

Sleep

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Kapitel 1: Sleeping

Snow was falling like little fluffy feathers, covering every tree and bush and the whole ground, be it grass or gravel. The breaths became a white cloud, flying skyward and disappearing in the endless nothing above. Stars were shining but he could be mixing it up with the glittering snowflakes.

The park was all silent, nobody could visit it at night who hadn't a key. But it would have been silent anyway, even if there had been thousands of people around. The snow seemed to take up every noise. It would be also empty since all objects slowly disappeared under the endless white.

Snow was covering the fountain he was looking at, the bench he was sitting on. Even in his hair and on his coat, there was snow, slowly absorbing him. How did he wish that he could disappear so easily, just by sitting there and thinking. He cuddled deeper into his coat after pulling his scarf up to cover his nose. He knew that he couldn't sit here forever. He needed warmth, just like all the sleeping flowers around he knew so well, and unlike them, as soon as he fell asleep under the soft, snowy cover, he wouldn't wake up. There was no spring for him, he'd always known. And there would never be one.

Knowing and act in best of his knowledge were two totally different things. Otherwise he hadn't gone to that party tonight. It hadn't been the first of this kind he had been invited to. Every time, he decided afterwards to never visit one again and then he ended up accepting the invitation next year anyway. Just because everyone was coming and because it was somewhat important to his bosses that he went there. To improve relationships, humpf.

He didn't care about relationships, didn't they know? He never had. He did as he was told and never ever risked too much emotion to cloud his judgement. Never. Not once he had stood up against anyone because of his feelings. He had agreed to everything. Just like everyone expected him to do. He wasn't allowed to feel jealous.

Snow glittered like stars on the black of his coat. Glittering jewels rained down next to his hand, one at first, then two, four, more and more. His fingers clawing into the soft leather of his gloves. If it hadn't been for them, there would be red with white and black and he saw the irony and was thankful. Painful memories he'd rather forget.

He had known what he would get to see at the party long before he had went there. And he had gone anyway. Did he want to get hurt that bad? Yes, he answered this question in the quiet of his mind. Because getting hurt is better than feeling nothing, than being as indifferent in truth as he was in the minds of all the others.

All the smiling faces, all the happiness, all the couples and close friends. It had been so bright that he had been dazzled at first. Some of those he called friends for various, not really personal reasons, had come to greet him and he had been standing around near them, listening to their chatter. He never said much when he was at a place like that. He wasn't good with people. Everyone knew.

He spend most of the evening trying to pay no attention to the dance floor. Even when his friends all went there and left him standing he kept looking everywhere but there. There, *they* had been. *They* had spent the whole evening floating around, giggling, being happy and looking like there was only enough space for the two of them in their own little world. But he couldn't know that because he hadn't seen *them*. Well, or not more than a short little glance which had told him everything he

needed – and didn't want – to know.

Then he'd left. It had not even been midnight then. Now it was a good deal of time past the last church bell's ring. The snow which hadn't been there at first now almost covered him. He was cold but not freezing. He had been cold all evening. He didn't even know why he'd come here. Perhaps he wanted to make his body as his heart was. Cold as ice.

Nobody would notice anyway. His friends he hadn't even said good-bye hadn't searched for him. They hadn't even noticed how he was always feeling this time of year. How alone he was even with people around.

His cell phone hummed next to him under a thick cover of snow for the last time before the battery died. It went unheard just like the previous twenty or thirty times. Snow was piling up, eating away the world and making everything disappear ...

Kapitel 2: Searching

For the twenty-sixth time, his call went unanswered. He was feeling like he was going mad. Perhaps his brother was right but he couldn't be sure. Why, oh why, didn't this idiot answer his phone. *He* couldn't be already sleeping, could *he*? Not possible. He had tried to call *him* as soon as he noticed *him* missing, about five minutes after *he* had last been seen.

One more try. Please, oh please, answer that damn phone, his lips formed in an inaudible whisper. There was no need to worry, he told himself. *He'd* looked like the death himself but that was normal for anyone who spent too much time inside, wasn't it. *He* had been quiet but on the other hand *he* was always too quiet so that was hardly an evidence. Why had he the indefinite feeling that *he* was going to get hurt? That *he* was going to get *himself* hurt?

He had almost given up all hopes when he heard a click in the line.

