

EXT. FIELD - MIDDAY

RAYSTON is tending the only maintained piece of land in miles aside from an overgrown suburbia. WILLIAM walks near the other boy, he's been walking for a while. Rayston hears someone coming and works harder.

RAYSTON

I'm almost done here, promise.

William pauses, he recognizes that voice.

WILLIAM

Rayston?

Rayston turns around now.

RAYSTON

Yeah?

Rayston pauses. This guy recognized him, but with how much William has changed, Ray doesn't know who he is.

WILLIAM

Ray, it's William.

William is ecstatic to see his childhood friend, Ray is less so.

RAYSTON

Oh. Oh my god. What are you doing here?

WILLIAM

I just- I've been looking for you.  
I knew I would find you.

RAYSTON

Why?

WILLIAM

What do you mean why? I missed you. I thought you might be dead. Did you not wonder where I was?

RAYSTON

I guess not.

Rayston begins walking towards the suburbia. William follows.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

WILLIAM follows beside RAYSTON who is trying to walk faster than him.

WILLIAM

Where are you going? I've been looking for you since this whole thing started, you can't just walk away from me.

RAYSTON

I've been fine without you, Will.  
I don't need you here.

William slows his pace, eventually getting left behind as Rayston walks home.

INT. HALF ABANDONED SUBURBAN HOME - LATER

RAYSTON walks into a house. Despite the rotting 'Home is where the heart is' sign, the inside has little resemblance of what it once was. There's a makeshift oven and open wiring scattered, but it's lived in.

JAMIE (O.S.)

Ray? You finished early.

Rayston walks further into the house and sits on a lawn chair in what was once a living room. JAMIE is sitting in another chair.

JAMIE

What?

RAYSTON

I saw a childhood friend.

Jamie catches Ray's emotions and mirrors them.

JAMIE

Well where are they?

RAYSTON

I don't know.

JAMIE

Do you care?

Rayston hesitates. He wouldn't admit it to anyone else, but he does.

RAYSTON

Yeah.

JAMIE

Did you run away from it?

RAYSTON

No. I walked. Quickly.

JAMIE

What do you want to do?

EXT. STREET - LATER

JAMIE and RAYSTON walk down the same street. Rayston spots WILLIAM, and Jamie turns around.

RAYSTON

Where are you going?

JAMIE

I don't know this guy. It'd be more embarrassing for you if I was there.

Ray builds up his confidence and walks to William who is sitting on a curb. Rayston pauses in front of him.

WILLIAM

Hey, I'm-

RAYSTON

If you're going to stay here you have to get signed up.

EXT. A DIFFERENT STREET - LATER

WILLIAM follows RAYSTON out of a bright green building. Ray is in thought.

WILLIAM

Thank you. I'm sorry, I can leave now, I just missed you and I guess I didn't think about how you'd feel if I showed up again.

RAYSTON

It's fine. You're staying with me  
and a friend.

INT. JAMIE AND RAYSTON'S HOME - LATER

RAYSTON walks into the house, WILLIAM following behind. JAMIE is  
in the kitchen making food.

JAMIE

Hey, you're back early.

Jamie turns around, she's clearly playing this up.

JAMIE

And you brought a friend. I had no  
idea we were expecting company,  
good thing I'm making extra food.  
I'm Jamie.

Rayston ignores her.

RAYSTON

Your room is upstairs to the left.

WILLIAM

Oh, okay.

He smiles at Jamie.

WILLIAM

I'm William.

Rayston stares at Jamie. She lets off, and William walks  
upstairs.

JAMIE

What? I can't talk to him?

RAYSTON

You're being weird. Calm down.  
Read a book or something.

JAMIE

(sarcastic)

Whatever you say, boss.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - THE NEXT DAY

RAYSTON and WILLIAM are in a line of other civilians filtering and passing water. It's awkward.

WILLIAM

So, how have things been?

RAYSTON

Fine.

WILLIAM

Cool. Do you still draw?

RAYSTON

No.

William takes the hint to stop talking. Rayston looks over at him, not expecting the silence.

The two go through a few weeks together, and Rayston slowly talks more and gets less short tempered with William.

INT. JAMIE AND RAYSTON'S KITCHEN - EVENING

WILLIAM is sitting at a makeshift table next to RAYSTON. JAMIE sits across from them.

JAMIE

I'm gonna head to bed. I have the early shift tomorrow for scrapping.

WILLIAM

Goodnight.

RAYSTON

Night.

They're left in a comfortable silence for a few seconds.

WILLIAM

I love you.

Rayston looks at William. Is he joking? Is he being friendly?

RAYSTON

What?

WILLIAM

I have loved you. Since forever.  
I'm just glad to have you back.

Ray stands and leaves the house. William follows after him.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

WILLIAM follows behind RAYSTON as he enters the house's backyard.

WILLIAM

Ray, please. Can we talk?

RAYSTON

I was fine without you. I moved on. I don't need you here, why can't you accept that? I've never needed you.

WILLIAM

I need you. I've been looking for you for almost a year, you can't expect me to give up the second I find you.

Rayston turns around to face William.

RAYSTON

I didn't ask for this. I don't want you here, and I'm not going to give up what I have out of the pity that you can't accept how *I* feel.

WILLIAM

Why can't you see this for the miracle it is? I *found* you. That has to mean something.

RAYSTON

You know I *did* love you. Before everything. I even saw a future with you.

William backs up as Ray closes the gap between them.

RAYSTON

But you're just obsessed with this bullshit fate stuff and wouldn't stop talking about nothing! So yeah, I ran away.

WILLIAM

I didn't know you ran away. I thought-

RAYSTON

And I don't regret it. The only thing I regret is not running further. I don't need you. I don't want you here.

WILLIAM

I've been looking for you for too goddamn long to turn around now. I don't care that you don't want me, I'm not going anywhere.

RAYSTON

God, you always think you're right, don't you? You'd be better off literally anywhere else.

WILLIAM

I know.

RAYSTON

Then why the hell are you still here? You don't have much to pack, you can be gone by morning.

WILLIAM

Because I will do anything to be with you, Ray.

Rayston pauses. He starts to think before he talks.

WILLIAM

You keep pushing people away, but don't you remember how happy we were before everything? We can be like that again.

RAYSTON

Things are different now.

WILLIAM

Not fully. We can still be happy together.

RAYSTON

You can live here, but I'm not  
going to blindly accept you back  
into my life. I've changed.

WILLIAM

So have I.