan, but it seems you have exquisite taste in music,” she heard that by now familiar baritone voice, and she realized – however crazy it sounded – that she’d missed him.

“You didn’t mention it, no. I’m playing Songs of Faith and Devotion on vinyl. It’s a rare first edition,” Jaana added, resulting in an enthusiastic exclamation from Ville.

They continued chatting about their respective vinyl collections for a while, as Jaana moved herself and her cup of tea to the windowsill, opened the window, and lit a cigarette.

“Weren’t you an occasional smoker?” Ville asked, with a hint of a tease in his voice.

“Shut up,” Jaana grinned, cigarette between her teeth.

“So aggressive. Are you always like this?”

“Not always. I can be very nice if I want to be.”

Jaana couldn't help but grin at her own comment. She heard Ville inhale sharply and could tell he was grinning too.

“Right, like keeping me company and cooking me that lemon risotto?”

“If you promise not to make judgmental comments about my not-so-occasional smoking habit, sure.”

She heard him laugh. “Promise.”

“So, you missed me that much you just had to call me already?”

Ville let out a low chuckle. “Truth be told..” A slight hesitation followed. “Without sounding too cheesy, it's not often I get to have good conversations with beautiful and talented women, and being the selfish bastard that I am, I couldn't let another chance at that slip.”

Jaana smiled, appreciating his honesty.

“Aww, I'm flattered. Isn't sounding cheesy kind of your job?”

Ville laughed his deep warm laugh again. “Ouch. So much for being a fangirl I guess.”

Chuckling, Jaana added: “Alright, I'm sorry, that was a low blow, but you set it up perfectly.”

“Well, I haven't written any new material in weeks, so I'm not sure it will be my job much longer.”

“Writer's block, huh?”

“Yeah.. it often happens to me after tour.”

“Finally run out of cheesy lines?”

He huffed, cigarette between his teeth as he added: “More like run out of writing material. Being single for a long time and having to write love songs is not easy.”

“Then why have you been single for a long time? I'm sure there are plenty of interested candidates out there.”

Jaana knew she sounded casual, but in truth, she was anything but.

Ville let out a soft laugh. “And that's precisely the problem. Despite resulting in plenty of new songs, none of my past relationships have been especially.. successful. My girlfriends either can't deal with my career, or they get jealous, or they just care about money and status. And ever since Razorblade Romance, the US tours, the online fans, the constant harassment by the Finnish tabloids.. it's such a demanding career, and it doesn't make me easy to be with.”

Now he was the one being vulnerable, she realized. Was he lonely?

"I'm sorry to hear that. I can't imagine how difficult that level of fame must be for your personal life, for relationships. I mean, what those tabloids write about you.. I don't envy you." Ville scoffed and mumbled a curse word as Jaana continued: "And adding to that your status.. unironically this time, I can only imagine it must be difficult for the women around you to deal with goth girls across the globe worshipping you."

"Yes, but at the same time, I didn't ask for it, you know? I write songs, I love hard, and I'm a hopeless romantic, but that doesn't mean I cheat. It somehow feels like I constantly need to prove that I'm not a bad person," Ville said in an agitated tone, before quickly regaining his composure. He sighed: "I'm sorry, that wasn't directed at you. You just pinpointed the problem perfectly. You can't imagine how many times I've had to explain this, I still get a little fired up when the topic comes up."

"That's okay," Jaana said gently. Clearly this was a sensitive topic for him, and she wanted to comfort him rather than make him feel on edge. "You don't have to defend yourself, really, I get it. And I think anyone who gets to know you better should be able to see that you're really just a good guy with cheesy lines, not a womanizing sex icon."

Ville laughed, and Jaana knew she'd done her job well. "Are you saying I'm not a sex icon? I'm hurt." Jaana snorted, as Ville continued: "But seriously, thank you for being kind. I don't deserve it, but I appreciate it. I shouldn't complain too much anyway."

"You should, it's okay. Just because you're happy about a lot of things doesn't mean you shouldn't be allowed to complain about others."

"You have a lot of wisdom to offer me tonight."

"Well, what can I say," Jaana said, lighting another cigarette. "I've spent a lot of time in therapy. Anyway – " She tended made plenty of jokes about it, but quickly realized she'd rather not get into it now. "Have you noticed the moon tonight?"

"The moon?" Ville asked surprised. "No, why?"

"It's a supermoon tonight. I've been staring at it for a while. Apparently it's kind of a rare event."

She heard Ville mumbling, curtains opening. "Hmm, it seems I can't see it from here."

Jaana stared up at it, through the trees surrounding the building. A special sight indeed.

"Are you sure you're not just looking out the wrong window?"

"I tried several, and no. It seems the trees that I carefully chose to block me from paparazzi, are also blocking my view of rare natural phenomena."

They both sat in silence for a bit, as Jaana listened to his breathing on the other side of the line. She suddenly felt tired. Then, Ville asked: "How do you feel about a midnight walk? I'm realizing I haven't left the house in a while, and this supermoon seems as good an occasion as any."

Jaana felt her heart flutter briefly and looked at the clock – was it midnight already? She paused, a warning sign flashing inside her mind: *don't get into things too quickly*. But God, she was enjoying his company, and a walk in nature sounded good right about now.

“You know what, I think that’s a great idea.”

“Well, I’m relieved,” Ville said gently. They agreed to meet at a forest area located at a ten-minute walk from Jaana's apartment; Ville would take a taxi and meet her there.

