

2020.

Under the moonlight, everything looks just a bit out of place. Each shadow, blurring substance and nothingness, startles me at every turn. Each streetlight seems like a safe haven until I stand beneath it and the darkness becomes even more threatening. I swallow my fear, knock back the beginning of tears in my eyes, and still my shaking hands. Pulling my hood tighter, I walk back out from the light.

It is not my fear that I should be focusing on, I remind myself. In fact, I am seeking the danger. I am seeking the darkness. Or, well, I am seeking The Light, the name she goes by now.

I used to be one of the many who hide in their homes when the sun sets. This country is not safe for the regular folk, when the cover of darkness lets the scum of the earth seep out from its crevices and rear their ugly heads.

But I suppose it is not the same as before. There used to be a time when the bad guys were like the mythical Lernaean Hydra, when the police would beat down on them but each time they only seemed to multiply. Now, The Light tracks them down and burns them at the stub.

Now, I'm out here in the open at night looking for her.

I breathe the cool air in, let it dry the sweat off my temple. I have been trying to track her down for nearly a year now, since I first heard the rumours of there being a masked vigilante. They used to call her a lot of things. Supergirl, Human Torch, The Flash. Copyright issues aside, none of the names really encompassed her powers the way The Light does, or the neutrality of her stance.

But it never matters, as long as I can find her.

To me, she was and will always be Addie.

2013.

At first, she was the intimidatingly pretty girl who wrangled the lecturer into a fiery debate about the presence of colonialism in modern times. Actually, no, she was pretty *and* intimidating. There was something about watching a 65 year old man struggling to keep up with an 18 year old freshman wearing a red acrylic fibre sweater in the middle of Autumn. But even after the novelty wore off, my eyes were still on her, catching on her red sweater and her bleached blond hair, and hanging on her every word.

After that, she was Adelaide. About a week later, after our first tutorial class, she was Addie.

Addie was charismatic, and her words were like lightning in my ears, each syllable striking deep and wrenching out a deeply buried part of me by the hairs.

“How do you do it,” I asked her one day, “stay so ready to fight?”

“*Je suis farouche*. Like a wild animal. Always on guard.”

The passion in her eyes and voice, constantly demanding for more, for *better*, made me want the same.

I had never read as much political and philosophical theory as after I met her. Every time I talked to her about a new theory, the smile that bloomed on her face made my heart twist into a ball.

I never knew when my feelings for her grew beyond friendship. The moment I realized, though, was different.

It was a few months after we first met. The lull of the train had the two of us dozing off. I fell asleep for half the journey, and when I woke up, my head was on Addie’s shoulder. I glanced up and there was just something about that vision, that image of her fast asleep and hovering 2 centimetres off the top of my head, of stasis.

At that moment, all I could think of was “*oh*.”

Because it all fell together, each puzzle piece sliding into its space. It was that moment that I would remember for years, the modern fairy tale scene.

It was moments like that, quiet and calm, that I remembered most vibrantly when she left.

2020.

BOOM!

I reflexively flinch, before catching my bearings and turning to the noise. A way away, clouds cluster, a small circle of grey and brown, curtesy of an amber glow from below. That’s where I need to go.

That’s where she is.

I break into a run, as if every cell in my body is tugging at me to go, to move, to *get to her*. I need to go faster. My lungs start to hurt, the burn and stretch of my muscles making it harder to breathe. I stumble as I make the next turn. I have just enough awareness to realise that the hair on my arms are standing, so as fast as I can, I force myself to stop, grabbing the edge of the nearest large object. My momentum throws me against the wood.

I shut my eyes and stay turned towards the box. Behind my eyelids, a white light flashes for just a millisecond and tagging after it, a loud crack splitting through the air.

Everything becomes too bright and loud, enough that I get disoriented. My ears ring, shrill and shrieking. The air smells of sulphur and smoke.

