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Minute Man
March Part 7

By Ziel.

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Jared hadn't said so much as a single word on the entire trip over to Heather's apartment, but that seemed just as well for Lindsey. She didn't appear too interested in saying much either. It was clear from his expression that Jared was in no mood to chat. Jared looked equal parts pensive and pissed off.

Jared had been running over what he would say the entire drive over. He had run numerous scenarios in his head, but he still could not even begin to fathom what he would say when he finally faced Heather. There was a lot he wanted to say. He wanted to tear into her. He wanted to curse her out for ruining his life. He wanted to somehow revisit some of the pain she had caused him upon her, but somehow even just the thought of that made his stomach turn. What could he even do that would be half as devastating as what she had done to him? The more he thought about it, the worse he felt. He was the first to admit

that he wasn't the most stand-up individual. He had never seen himself as some pinnacle of morality or virtue, but the thoughts that were dancing in his head made his skin crawl.

Jared had been so focused on the upcoming encounter that he had even been able to tune out the ever present tingle of arousal... almost. His dick still felt pleasantly chubbed the entire time, and every fidget he made in his seat caused his pant leg to rub against his huge cock, but at least for the time being he wasn't so hot and bothered that the slightest touch would cause his dick to go off like a jizz-spewing roman candle.

When Jared finally reached Heather's apartment, he found the place seemingly deserted. The lights were off. The door was locked, and any attempt he made to knock on the door was met with silence.

"She doesn't seem to be home." Jared muttered irritably.

"Are you sure? Where else would she be this time of night?" Lindsey asked.

"I don't know." Jared grumbled in reply.

"Think. You said you dated her. Did she have friends she would have gone to? Does she have a night job?" Lindsey asked.

"I said I don't know, ok? I don't know her friends. I never wanted to know her friends. I bet they

are all a bunch of awkward shut-ins like she is.” Jared replied testily.

“I’m just trying to help.” Lindsey replied. There was enough of a snide edge to her tone to make it clear that Jared needed to lay off, and fortunately Jared was keen enough to pick up on it.

“I know. I’m sorry. This has been a hell of a day, ok?” Jared replied. It was an exasperated apology, but it was an apology nonetheless. The fact that he would even apologize at all was a shock to both of them.

“Well try and think. If she doesn’t get out much, what are the chances she’s still home? Maybe she’s just avoiding you.” Lindsey said in hopes of sparking some ideas.

“Still home...?” Jared mused out loud. He seemed to mull something over and then walked over turned around and peered out over the railing.

“Looking for something?” Lindsey asked.

“Yeah. Her car. If it’s still here, then we can assume she is too.” Jared replied. He took a moment to scan the parking lot and then he perked up. “Ah ha!” he said and pointed towards a beat-up, old, white sedan.

“So she’s here, probably. Now what? You wouldn’t happen to know where she keeps her spare key, do you?” Lindsey asked.

“No, but I can do even better.” Jared replied and fished around in his pockets. The jostling of his jimmies caused his pants to rub against his semi-boned cock which in turn sent a shudder of pleasure up his spine. His dick was once again oozing pre, and it was making a noticeable splotch on the inside of his thigh.

Lindsey cast her gaze at the damp spot in Jared’s jeans as well as the noticeable outline of his thick, semi-boned cock straining against the fabric. She could actually see his dick hardening beneath the fabric. She could see it shudder and buck like a groggy rodeo bull slowly getting into the game, but she chose to remain silent on it. She realized it was a sore subject for Jared, and he no doubt knew better than anyone what was happening.

By the time Jared fished his keys out of his jeans pocket his dick was damned near ready to pop. Sweat was dripping from his brow, and his whole body was visibly trembling from his own extreme arousal. He had to struggle with all his might to keep his wad down. As he stood there trembling waiting for the worst of it to pass he couldn’t help but wonder why he bothered. He couldn’t help but think that he would be better off just letting it out. If he just came right then and there then he would have a brief reprieve from his constant boner, and he could at least think of something other than sex for a few brief moments.

In the end it was only the thought of Heather’s snide sneer as she saw the white, crusty jizz splotch soaking through his jeans that gave him the strength

to hold off. He didn't want to give her the satisfaction. He didn't want to let her think she had won.