She quickly got up, a tinge of excitement and nervousity rushing through her. *Was this a date?* No, of course not, she quickly told herself. They were friends, or becoming friends, nothing more. She ran into the bathroom and sprayed on some light perfume. Looking at herself in the mirror, she deemed her ponytail good enough for now, just some eyeliner and mascara would do the trick. Sweatpants and an old t-shirt would *not* do the trick though, so she quickly slipped into some black skinny jeans and an oversized Pink Floyd hoodie to keep her warm on this chilly spring evening. Finally, she put on her favorite pair of purple Doc Martens and grabbed a small black cross-body bag from the coat rack to hold onto her phone, cigarettes and keys. She took a deep breath as she closed the door behind her, and set out for the spot where Ville would meet her in fifteen minutes. No matter where tonight would lead her, she knew she’d at least get to enjoy Ville’s company once more.

Chapter End Notes

Who doesn't love Depeche Mode, amirite?

A kiss worth dying for

Chapter Summary

Jaana and Ville's forest walk takes an interesting turn.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Helsinki Central Park was quiet and mostly deserted, late at night on a weekday. Ville checked his phone for the time, his thoughts racing while he waited for Jaana. He felt an intricate connection with her that he couldn't explain, and the fact that she was meeting him now meant she must feel it too. Or did it? Perhaps he'd been too forward. Perhaps she was intimidated by him, after all. Something about her had given him the impression that she wasn't scared of his fame, of his status; that she could somehow pierce through the image that was crafted of him. Was she using him to get over her ex? He quickly dismissed the thought. Even though they only met so recently, the conversations they had made him feel like he'd known her much longer. Lost in thought, he heard a – by now familiar – voice behind him say: “Hey you”. Ville turned around to find Jaana looking comfortable in jeans and a hoodie, a soft smile on her face. He didn't stop to think before turning around and pulling her in for a hug, which she seemed happy to take part in.

They spent some time walking around the park, the cool night air a welcome companion, before sitting down on a bench by the water. Ville pulled a pack of cigarettes and two mini bottles of vodka out of his pockets. “Are you always this well-prepared for midnight walks?” Jaana grinned, grabbing a cigarette from the pack Ville held in his hand. “Don't even start.” She said, as she saw Ville raise an eyebrow at her out of the corner of her eye. He handed her one of the small bottles and they sat in silence briefly, cigarette smoke filling the air. Jaana pulled her legs up and turned sideways, sitting cross-legged on the bench, her knees touching Ville's legs. Their conversation tonight had been mostly lighthearted and casual, but tension had clearly been building between them. There was a connection between them that neither of them could quite comprehend. They were so easily able to switch from deep conversation about past relationship traumas to discussions about mundane things like the music industry, and none of it felt even remotely awkward.

“I've actually been trying to drinking less lately,” Ville said. “It's so easy to get lost in it, you know, being on the road all the time.. To be honest, I forgot I still had these in my pockets from a party last week.” “I wasn't complaining,” Jaana said, taking another sip. “I also try not to drink when I'm not on the road, but.. it's not always easy.” Ville smiled softly, watching her out of the corner of his eye. *God, she's fucking stunning*, he thought. “Plus, when the singer of some big famous band offers you a drink, you don't say no, right?” Jaana said with a teasing smile. “I think that's when you *especially* say no,” Ville grinned. “Plus, Seppo has been bugging me for ages now that drinking is bad for your vocal chords..” “Worse than

smoking?" Jaana said. "You're one to talk," Ville grinned, pulling out his pack of cigarettes. "How many of my cigarettes have you stolen tonight?" "Hey!" Jaana laughed, briefly touching his hand as she took the pack away from him, lighting another cigarette.

"You know.." Ville started, staring at his hands as Jaana took another sip of her vodka. "Know what?" she asked, Ville remaining silent, pulling one of his legs up so he was directly facing her now. "I'm glad I ran into you that day," he said. As he looked up, he found Jaana's eyes piercing his. "I'm glad you did, too" she said softly, their eyes locked, Ville's face suddenly only inches away. He smiled softly, moving his hand to the side of her face, stroking her hair. Before she could even gather her thoughts, Jaana was swept away by the feeling of Ville's lips on hers, kissing her gently at first, softly nibbling her bottom lip as his hand moved down her hair. She moaned ever so softly, moving her hand from his leg up to his torso, and their kiss became fiercer, more passionate, his tongue probing hers with a hunger that made her ache.

"Fuck.." Ville whispered as Jaana pulled away, moving her legs to the side, leaning against him. "You feel.. nice," she said, taking his cigarette from his hand and inhaling slowly. His arm around her, softly stroking her back, just felt *right*. "You feel nice," he retorted, softly stroking her hair. "I wasn't.. planning on doing this yet, you know. But somehow.. it seems I just can't stay away from you," he said, trying to choose his words carefully. *Fuck, did I move too fast?* he thought. Somehow he wanted more than anything not to scare her off or give her the wrong impression. Jaana smiled, grabbing his hand that now rested on her upper legs. "Maybe you don't need to stay away from me," she said. Jaana had no idea what any of this meant – a part of her longed for him, and a part of her was deeply scared of falling in love and ending up hurt. But for now, all she wanted was to savor the feeling and the moment they shared.

They both sat in comfortable silence, until a sudden rustling in the trees caught their attention. "You have got to be kidding me," Ville said, and before Jaana even realized what was happening, the unmistakable flashing light of a camera obscured her vision. Ville got up, but the photographer had already disappeared into the darkness. "Fucking hell!" Ville shouted, yanking his beanie off his head and walking back towards the bench with a heavy sigh. "Man, they're assholes," Jaana said, hand rubbing his back as he sat back down. Lighting another cigarette, Ville mumbled: "Fucking assholes. They don't give me a second of peace." He shook his head, hands in his hair. "I should have known better.. I never should have brought this on. You know they'll write about you too, now, right?" Jaana sighed. It hadn't occurred to her what this would mean for her. Lithium was not that big that she'd be recognized, but ahead of what could possibly be a huge tour with increased popularity for them, did she really want to draw attention to herself – and Lithium by extension – as the girl Ville Valo kissed in the middle of the night on a park bench?