"Hey, listen up, where...?" he started and then stopped dead. Voice mail. He'd never before been directed to voicemail this evening. Did this mean that something had happened? No, he told himself. Calm down. *His* battery might have run out of power. Yes, that was definitely it.

No, it wasn't. He knew it. Deep down, he knew. Nothing was alright. And he couldn't stay here and wait and go on like nothing has happened.

"I'm going," he told the world in general. He grabbed his coat and was out before anyone had even the slightest chance to stop him. He had to do something.

So he hurried down the lane, as fast as he could, not caring about the black ice and all the snow which made the walk slippery. Got into his car without falling even once. Drove as fast as he dared to *his* house.

No lights were on. There were not even Christmas illuminations. It all looked so ... dead. He shook his head. No, stop thinking like this. *He* isn't. Not even when *his* house looks like no one has been living inside for some decades even though there clearly has to be someone who looks after the garden and cleans a bit. You're fantasising.

He ringed anyway. Of course – not even he had expected it – no one answered. Why couldn't this be the old times when there had been at least a maid who would have told him that the master hasn't been home yet?

He tried to think of what to do next. He had no idea. He didn't know where *he* went when he wanted to be alone. He'd always thought the answer to this was "home" or "*his* house". And now he could see, that this answer was false.

When his phone rang, he instantly answered without looking on the display.

"Yes?" He sounded so much out of breath. Please, oh please, dear god, let it be him.

But it wasn't. *He'd* never call. *He* will never call. Damn. He bit down on his lips.

It was his brother, worried about him, wanting to know what was going on. Not understanding why he was so worried. Trying to calm him down in vain. In the end promising to help him searching. Promising to get other's to help him as well.

"You might want to start looking for *him* in the park," was the last his brother said before he hung up.

So he ran. Ran so fast his chest hurt. Ran as long as he had hope.

Kapitel 3: Waking

Warm. Everything was so warm. He couldn't breath. He couldn't open his eyes. Dark and hot. Had he fallen asleep? Last thing he remembered was a voice calling his name. Had he been found?

He coughed. Felt the pain in his throat and chest. He was still alive. Sick, but inside, save. Why me? He didn't want to feel this relieved about it.

Someone near him was snoring.

He tried to move, to get rid of the blanket, the heat. He couldn't. It even took him some time to finally open his eyes. A warm wet cloth had been placed on his forehead but it had slipped and was now dripping on his cheek. Why had everything to be warm? He almost felt like melting.

With some effort, he managed to put himself in an almost sitting position. He wasn't home like he'd thought at first. He didn't recognize this place, or the bed – not that he usually remembered beds. What he recognized, though, was the white haired man snoring in the armchair next to the bed. Maybe he had died anyway and this was a weird kind of heaven or hell?

It couldn't be *him* of all people who had come to rescue him, who had searched for him and brought him someplace war. This wasn't *his* bed. No way this could be *his* bed, *his* of all people's.

He coughed again. Hot pain flamed inside his chest. He pressed his hands on his chest, bending forward in the hope this would dull the pain or at least make him stop coughing. He didn't want *him* to wake up yet, wanted to look at *his* peaceful face a bit more. He had never seen *him* like this before.

For the first time in years, he felt like smiling. He was sick, too warm and in pain, but happier than he had been on a long time.

When he recognized that he was also wearing one of *his* pyjamas, the smile even grew wider. He felt like he had gone mad. Smiling like this did count as a prove of insanity, he was sure of that. He was no one to be this happy. He of all people knew that. As soon as he felt happy, someone would see to it that he regret it. And still he couldn't help feel insanely happy.

"What are you smiling about, idiot?" croaked a hoarse voice. He had trouble recognizing it first. Then he saw *him* into the eyes, grinning. The both held that glance, full of warmth, for some time. Then, from one moment to the other, they started laughing.

"Thanks," he smiled. "Thank you so much."

Tears were rolling down his cheeks, mixing with the water for the cloth on his forehead. He cried and cried and cried so much that he didn't even know where all the tears came from. He cried so long that *he* sat down next to him, pulled him into *his* arms and cried with him.

The snow filling all the windows, piling up on the outside world, went unnoticed. It could be as silent, as cold as it wanted to be. Now, everything that mattered was warm, all warm.

Maybe, after the sleep when a sun had melted the snow there was spring, no matter how long it would take to melt all the snow to water that would open up all floodgates.