"Here." Jared said breathlessly as he held up his set of keys. Most of the keys were left to dangle from the ring, but there was one key which Jared held clutched between his thumb and forefinger.

"You have her apartment key!?" Lindsey asked incredulously.

Jared shrugged weakly. "I could never be bothered to return it. It seemed like a waste of time." He replied.

Lindsey didn't even bother replying. She quickly snatched the key from his grasp and turned to use it on the door. The key slid perfectly into the deadbolt – so perfectly in fact that Jared couldn't help but think it was strangely erotic in its own way. There was the obviously phallic shape of the metal key, and the way it slid into the lock like a dick into a tight snatch sent shivers up his spine. Watching Lindsey's fingers deftly dig the key in and twist it sent butterflies dancing in Jared's stomach. The more Jared thought of it the more closer he got to blowing his load, but there was a single dark thought in the back of his mind which mockingly put him in his place – the key had done its job perfectly. It had gotten in, done its thing, and got the door to give it what it wanted, and it had remained perfectly hard the whole time... unlike a certain someone.

“Well?” Lindsey asked and nodded towards the now opened doorway. The implication was clear as was her impatience. She wanted to get this over with as soon as possible for many of the same reasons that Jared did.

Jared nodded and stepped through the doorway. The way his jeans brushed against his hardened cock weighted on his mind with each and every step. His need to cream was almost unbearable, but he needed to fight it. He needed to maintain some semblance of control as he went into this encounter.

The lights in the apartment were off giving the place an ominous appearance. It was strange how a place could change so completely with the flip of a switch. Jared had never particularly liked Heather’s apartment, but before he had always found it to be kitschy and girly. Now all the stuffed animals and floral pillows that lined the room seemed somehow sinister. It was as if the cold, lifeless eyes of her overflowing bookshelf full of Beanie Babies were somehow judging him.

Jared flipped the switch, but that actually didn’t help matters much. The stuffed animals looked even more lifeless than before, and now that he could get a better look at the room it seemed somehow eerier than before. Everything was so perfectly in its place that it practically looked like the apartment was completely abandoned. The furniture was merely a layer of clear plastic covering away from this being the home of a germophobic soccer mom.

Jared was half tempted to give up right then and there. It wasn't that he was looking to quit, but he was convinced that the place was completely deserted. For all he knew Heather really had spent the night somewhere else. For all he knew she was hunkered away in the lab. He remembered her spending much of her days and nights there, and in fact she would have lived at the lab had he not dragged her away from her work on a regular basis. As Jared mulled it over a smug sense of superiority started to creep into his thoughts. Heather should have been thankful for him for dragging her out of the drudgery of her work. Without him there she probably wouldn't have even had a social life, but those thoughts quickly began to turn dark. A gnawing, nagging pit began to form in Jared's stomach. Maybe she was thankful for him being there. Maybe she realized her own workaholic tendencies as much as he did.

Jared tried to shake the thoughts from his mind. He wasn't sure what he was feeling anymore. There was this strange gnawing feeling in the back of his mind and in his gut. Was he feeling guilty? Guilty for what? Or was he feeling pity? Pity on her for how little she had without him there. Whatever he was feeling was not helping his situation at all. She was no longer his job or his responsibility.

"Come on. Let's look around." Linsey said.

"...right." Jared concurred uncertainly.

“Think she’s asleep? It is pretty late.” Lindsey asked.

“It’s late, but she’s not a light sleeper. She would have heard us already.” Jared replied.

“So she’s either ignoring us or she’s not here.” Lindsey concluded.

“But her car was here.” Jared replied.

“But she could have gone out with friends.” Lindsey countered.

Jared didn’t have a response for that. He merely shrugged and fished his phone out from his pants pocket. A shudder ran up his spine as his hand slipped into his pocket. The slight motion caused his jeans to once again brush against his dick. He fully boned cock gave a lurch of approval and strained against the inside of his pants leg. His dick was beyond boned by this point. His cock was so rock hard that he had to struggle not to soak his pants leg in cum, but even despite his best efforts a huge splotch of pre started to seep through the denim.

“What are you doing?” Lindsey asked.

“Calling her.” Jared replied and started to scroll through his recent calls. It didn’t take him long to find Heather’s number and click the call back button.