She suddenly felt terrible about herself – had she been imagining their connection? Was she really just some naive girl who fell victim to Ville's charm? Almost as if he could see the wheels in her head turning, Ville gave her an inquisitive look as Jaana regained her composure. "Well, whatever," she said, blowing out smoke, trying not to catastrophize the situation. "I hope we gave them a good show," she said sarcastically. Ville looked up at her grinning, but she could tell the incident had upset him. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't be making jokes," Jaana continued. "It must be fucking awful to have them chase you like this all the

time.” Ville sighed. “Yeah.. you never really get used to it. It’s not even me, but the people around me, you know? They suffer from this because of me. I never meant to put you in the spotlight like that, to have the magazines speculating about whatever is going on between us when I don’t even know myself.” Jaana felt that by now familiar feeling in her stomach at the thought of *anything* going on between them. She hadn’t considered the consequences of this night, this kiss, what it meant, where it would lead – she just knew it felt *good*, but was she turning a blind eye to the complexities of being.. with him, in any shape or form?

“Don’t worry about me,” Jaana smiled at him. “Maybe we should call it a night though, before we attract even more attention?” Ville gave her a questioning look. “Sure, I’m tired too. But just..” He hesitated, seeming to collect his thoughts. “Jaana, I like you. I don’t want to scare you off.” “I’m not that fragile, Ville,” she said softly. “Don’t worry about me.” She smiled at him and got up, holding out her hand. She felt bad for him, clearly upset by the incident. “Thank you for a lovely evening, Ville,” Jaana said, kissing Ville softly on the cheek as he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her in for a tight hug. Ville smiled and said: “I’ll see you soon, okay?”

The brief walk back home after saying their goodbyes gave Jaana some time and space to process what happened. A part of her was excited – hyped, even – at the feelings that had started to grow tonight, at the memory of their kiss. For now, this part was able to shut all the other parts up, her apprehension and doubt taking the back seat as she wondered whether 2am was too late to call her best friend Sanna to tell her she'd just made out with the lead singer of HIM. Deciding to wait until morning, she got into bed with a book and a cup of tea when the buzzing of her phone drew her attention. She read the text from Ville and smiled: “Sleep well, beautiful.”

Chapter End Notes

I've had such a massive creative block the past few months - but I'm picking things up again, and trying to find joy in writing again rather than forcing myself through it. I enjoyed this chapter and I have so many ideas for Jaana and Ville's story now. Thank you for reading <3

I wait for the day your heart burns

Chapter Summary

Jaana and Ville face the consequences of their actions.

Jaana woke the next morning from the light entering the room through her half-closed curtains, and checked her phone to find three missed calls from Brandon and one from Lithium's manager Tero. It took her a brief moment to recall what happened last night.

"Hey Bran, what's up?" she asked, sipping her tea in the windowsill. "Thanks for finally answering, Jaan. I've only tried calling you three times," Brandon said. "Tero called to let us know that the tour is confirmed – we're gonna be joining HIM on their European tour! Isn't this fucking amazing? This is gonna be our big break Jaan, I just know it," he continued, while Jaana struggled to breathe. "God, that's amazing Bran. I can't believe they confirmed. When do we leave?" "At the date they booked for us ages ago, so four weeks from now, we start in Germany. Are you not fucking excited?" Jaana grinned. "I am, I am, I just woke up, I.." she sighed. "What is it?" Brandon asked. "Is this the right time to tell you I kissed their lead singer last night?" Half a minute of stunned silence, before Bran burst out laughing. "You did not!" Jaana flinched at the loudness of the sound of his laughter, realizing only now that she had quite a headache – probably from last night's vodka.

"I did," she said, sighing. "Oh god, I did." "I knew there was something going on between the two of you," Brandon continued. "What do you mean, you *knew*?" "I knew when I saw you two outside of the hotel. The way he looked at you – I know that look. He was clearly fucking into you," Brandon said through the sound of a cigarette between his teeth. "You cannot tell that from a look alone," Jaana retorted. Brandon snorted. "Yeah I fucking can. I've looked at you that same way." "Brandon!" Jaana exclaimed, shocked by the reminder of their brief dating history. She heard him laugh again. "Plus, Damian told me he noticed it too. He didn't seem too happy about it." Jaana sighed – she hadn't considered Damian yet, or the talk they had about Ville. "Yeah.. Damian can't see beyond Ville's reputation. He means well, he's always protective of me you know, but.. fuck, he's gonna be so pissed when he finds out." "Why would he find out at all? Don't tell him." "Well.. do you think he reads Seiska?" "What on earth are you talking about?" "Ville was followed by paparazzi last night, and we didn't know, and now.. well, our kiss should become quite public right about now."

Brandon burst out laughing again. "What the fuck, Jaan!" "I didn't know!" Jaana exclaimed. "We're literally home for a few days and you go out kissing Ville Valo and appearing in gossip magazines?" "Fuck, I don't even know," Jaana sighed, getting up to make another cup of tea. "I mean, most likely no one will recognize me anyway, they'll be too busy focusing on him." "What, you think Seiska doesn't want to know who is the woman who Ville Valo kissed?" "Yeah, but it was pretty dark, and I guess my face was.. covered." Brandon snorted. "In all honesty, I'm glad to see you back to living a little. Do you think you like him?" "I.."