My blurred vision can only catch the orange-red-black-grey of fire and smoke. I blink rapidly, trying to clear the remnants of the lightning from my eyes. Slowly pulling myself up (*when had I fallen?*) with the help of the shipping crate (*the pier, I am at the pier*) I shakily turn my eyes to where the lightning struck.

The blurring subsides, just enough for me to see more than vague wobbly shapes. A familiar figure stands, decked in a familiar red sweater. It's her, I know it's her. Seeing her in front of me tears apart the four-year-old veneer of normalcy I carefully constructed. I make to step forward but stop myself.

Her adversary, an old man in a suit, shouts something at her, muted by the ringing caused from the thunder. She shouts something back, shooting fire out the palms of her hands. He tumbles clumsily to the side, but the shot misses him completely.

My vision clears. I see him reach into his suit pocket.

“GET DOWN!”

Addie drops behind the crate she was standing on just a second ago, and whatever the man throws out sails harmlessly over her head. She jumps back out immediately, and within seconds she has the man incapacitated and tied against the arm of a crane.

She looks up at me, and her eyes widen.

My hood has long blown off the top of my head and I know what she sees. In the light there was no hiding, and there is no place more lit than here, where the fires she set continue to whip in the night's wind.

“Evie?”

2014.

“What's gotten you so quiet?”

There was a smile in her voice as her hands curl in my hair, scratching my scalp. For a moment, I was lost in the feeling, my eyes fluttering closed like I was a cat. I curled into her lap, my cheek pressed against her thigh. Trying to pretend to not know what she was talking about, I rubbed my thumb back and forth against her red sweater, feeling the sting of static from it. I made a quiet groan when she pulled away. She laughed, a rumble of a sound that struck my chest like thunder.

My pulse quickened to the rhythm of the monsoon rain.

“I love you,” I said in deadpan, pretending I had the same meaning as the times she said the same to me. *Friendship*, I told myself in my head. It came out tighter, a harsh whisper, cutting through the air within the walls of our dusty shared apartment.

She stared at me for moments, her dark eyes centred on mine. It dug under my skin, a prickling feeling that spread from my shoulders to the edges of my fingertips.

Her hands dropped from my hair to my jaw.

“Can I kiss you?” she said finally. I held my breath, my face burning as I nodded.

Then she leaned down and pressed her lips to the corners of mine, as smoothly as one could when sitting at a right angle, which was not very.

I remember the world feeling like it stopped, but it was over about as suddenly as it happened. She smiled at me, shy.

Slowly, I smile back.

2020.

There are people who stare, sometimes, a lot of the time, at the scars that run down half my body, looping from one arm to where it disappears down the collar of my shirt. I am not afraid of them. But this.

I am afraid of this, the look of recognition on her face, the fear, the exact same face she made four years ago before she disappeared from my life.

Her hands flex, turning in circles, the palms of her hands opening and closing.

2016.

I remember her 21st birthday like snapshots. Laughing, singing. An argument of which the details escape me.

Then fire, lightning, white hot. Sudden and unprecedented.

Her screaming, hot tears seeping through my clothes.

Sparks shooting out from the ceiling. The daze of the shock muting the pain. The flickering ceiling lights.

On, off, on.

Her eyes, terrified.

Off.

I remember waking up in the hospital, alone.

2020.

“Are you going to run? Again?”

Her hands still. The fire grows bigger, rising like high tide. Her eyes land on the floor.

“I’m going to end up hurting you again.” Her voice is quiet, small. I have never heard her so scared (except that time, *the first time*, in 2016).

But she is not the only one who has changed since then. “I’ll help you learn how to control your powers. I’ve been studying, the past four years.”

She is still not looking at me. I cross to her and grab her hands. In the time it takes for the eye to blink, the fire extinguishes, and a breath leaves her body. Encouraged, I try one more time.

“Come home with me?”

2021.

“You’re insane.”

I laugh, leaning my head against hers.

“Be serious!”

“I am *wild*.”