“You’ve tried that already.” Lindsey said. “She hasn’t answered in the past few hours, what makes you thi-” Lindsey’s comment was cut off by a distinctively chirpy tune. She didn’t recognize the song

per se, but it was no doubt a ring tone. Lindsey turned towards the direction of the noise and pointed at the door.

“Which room is that?” She asked.

“That’s the bedroom.” Jared replied.

The ring tone had stopped as abruptly as it started, but that just proved that Heather was home. Jared wasted no time in rushing towards the door that Lindsey had pointed out. He all but bowled Lindsey over as he jogged past her. He reached down. Grabbed the handle braced himself for what was to come next, but he was pleasantly surprised to find it unlocked. The handle turned easily, and the door opened immediately after.

Jared peered into the room. It was completely dark save for a dim, blue light coming from the corner of the room. There he saw Heather at her desk hunched over her computer like some kind of tech savvy Quasimodo. She didn’t seem to even realize he was there. She was so fixated on her screen that she had tuned everything else around her out. Jared had seen her like this many times before. She could easily lose herself in her work if there was no one around to snap her out of it.

Jared flipped the switch by the door. The light snapped on in an instant, and the room was suddenly bathed in light. The sudden change was so drastic that it was even enough to snap Heather from her trance.

“Jared!?” She gasped and jumped up from her chair.

Heather looked beyond exhausted, and it was more than just the dark circles under her eyes. She had been hunched over her desk so long that her back popped audibly as she stretched. She was not the same woman Jared had run afoul of this afternoon and maybe she never was. This seemed much more the woman that Jared had dumped. Her hair was a mess. It looked like it hadn't had a good brushing in a few days and was overdue for a good wash. She still had her makeup on from earlier, but the hours she had spent since then had taken their toll. The eyeliner was smudged and runny from rubbing her eyes so much. There was more lipstick on the rim of her Big Gulp than there was left on her lips. The black, stylish clothing Heather had worn earlier were now tossed haphazardly in the corner and had been replaced with her standard loose, grey sweats. This was definitely the woman Jared had dated.

“Jared. What are you doing here?” She yelled. Heather was visibly rattled. She didn't have anywhere near the poise and posture that she had had earlier in the day.

“I came for the antidote.” Jared replied as coolly as he could muster. His voice still trembled, but that was more from the nagging arousal that made him weak in the knees than it was from the woman who stood before him. Sure, Heather still held Jared's future in her hands, but there was something different

about her now. Somehow Jared had gained the upper hand. He wasn't quite sure how yet, but he could feel it in the atmosphere of the room. Heather was no longer in control of the situation.

"You're much too early for that." Heather snapped back. It was clear she was trying to regain some of her poise. She was trying to summon forth the scorn and derision she had had earlier, but her jittery nature made the delivery lack the emphasis necessary for the words to really land.

"No. I'm not. You said it yourself, I only have twenty four hours. I can't wait any longer." Jared replied. His tone was a strange hodgepodge of desperate and demanding with hints of uncertainty and annoyance mixed in. Jared knew he needed to keep his cool. He knew how much was riding on it. It wasn't just that he couldn't show weakness. It wasn't just that he didn't dare let on that the constant state of arousal was wearing him down both physically and mentally. He knew that if he did that, Heather would have a chance to recover and once again take the offensive, but at the same time he couldn't push too hard. As much as he wished he could, he knew he needed to play things safe and cool. Too much depended on Heather relenting. Too much depending on Jared managing to somehow convince this woman to give him his life back. As much as Jared hated to admit it, Heather still held all the cards. He just had to hope that somehow she didn't realize.

“And you expect me to just give it to you? After you broke in?” Heather scoffed disdainfully.

Jared could feel his edge fading. Heather was reverting back to how she had been this afternoon. She was slipping back into the snide and haughty persona she had used in mocking and manipulating him through all those calls. Yet at the same time he could still see the uncertainty in her eyes, and there was something else there too, but he couldn't quite put his finger on it.

There was a tense pause where Jared weighed him options and tried to think of the best way to approach the situation. He cast a sidelong glance towards Lindsey who had been strangely silent this whole time. She merely shrugged in reply. Whatever was going on in that head of hers, Jared knew he was on his own for the time being.

“I didn't break in, ok? I had a key. I just... I don't know... let myself in?” Jared replied awkwardly.