Jaana halted, teabag in her hand. “I don’t know yet, Bran,” she said, knowing she wasn’t being honest – knowing she *did* like him, which currently terrified her. She couldn’t face another abusive relationship, and what did she really know about him? Suddenly, last night’s high seemed to have faded completely, and all she felt was stupid. “Listen, I gotta go, alright? Great news about the tour though, I’ll call Tero back first.”

After saying their goodbyes, Jaana quickly dialed Tero’s number so he could fill her in about the tour. Like Brandon had said, they’d be flying to Germany in four weeks for the first leg of the tour, where they’d be opening every night – in most cases as the only band with a 45-minute slot, and in some cases they’d share the opening stage with a local band for a 30-minute show each. After 4 weeks in Europe, they’d take a short break before flying to the US for another 4 weeks of touring. Jaana *was* excited – all things Ville aside, going on tour with a band as big as HIM felt like all of their hard work was paying off. The prospect of being away from home for 8 weeks both excited and discouraged her, but she knew she’d be too busy on tour to think much about home anyway. She made a mental note to tell her employer at the university of her unpaid leave so they wouldn’t schedule her for classes, and to ask Sanna to let the cats stay with her again.

After taking a long, hot shower to clear her thoughts, Jaana got dressed in black leggings and her Lithium hoodie before heading to the coffeeshop down the street to get some breakfast. On her way back home she enjoyed the sunshine, coffee and a Danish pastry in hand, filled by a sense of excitement at the upcoming tour. No matter what might happen between Ville and herself.. this is what Lithium worked for for years. Touring with a band like HIM would likely have a massive effect on their popularity, and really help them to expand their network. Plus, they would have fun either way. The other guys from HIM seemed fun to hang out with, and she’d never tire of the company of her bandmates. Just as Jaana turned the corner to head back into her apartment, she spotted the newspaper kiosk across the street and – *surely, it couldn’t be..* She crossed the street, heart beating fast, inching closer before spotting it: a brand new *Seiska* magazine, and the picture of her and Ville gracing a small – but noticeable – corner of the front page. “Fucking hell..” she whispered to herself. “Ville Valon uusi tyttöystävä?” (*Ville Valo’s new girlfriend?*) it read in big black letters underneath. She grabbed the magazine and found to her relief that she was hardly recognizable in any of them – her hair and Ville’s hand covering most of her face. Much to her own surprise, the pictures and the memories of last night gave her a familiar nervous feeling, and she couldn’t help but grin as she flipped through the pages. “I’ll take this please,” she said to the man behind the counter, handing him some cash before making her way back home.

Slightly nervous, she called Damian. Even though there had been some tensions between them recently, he was still her oldest and closest friend. They were both excited at the prospect of touring with HIM, and discussed how they’d make good use of their time on the tour bus by finally getting around to their joint reading list. Right as they were about to end the call, Damian said: “By the way.. is it you?” Jaana was briefly taken aback. “Is what me?” “I came across a copy of *Seiska* this morning on the metro. Ville Valo making out with someone who looks surprisingly like you,” he said. “Yeah.. it is me.” Jaana said. They were both silent for a moment. “Look, Dame, I know you don’t trust him but I like him. I will never let anything that happens with Ville get in the way of the band, and I have no idea

where this is going or if it's going anywhere, but.. I want to find out, and I don't want to feel like I need to explain myself to you every time his name is mentioned." "I get that.. don't worry Jaan. I'm sorry if I was too forward, too protective, you're a grown woman.. I just don't want you to get hurt again."

Jaana felt herself getting emotional. "I know. I love you for it. And I promise I'll be careful and not rush into anything." Damian was silent for a brief moment. "Does this mean you're together now?" Jaana laughed. "No. In fact, I haven't heard from him. I'm trying to be breezy about it all. I like him, and I'll see where it goes, but it will be a damn good while before I let someone get that close to my heart again." She sighed. "Just.. don't let Mikael turn you bitter, okay?" Damian said. Jaana's heart skipped a beat at the mention of his name. "I.. I'm not ready to even consider that conversation, Dame," She said. "And since when are you team Ville anyway?" Damian snorted. "I'll give him a chance, if you want." "I appreciate that," Jaana said softly. "But don't jump to conclusions. I haven't heard from him today, maybe it was all some drunken ruse," she said, half-joking, but Damian immediately said: "You were drunk?!?" "Hardly," Jaana replied. "We had some vodka." "Did he get you drunk?" "Cut it out, Dame!" They both laughed. "Alright, I'm sorry," Damian continued. "Whatever you do, I support you, you know that. Now, what are you doing for dinner tonight?"

Seiska magazine in his hand, Ville sighed as he sat down and lit another cigarette. "Come on, dude, it's not that bad," Linde said, taking the magazine out of Ville's hands and flipping through it. "It *is* bad," Ville said. "I can't do fucking anything without them breathing down my neck. I wanted to take things easy with Jaana, see how we feel, see where things lead, and now I'm forced to admit that to the entire country apparently." "Just ignore it, as you always do," Mige chimed in, handing Ville a drink. After a management meeting where Seppo announced the tour to them, they went back to Ville's place to record some music in his home studio. Mige had discovered him on the cover of Seiska – which they all regularly checked – on his way to get pizza. "Have you spoken to her today?" Linde asked. "Nope," Ville said, exhaling. Linde and Mige exchanged a knowing look. Ville's tendency to drown in his own sorrow may have resulted in some of their greatest hits, but also frequently led him down the road of self-sabotaging behavior.

"Are you going to?" "Do you think I should?" "Uhm.. yeah," Linde and Mige said simultaneously. "It's not that I don't wanna talk to her," Ville continued. "I just.. I want to protect her from me. I don't wanna put her through this. What if Lithium gains popularity and everyone will forever associate her with me?" "That's not up to you though," Linde said. "Just give her a call, man," Mige chimed in. "If there's one thing I learned from my relationship, it's that you should just communicate how you feel." Ville and Linde both rolled their eyes. As happy as they were for Mige and his *very serious relationship*, his new role as self-proclaimed relationship guru got a bit tiring every now and then. "I'm not in a relationship," Ville said. "And I couldn't even make up my mind about any of it before Seiska told the whole country." "Do you like her?" Mige asked. Ville hesitated. "I.. I think I do. I mean, I know I do. I really do." Mige and Linde exchanged a look. "But at the same time.. I don't fucking know. It just happened. I didn't plan to get involved with anyone for a while. It always leads to the same shit, the same discussions, and magazines like Seiska are a

big part of it. Plus.. when we were at the hotel, she told me some pretty heavy stuff,” Ville went on, lighting another cigarette as Mige handed him a slice of pizza.

“Apparently her ex was quite abusive, and I do think that she’s moved on, I understood she kicked him to the curb the first time he physically assaulted her.. ” Linde and Mige both flinched. “But I think she might be fragile, even if she doesn’t seem it, and I don’t want to make her life more difficult,” Ville continued. Mige sighed. “For someone who’s such a hopeless romantic, you always manage to come up with the worst hypothetical conclusion to any situation,” he said. “You’re making too big a deal out of this, Ville,” Linde chimed in. “Nothing’s happened. She’s barely recognizable in those pictures. You don’t even know how she feels because you refuse to talk to her. I’m telling you, you’re catastrophizing, just call her and see how she feels.” Ville sighed. He couldn’t make sense of whatever he was feeling. Something told him he really wanted to hold onto whatever it was that was going on between him and Jaana, that he wanted to protect it and allow it to grow. But he felt tired – tired from being chased, from being the subject of attention. He saw what it did to those around him, to previous girlfriends who couldn’t handle the spotlight, who became jealous and started to blame him. Ville grabbed his drink, got up and walked into his living room. “You’re right, I’ll give her a call.”

It was 12:30 by the time Jaana rushed out the door, hoping she wouldn’t be late to her date with Sanna ahead of the bakery opening. She was dressed comfortably in high waist jeans and a plain pink long-sleeve t-shirt tucked in, deliberately picked to match her equally pink AllStars, underneath her long black coat and leather purse. Her long black hair fell loosely over her shoulders, and her glasses graced her face so she could give her eyes a break. She’d agreed to meet Sanna slightly earlier than the expected guest arrival time. Her best friend since childhood, Sanna had dropped out of university during her last year to pursue her passion for pastries, coffee and cooking. They were each other’s back and call, ride or die, always. Jaana spotted Sanna from a distance as she walked toward the decorated store where Sanna was about to open her very first bakery. Her short blond hair tucked behind her ears, nervous look on her face, and most importantly, an apron with her name and logo on it. For a brief moment before heading in, Jaana felt unspeakably proud of her friend. “Hej älskling (*Hi honey*)!” Jaana exclaimed, and Sanna instantly ran up to her and hugged her. They hadn’t seen each other since before Jaana left on tour, and stayed in comfortable silence as they hugged. “Hej du. Jag har saknat dig (*I have missed you*),” Sanna responded as Jaana hugged her even tighter.

Growing up as the children of Swedish-speaking Finns, Jaana and Sanna bonded instantly in primary school, feeling like ‘outsiders’ in more ways than one. While Sanna’s parents were both Swedish-speaking Finns, Jaana spoke both languages at home, having only a Swedish-speaking mother. Both languages felt equally native to her, yet with Sanna she always spoke Swedish. It made them feel even closer, and in some cases made it easier to exclude others from the conversation.

“God, this place looks amazing! I can’t believe I wasn’t here during the preparations,” Jaana said, recalling the many, many photos Sanna sent her of her and her family doing construction on the place. “I know, right?” Sanna said, walking over to the bar to make Jaana

her usual drink – herbal tea with a dash of milk – as Jaana admired the collection of pastries in the display. They had about an hour until the guests would start pouring in for the official opening, and a *lot* to catch up on. Although they called regularly while Jaana was on tour, it seemed they had an endless line of discussion topics – work, family, mutual friends, Sanna’s various dating adventures, the cats, Lithium’s upcoming tour.. Jaana was so happy to catch up with her closest friend in person. They often felt more like sisters than friends. Jaana warmly greeted her friends, Sanna’s parents and brother and sister, and chatted with them for a while until the official opening ceremony.

They all shared some champagne and some of Sanna’s delicious pastries, and the news of Lithium’s tour with HIM was making the rounds among Jaana’s friends. *God, if only they knew.* She realized that while she was too busy to be actively thinking of Ville, the memory of last night’s kiss popped up every now and then, and she wondered whether it would be the right time to text him yet. She knew deep down that her playing it cool was a way to keep her distance and keep herself safe, and she really wished she could talk to Sanna about it, but she didn’t want to occupy her big day with her own news. Most of the guests were starting to leave, which reminded Jaana that she was going to meet Damian for dinner tonight, and it was already 4:30. She opened her phone only to find a text from him, asking to raincheck. She quickly responded and checked her messages, only to have her heart skip a beat when she saw a missed call and a text from Ville. “Hope you’re having a good day. Call me when you can? X V” Smiling, she grabbed her coat and hugged Sanna goodbye. On her way out, she dialed Ville’s number.