This time his fidgeting and murmuring wasn't just an act. This time he really was uncertain how to proceed. Jared hated this feeling almost as much as he hated the constant need to cream that weighed on his mind and chubbed his cock. It wasn't just that he had lost his skill in bed. This exchange made it painfully clear that he had lost his edge with women as well. Namely he had lost the finesse that he had had when he had dated Heather before. There was once a time where he could have her eating out of his hand with a simple phrase, but now something was different, and

he wasn't convinced that the change was merely on his end.

"Semantic bullshit." Heather shot back. Whatever weakness she had shown when Jared had shown up unannounced was quickly fading. Heather had almost completely reverted back to the cold, hard bitch she had been before. One thing was sure, the passive, polite angle wasn't getting him anywhere. If anything it was making matters worse. Even Lindsey was getting annoyed with Jared's timidity. She looked ready to intervene on his behalf which was somehow even more devastating than Heather's attitude shift. Jared knew he'd need to try pushing harder. If he didn't somehow gain control of the situation he knew he'd never live it down.

"Well you obviously weren't going to let me in!" Jared shouted back. His sudden outburst caught even Lindsey off guard. She jumped back in shock at the total 180 Jared had pulled, and Heather was even more shocked. She recoiled at the outburst, but there was something in the way she moved that caught Jared's eye. She didn't take a step back... she stepped to the side.

Jared decided to push his advantage. "How was I supposed to prove I had done enough to deserve the antidote if you won't even speak to me? If you won't even look at me!?" He demanded. He stomped forward and eyed Heather intently. Her tough act started to crumble even further, and once again instead of just slinking backwards, she crept slightly to

the side. It was clear that she wasn't just trying to back away... she was instinctively trying to block Jared from reaching something.

Heather had nothing to say in her defense. She shrugged and scowled and tried her hardest to keep up the menacing mastermind act she had pulled off so well earlier, but she was visibly shaken. There was a tense moment where she and Jared held each other's gaze. Their anger flung like knives from their glares, and their bodies both trembled but for very different reasons. Jared was physically drained and mentally sapped from a day that had taken him down from hero to zero and then kicked him while he was down, and Heather was mentally sapped for a very different reason – a reason which Jared still couldn't quite place.

Jared was sure he finally had the upper hand. The only question was what to do with it now? He had nowhere to go with it. He had no idea how to proceed. He was sure he had Heather on the ropes, but he didn't know why? Something about the way she was acting was totally wrong, and to make matters worse, Lindsey looked ready to snap.

Lindsey had been getting steadily more agitated during the course of Heather and Jared's battle of wills. She had gone from put off to annoyed to enraged in record time, and Jared could see it. Her stance steadily shifted. First she was merely hanging back. Then she folded her arms in front of her chest and glowered as he and Heather went at it, and now she had her hands down by her sides, her fists

clenched into tight fists, and her teeth gritted together like she was ready to tear someone's head off. Jared hoped that her ire wasn't aimed at him, but even if it wasn't, it was yet another example of how he had lost his edge. He had used and manipulated her with ease for months now, and now he couldn't even read her. He had no idea what it was that had her so pissy.

"This is re-goddamn-diculous!" Lindsey shouted suddenly.

Both Heather and Jared were completely stunned by her outburst. Jared had no idea what was going on in Lindsey's head. He was sure he had Heather on the ropes. Why had Lindsey felt the need to butt in like that? Jared glared at his girlfriend and silently mouthed, "what the fuck!?" but Lindsey blew him off and kept her focus on Heather. Jared silently fumed over this new development, but he knew better than to argue. The last thing he needed was for Heather to see some discord between him and Lindsey. As much as he hated it, he knew his only chance right now was to sit back and let Lindsey do her thing. He just hoped that she somehow gave him an edge in this conversation.

It didn't take Heather long to recover from her shock. She quickly regained her footing and became straight up livid. Her focus had shifted from Jared to the new arrival, and as her focus shifted, her bravado returned.

“Who the fuck is this? This your newest blonde bimbo? What’s this? Your eighth one this week?” Heather snarled at Jared.

Jared was taken completely off guard by Heather’s outburst, and it wasn’t just because it was so sudden. “No! It’s not like that! This is Lindsey, my girlfriend. You know her.” Jared explained, but there was something in his voice – a faint hint of uncertainty. Heather did know her, right? She claimed they were friends so how had they not recognized each other.