Save your happiness for tomorrow

Chapter Summary

A city-wide blackout leads to an interesting afternoon for Jaana, Sanna and Ville.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Hey,” Ville answered. “Hey you,” Jaana said happily. “How’s your day been?” “Well, not as eventful at last night..” Ville started, causing Jaana to grin. “But pretty okay so far. Seppo told us about the tour.” “Are you looking forward to it?” “Of course I am! Are you? Congrats, Jaana, this is honestly pretty huge for you guys!” Jaana smiled. “I take it you are used to it by now, Mr. Rockstar?” she teased. “I didn’t mean it like that,” Ville said gently. “It’s a big tour for us, too, some venues much bigger than our last tour. I’m looking forward to it. I.. I called about something else, really,” he continued. Jaana suddenly felt nervous. He was going to tell her it was all a big mistake, surely. That he shouldn’t have kissed her, that he didn’t mean the things he said, that he.. “Our pictures showed up in Seiska today. Along with a whole stupid article about me, obviously. It seems they didn’t recognize you, though.” “Well, that’s flattering,” Jaana snorted. Ville continued: “But it will probably mean they’re gonna keep a closer eye on me. I’m really sorry that I dragged you into this. I had no idea that any of this would happen, really.”

“Do you regret it?” Jaana asked, sitting down on a park bench so she could more easily talk to Ville. “I don’t,” Ville said without hesitation. “Do you?” “No,” Jaana said, smiling. “I already saw the pictures this morning. It gave me quite the heart attack, but it seems indeed no one knows it was me. Well, except Damian.” “What did he have to say about it?” “He’s just happy I wasn’t recognized so that it won’t affect the band. He said it would suck if I’d become known as “the girl Ville Valo kissed”, just as we are becoming more successful, especially with this tour,” Jaana said. Ville paused briefly, the relief he’d felt at Jaana’s relaxed response suddenly overshadowed. Her becoming known as the girl he kissed would lead to a lot of unwanted attention, both from the media and his fans, and was precisely why he’d been so worried. “But hey, it all turned out fine, right,” Jaana said, doing her best to reassure Ville as if she could hear his thoughts. Rain had suddenly started pouring from the sky and she was anxious to shelter inside the metro station. “Yeah, it did, but I understand his concerns. I wouldn’t want you to get dragged into my mess,” Ville said. “My fans can get pretty crazy. I don’t want them to start chasing you down.” Jaana smiled softly. “I don’t mind being part of your mess,” she said smiling, and she softly bit her lip as she heard Ville let out a low chuckle at the other end of the line. “You have no idea how happy that makes me,” he said. “I was worried I’d scared you off.” “Of course not,” Jaana said gently. “I’m not.. wait, what is this?” She halted her movement, looking at the sign at the entrance to the metro station.

“What's going on?” “Well, I’m at Kamppi metro station, and apparently I’m stuck here due to a power cut.” Ville chuckled, mumbling: “Well, you’re not gonna believe this..” “No way!” Jaana exclaimed, grinning. “Are you actually stalking me?” she teased. “I’m not, I promise,” Ville laughed. “I spent the day at my place with Linde and Mige, they left and I just made my way over to Tavastia because Seppo wanted to meet me there.” Jaana had completely forgotten HIM’s official tour closure show was coming up this week. “But well, with the electricity out, I guess that’s no longer needed..” he continued. Jaana walked back outside, as crowds of stranded travelers started to form inside the metro station. “Excuses, excuses,” Jaana said, causing Ville to laugh. “I know it’s getting uncanny, but I promise I’m not stalking you.” Suddenly Jaana had an idea. Having her best friend’s trusted judgment would really help her make up her mind about whatever was going on between her and Ville. It would maybe even help her settle the doubt that Damian instilled in her if Sanna could meet him.

“I think I might head back to Sanna – my best friend, I was in town to attend her bakery opening. The event is over but she told me I could hang around while she cleaned up, and with the electricity out, everything else is probably closed. If you want, you can meet me there?” “I’d love to,” Ville said, feeling relieved that the doom scenarios his mind created for him turned out not to be true. They agreed to meet outside of the bakery, Ville not wanting to attract any more attention to them in such a crowded place like the metro station. As she made her way back to Sanna’s place through the rain, Jaana quickly called her best friend to give her a heads up and explain the situation, and Sanna happily agreed to spend more time with her best friend who she hadn’t been seeing much. “Oh, and by the way,” Jaana grinned, “I invited Ville Valo.” “You – WHAT?” Sanna exclaimed. “He was on his way to Tavastia when I called him, and since everything is closed due to the power cut, I invited him over.” While neither Jaana nor Sanna had been huge HIM fans, they’d always enjoyed their music, and the band was difficult to avoid in Finland either way. They’d seen them live together numerous times throughout the years and were always happily singing along to Join me in death or Poison Girl. “I need your take, San,” Jaana continued. “I don’t know what is happening between us, but you know I can’t do anything without your judgment.” Sanna chuckled. “You know that’s not true. But also, fuck yes, I want to get involved in this.” Jaana laughed. “I’m almost there. *Ses* (see you)!” Jaana hung up.

She spotted Ville as she approached Sanna’s bakery, he waited on the corner of the – thankfully quiet – street. His face lit up as he saw her, which somehow seemed to make her heart flutter. “Hey you,” he grinned, pulling her in for a tight hug. “Hey you,” Jaana responded, her voice muffled against his shoulder. They both held on a little too long and were startled by Sanna opening the door and welcoming them in. Jaana was thankful for her best friend’s spontaneous and bubbly presence, removing any possible awkwardness from the situation of meeting the best friend of a woman who you’re not even sure you’re dating. Ville seemed in good spirits, and was asking Sanna all about her bakery and the opening event that took place today. Just as Ville took a quick call, Jaana snuck behind the counter to try some of the leftover pastries.

“*Jag gillar honom* (I like him),” Sanna said with a wink as she emerged from the kitchen with a pot of boiling water from the stove, startling Jaana who’d just taken a bite of brownie

and proceeded to drop the remainders of it on the floor. Sanna laughed: “*Vad vill du* (What do you want)?” Jaana rushed to clean the brownie off her sweater: “Eh.. *svart kaffe, tack* (Black coffee, please),” she responded. “What do you want to drink, Ville?” Sanna said, noticing he’d ended his phone call and was looking at them with an amused grin on his face. “Can you make black coffee with that, by any chance?” he asked, nodding at the pot Sanna was carrying. “Sure,” she said. “It might not be the best you’ve ever had, but it will be hot.” Sanna and Jaana gave each other a knowing look – Ville clearly hadn’t heard Jaana already ask for black coffee, which meant he didn’t understand Swedish. Ever since childhood, in certain crowds Swedish had been almost their secret language, often instigated by Sanna to discuss boys in front of them. As though reading her mind, Sanna turned around and grinned at Jaana, who shot her a warning glance.

The three of them chatted comfortably and amicably, accompanied by the candles Sanna had lit across the store. Although their conversation was casual, Jaana could feel the ongoing tension between her and Ville, and memories of last night's kiss occasionally came back to her. Overall, she was happy that Sanna and Ville seemed to get along, especially after discovering a shared passion for *karjalanpiirakat*, a typical Finnish pastry that Jaana strongly disliked. She grinned as she watched Sanna bring out a plate, with a small side of *pulla* (cardamom bread) for her. “You’re spoiling me,” Jaana said in between bites. “It’s a thank you for making me dinner,” Sanna said smiling as she poured them both another cup of coffee. “I’m making you dinner?” Jaana asked. “Come on, it’s been ages since you cooked for me, I’ve been looking forward to this ever since you came home!” Sanna exclaimed.

“Don’t tell me Jaana didn’t tell you she’s an amazing cook?” Sanna said to Ville, grinning at Jaana. “Well, I heard something about a lemon risotto..” “Anything she cooks is fantastic. I’ve been trying for a year to convince her to abandon the band and open a restaurant with me, but it seems the luxuries of fame are more important to her,” Sanna said. Jaana smiled and rolled her eyes: “Yes, spending weeks on end in a tiny tour bus with Brandon somehow seemed like a better idea,” making Ville and Sanna laugh. “I can’t believe you’re able to put up with him for that long,” Sanna said. “I could never be in a tour bus with my ex for that long.” Ville choked on his pastry and coughed as Jaana rolled her eyes at Sanna. *Did she have to bring that up?*

“Brandon is your ex?” Ville asked, and although he intended to sound curious, Jaana spotted a hint of jealousy in his voice, which gave her a strangely satisfied feeling. “Ex is a big word,” Jaana said. “We dated briefly, it obviously didn’t work out. It’s a long time ago and we both agree it was a bad decision. We laugh about it now,” she said. “Brandon just seems like.. a lot,” Ville said, recalling the night when Brandon had joined his bandmates in drunk renditions of ABBA. *A lot, and not good enough for you*, he thought, surprised at his feelings of jealousy at this revelation. “He is,” Jaana and Sanna said simultaneously, laughing.

As Sanna walked into the kitchen area to clean up, chatting away about the time she and Brandon got stuck on a ferry where he befriended all the tourists and started a party, Jaana looked up to find Ville’s eyes looking directly into hers. “I’m learning some interesting things about you today, it seems,” he said grinning, after Sanna disappeared into the kitchen. Something about the look in his eyes, and the hint of jealousy in his voice when he found out, sparked a desire in her to kiss him more than ever. He seemed to notice, his eyes moving slowly towards her lips and back up. *Is he flirting with me with his eyes?* she thought, smiling

as she softly bit her lip and grabbed her coffee cup, not breaking his stare. “Well, I learned some interesting things about you, too,” Jaana said. “What’s that?” Ville asked. “According to Seiska, you kissed some unknown girl last night.” Ville threw his head back and laughed, the deep sound reverberating across the empty shop. “I’m glad you’re not upset,” he said, a hint of vulnerability in his voice. Jaana smiled at him. “Were you really that worried I would be?” “I..” Ville hesitated, mindlessly stirring the sugar in his coffee that had long dissolved. “I was. It’s why I waited so long before calling you today. I guess I kind of spiraled and assumed everything between us had gone to shit,” he said, chuckling softly, but Jaana could tell he was serious.

Before Jaana could respond, a loud clatter arose from the kitchen, where Sanna had seemingly dropped some plates. Jaana got up to help her clean up, and they emerged minutes later, carrying three cold beers. “I’d left them outside and forgot about it, so they’re properly cooled now,” Sanna said as she handed Ville his beer. “Please tell me you’ve moved past the topic of Brandon while I was out.” Ville grinned. “We did,” he said as he looked Jaana directly into her eyes. “You know, if anything, I thought Damian was your ex,” Ville continued as he opened his beer.

Jaana and Sanna both snorted. “I get the feeling he doesn’t like me, too,” Ville continued, just as Jaana muttered “Absolutely not”. “Wait, Damian dislikes you?” Sanna asked. “He doesn’t,” she intervened. “You know what he’s like. He’s gloomy and antisocial, but he means well. He is definitely not my ex, more like my brother,” she said.