“How’s one of your token blonde bitches any different from another.” Heather snarled back.

“Well I’m obviously better than you so there’s that.” Lindsey countered.

“Yeah. Like being young and pretty will mean jack shit in five years.” Heather shouted back.

Things were starting to fall into place in Jared’s mind. If what Heather said earlier was true then she must know who Lindsey was, and yet... here they were face to face as if meeting for the first time. Jared looked back and forth between the two women, his ex and his current girlfriend, and looked at the fire in their eyes. These were not friends. They never had been.

“I wasn’t referring to looks, you shallow cunt. I don’t need to fucking poison my exes to feel better about myself!” Lindsey shouted.

That last line caught Jared's attention. To feel better about herself? Had it really been so simple as that? He didn't have time to think too hard on it. Heather was already shouting back her reply.

"Poison!? I didn't poison him!" Heather shot back. She was practically hysterical by this point. She had a look of rage in her eyes that Jared had never seen in her before, and Lindsey wasn't much better.

"Oh? Then what would you call it, then?" Lindsey demanded.

"I was taking back what I gave him!" Heather shouted.

"With poison!" Lindsey shouted back.

The situation was going from bad to worse. Jared knew if he didn't act soon, their argument would get the neighbors involved, and there was no telling what would happen if the police got involved. He couldn't wait long enough for them to finish getting out of the precinct. He needed the antidote and he needed it now.

Jared fought against the haze that had set in over his mind and against his own confusion. Finally he managed to summon the focus to step in. "Both of you. Stop it!" Jared demanded.

"Or what." Heather asked menacingly.

"I'm just telling it like it is." Lindsey replied in a half-hearted attempt to defend herself. She didn't

really see the point though. As far as she was concerned, Heather was the only one who was at fault.

“I need you both to be calm. Please. Just. Just answer some questions for me. Help me understand what the fuck is going on here.” Jared said as evenly as he could muster. Jared had never been the voice of reason. He was the first to get mad. He was the last one to try to mediate, but here he was having to play ref before his current girlfriend and his ex got into a full on fistfight over him.

Jared cringed slightly at the thought. On some level he knew that had he not been in such a terrible physical state he would have loved to sit back and watch these two tear each other apart. He knew that had his dick not been so fully knackered he would have gladly made some popcorn and watched the two of them throw down. In fact just thinking about how hot it would be to watch these two woman tear each other’s clothes off got his already overstimulated dick ready to unload once more, but as much as it pained him, both physically and emotionally, Jared knew that he had to be the mature one even if it was for the first time in his life.

“I don’t have to explain anything to you.” Heather replied. She sounded so testy and disinterested that Jared was worried he wouldn’t be able to get anything out of her, and yet he knew he had to try.

“Earlier today. At the gym. You told me. You told me that you were doing this to protect Lindsey.” Jared said as calmly as he could muster.

“Protect!?” Lindsey scoffed. She was ready to give Heather another piece of her mind, but before she could get more than two words out Jared rudely snapped his fingers and glared at her. “Like I-” was all Lindsey managed to get out.

“Quiet.” Jared said.

“Don’t snap at me. I’m not your dog.” Lindsey fumed. She may not be Jared’s dog, but she did sound about ready to tear his throat out if he didn’t watch where he was going.

“You may not be, but you sure are his bitch.” Heather added with a snide chuckle.

“I’m gonna fuckin’ kill her. I swear.” Lindsey muttered menacingly under her breath.

“I know, but at least let me finish with her before you do.” Jared replied as calmly as he could muster.

“Fine.” Lindsey grumbled dismissively.

“So what did you want to know?” Heather asked defensively. Her snide demeanor made it clear she had no interest in giving up any information willingly, but Jared had already seen the cracks in her façade. He had seen how easily her frigid bitch act could crumble if he pushed her right. For the first time all day Jared was starting to feel like he had regained

some of his former glory. He was starting to get a feel for how to read Heather, and if he could read her, he could control her.

“As I was saying. You said you wanted to protect Lindsey.” Jared said again. This time he shot Lindsey a sidelong glare to indicate that she should stay out of it. She looked irritated, but at least she was staying out of the way... for now.

“What of it?” Heather asked testily.

“You made it sound like you knew her. That the two of you were friends somehow.” Jared explained.