“While we’re on the topic, do you have any interesting exes, Ville?” Sanna asked, smiling innocently. Jaana gave her an annoyed look, which Ville didn’t seem to notice. “None particularly interesting, no, although I suppose I should be grateful since they provided all the inspiration for my songs. Well, until now, anyway,” he said, looking right at Jaana, who seemed to blush slightly at this comment. While Ville hadn’t mentioned it even to his bandmates yet, after months of struggling to write new music, new songs had started to emerge in his mind since the night he ran into Jaana at the hotel.

They continued chatting for a while about HIM, and Ville seemed happy – or at least patient – to sit through Sanna’s line of questioning. It was already 7pm when Sanna announced she needed to head home, the power being back on meaning the metro would be up and running again. Jaana wasn’t sure whether she should invite Ville to her home, but she was starving, and smiled as she remembered she had enough ingredients to make more lemon risotto. As if reading her mind, Sanna said: “Do you have any interesting plans tonight Ville?” Jaana rolled her eyes, getting up to put on her coat as Ville responded he’d go home and read.

As the three of them put on their coats, Jaana said in a hushed tone: “*Är du klar med din utredning nu?*” (Are you done with your investigation now?) “*Vad menar du? Jag samlar bara fakta* (What do you mean? I’m just gathering facts),” Sanna grinned, as she kissed her best friend on the cheek and pulled her in for a hug. “*Du tröttar ut mig* (You exhaust me),” Jaana mumbled, before noticing Ville giving both of them a puzzled look, and they burst out laughing. “Sorry, we tend to fight in Swedish,” Sanna said, leaving Ville even more confused as they exited the shop before saying their goodbyes.

“So, you learned Swedish so you can talk about me in secret, huh?” Ville grinned, lighting a cigarette as they slowly made their way back towards the metro station. Jaana smiled: “Don’t flatter yourself. We’re both native suomenruotsi (Finland Swedish) speakers. It’s what got us to bond in primary school. These days she’s one of the few people outside my family I always speak Swedish to, and sometimes it comes in useful, although I promise we weren’t gossiping about you.” Jaana shook her head as she recalled Sanna’s blatant questioning. “Oh, and my cats. They might not even speak Finnish,” she laughed.

“What are their names?” Ville asked, and Jaana hesitated. “You’re gonna call me stupid,” she said. “Come on, tell me!” Ville insisted. “They’re Stevie and Chris,” Jaana said, drawing a laugh from Ville after he paused briefly. “You named your cats after Fleetwood Mac?” “I told you before, Fleetwood Mac is the best band in the history of music,” Jaana said, causing Ville to laugh and shake his head. As they came to a halt in a quiet corner of the busy metro station, Jaana realised she’d have to find a way to possibly invite him back to her home without seeming too forward. “So now that Sanna’s not here to question you, what are you really doing tonight? Aren’t you supposed to go see Seppo at Tavastia now?” Jaana asked, Ville now standing directly in front of her. “I probably should. If I cancel on him, he might just kill me,” Ville said, causing Jaana to laugh. “But then again, I would also hate to turn down the chance to be in your company once more,” Ville continued, looking straight into Jaana’s eyes as he inched closer to her while she slowly backed up against the wall. “If that was what you were getting at, of course,” he quickly added. A hint of nervousity passed over her at the thought of inviting Ville into her home, but something about his company made her want to be close to him. “Possibly,” Jaana teased, smiling at him as his stare seemed to grow more intense by the second.

The tension that was a constant between them suddenly seemed to reached its peak, with Ville’s lips only inches away from hers. The metro station was filled with people who were so glad they were finally able to travel again that none of them paid much attention to their surroundings, and it was so crowded that Jaana and Ville blended in seamlessly. Ville couldn’t help but stare at her lips, debating if he was going to kiss her again – and just at that moment, Jaana interrupted him. Grinning, she said softly: “You want to put up another show for Seiska?” Ville smiled and rolled his eyes. “Fuck. Don’t tempt me,” he grinned, but his darkening eyes revealed his desire. “I do, and I don’t,” he said, one hand moving up to stroke Jaana’s neck, goosebumps forming on her skin. Just as Jaana looked back up into his eyes, he kissed her softly, hand moving down to stroke her back and pull her closer towards him.

“Why is it that I can’t stay away from you?” he mumbled against her lips. Jaana felt that familiar combination feeling of butterflies and fear wash over her, as she asked herself the very same question. Did she want to stay away from him? Being around him felt so good, but she couldn’t help but feel scared at the prospect of falling in love. “Do you want to?” she asked, running her hand through his hair and down the back of his neck as Ville rested his lips against her forehead. “No,” he said, pulling back, a soft smile on his lips, but his eyes had a serious glance in them. “No, I definitely don’t,” he grinned, whatever serious thought was bothering him seemingly gone.

“Well, you know, if you’re still up for some risotto, me and the cats would be happy to have you over,” Jaana said. Ville’s face lit up. “I’d really like that,” he said, his hand gently moving the loose strands of hair out of Jaana’s face before softly kissing her forehead. They

agreed to meet at Jaana's place, as Ville would need to make some quick calls with Tavastia and Seppo to make up for their missed appointment. Smiling, Jaana couldn't deny the feeling of butterflies in her stomach as she got onto the metro and called Sanna.

Chapter End Notes

What can I say - Helsinki is not that big of a city, or fate just really wants Jaana and Ville to find each other. This was a lengthy chapter, but a lot of things happened for Jaana and Ville! I hope you enjoyed it, it still brings me a lot of joy (and please forgive me for any mistakes in Swedish, it's become a bit rusty over the past few years!) <3

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!