“She’s a good kid. She doesn’t deserve to be manipulated by you.” Heather shot back. Her attitude had returned full force. She was once again full of spite and acting high and mighty about her actions, but this time Jared wasn’t fazed. He knew it was all bullshit.

“You’ve obviously never met her.” Jared replied.

“Are you saying she somehow deserves your bullshit!?” Heather snarled.

“That’s not what I meant at all. I agree she’s a good person.” Jared replied. He was so casual and nonchalant about it that it completely threw Heather off, but she had no good follow-up. All she could do was stand there and stare at Jared skeptically.

Jared glanced back at Lindsey once more. She was noticeably baffled, but at least she wasn’t going to

interrupt. She seemed as interested in where this line of questioning was going as Heather was.

Jared allowed himself a smug smirk. He was really feeling like his old self again. He didn't know all of what was going on, but he had the advantage. He had the cards. It felt good to have control again. He missed this feeling more than he missed having good sex. It was never really about getting his rocks off. It was about control.

As much as Jared wanted to sit and bask in the smug sense of superiority that came with his control of the situation he knew better than to do that. His cock was already precariously plump as it was, and the sudden surge of machismo sent him from half-mast to fully hard. His dick was struggling against the front of his jeans. The noticeably bulge in his pants rose and fell as his rigid cock tensed and flexed expectantly. Jared knew he needed to hurry or he'd risk creaming himself just when he was getting to the good part.

Jared looked Heather straight in the eyes. He didn't show so much as twitch as she glowered at him. He looked as smug and self-assured as he ever did. That better-than-you smirk was back at full force, and it made Heather sick to her stomach.

"All I'm saying is, if you really knew her, you'd know she's standing right here." Jared said. He was so casual about it that his attitude threw Heather off far more than the actual bombshell that he dropped.

“HER!?” Heather yelled in shock. “That can’t be her! Lindsey’s such a sweet little girl. She’s top of her class and full of potential, not just another vapid bimbo!” Heather shouted.

Despite her outburst, Heather seemed genuinely jarred. It was as if this current revelation shook her to her core. She wasn’t sure what to believe anymore.

“Oh, please.” Lindsey replied sarcastically. “The only person who thinks that is my-“

Her words trailed off suddenly. She and Jared exchanged a quick glance. The gears were turning in both of their heads at the same time. There was only one person out there who genuinely thought Lindsey was all that and more. There was only one person who had such an overly idyllic view of the young woman who now stood in the room.

“Wait a second... I DO know you!” Lindsey shouted suddenly. She pointed right at Heather. Her eyes narrowed into furious slits.

“You’re my dad’s fucking secretary! Did he fill your head with fairy tales about his perfect little girl for hours every day? Is that what this is about?” Lindsey demanded.

Heather was too taken aback to reply. She merely stood there and stared in shock at Lindsey. She stammered and tried to formulate a response, but she wasn’t given the chance. Jared was quick to capitalize on her moment of weakness.

“Let me guess. He put you up to this, didn’t he?” Jared demanded.

“What? No!?” Heather sputtered.

“Of course not. He’s too goody goody for something like this.” Lindsey replied flippantly.

“So he had nothing to do with this?” Jared asked? This was actually news to him too. He was sure that the second Heather mentioned working for the dear old dean that he was going to be the mastermind behind all of this.

“Of course not. He might be a stick in the mud, but there’s no way he’d do something so blatantly illegal. If word of any of this ever got out, the only thing that would drop faster than her GPA is her fat ass on the curb. She’d be expelled for sure.” Lindsey replied.

Something about her tone actually made even Jared’s skin crawl. He knew that tone too well. He had used it himself many a time in the past. Lindsey had said one thing, but she had implied another thing entirely. That wasn’t just a joke. That was a threat!

Heather had picked up on it too. The color had completely drained from her face. She looked about ready to cry.

“What’s the matter? Don’t tell me you didn’t know this was how this was going to end.” Lindsey chided menacingly.

Heather started to back away in horror. She had abandoned all pretense of trying to keep up her villainous mastermind façade. Her guise had crumbled completely leaving nothing but terror in its place.

Lindsey sauntered forward. Her lips had curled into a victorious smirk. Something about her attitude made Jared feel uncomfortable, and he wasn't even sure why. He should be happy. This meant that he had won. They had Heather on the ropes. They had everything they needed. This new little bit of info was the perfect blackmail necessary to get her to give up the antidote. So why did Jared feel like he needed to stop it? He didn't understand, but the more he watched Lindsey sneer at his ex, the more uncomfortable it made him.

"Wait." Jared said suddenly.

Both Heather and Lindsey stared at him, but their expressions were very different. Lindsey seemed slightly annoyed if anything, but Heather... Heather was staring at him as if pleading for her very life.

Jared wasn't even entirely sure why he had said anything. He had no idea what to say. He had no idea why he even felt the need to step in, but he the situation just didn't feel right.

"Wait... Just wait... Let's hear her out first." Jared said uncertainly.

"What's to hear out? I know exactly what's going on here." Lindsey replied flippantly.

“Y-yeah...?” Heather asked. Her voice cracked as she did so. She was so terrified that she could barely even speak.

“Yeah. You’re just another angry ex. The world is full of them. You think he should still be yours, is that it? If you can’t have him, no one can.” Lindsey said with a sneer.

“N-no. It’s not like that...” Heather pleaded.

“Oh? Then how is it?” Lindsey asked. She had such a snide tone to her voice that it made even Jared feel uncomfortable, and he had every reason to hate Heather for what she had done.

“You don’t understand. I gave him everything. I gave him my life, my time, my money.” Heather stammered.

“Well, duh.” Lindsey replied.

“It’s more than that! He would be nothing without me! He wouldn’t have his gymnastics scholarship if it wasn’t for the serum I was giving him.” Heather shouted. She was nearly in tears at this point. She was so terrified and hysteric that she looked about ready to break down completely.

“If I remember, he had the scholarship before he even met you.” Lindsey replied.

“He did! But... but... I gave him the serum. He couldn’t get past the drug tests without it.” Heather sputtered.

“So that’s it.” Lindsey mused out loud. She glanced over at Jared and added, “I always wondered why you kept her around so long. So that was it. She was your supplier.”

“There’s a bit more to it than that...” Jared replied awkwardly.

“That’s right. I was his supplier.” Heather said suddenly. She still seemed terrified and on the verge of tears, but she had managed to summon forth some lost font of strength.

Her latest outburst got both Jared and Lindsey’s attention. Jared knew what was coming. He could feel the pit forming in his stomach, but Lindsey seemed completely nonplussed.

“If you rat me out then you’ll be getting Jared kicked out too. He’ll have to admit to doping!” Heather stammered. It was clear that she was trying to sound like she was in control, but her voice was faltering left and right. She wasn’t fooling anyone.

“If you really believed that, you wouldn’t be shaking like a leaf.” Lindsey replied flatly.

Heather recoiled in fear. She knew her trump card had failed. She knew she was busted. With nothing left to do, she looked pleadingly at Jared hoping that he would somehow intervene, but even she knew how hopeless that was. Even she knew that Jared wasn’t in it for anyone but himself.

The way Heather was looking at him made Jared's skin crawl and his gut churn. She was beyond a wreck. She was a scared and broken heap of a person, and somehow that didn't sit right with him.

"You're looking for help from him? The guy you tried to ruin? Ha! You're dumber than you look." Lindsey mocked.

Jared once again felt his skin crawl. He knew that Lindsey could be a bit snide. He knew that Lindsey didn't take shit from anyone and that she loved to get even with those that had crossed her. In that regard she was a lot like him. That was part of the reason that he liked her, but this... this was too much.

Lindsey took a few steps closer. Heather once again recoiled in fear, but she was out of room to maneuver. She was pinned up against the wall. With nowhere left to go she started to curl up against the wall and shrink in fear.

"You're really not that stupid, are you?" Lindsey asked softly. Her words were cold as ice. Her words cut Heather straight to the bone.

Lindsey's tone was so heartless that even Jared felt uncomfortable, but he couldn't bring himself to act. He still didn't even know why he felt like she should. Heather was the one who ruined his life. She deserved everything that was happening.

"N-no... I'm not..." Heather whimpered and began to softly sob. She was no longer even trying to

hold back. She was beaten and broken. All she wanted to do was leave and never come back.

“You knew it from the start. He was just using you as he had all the others.” Lindsey said mockingly.

Jared couldn't deny what Lindsey had said. He had been using Heather all along. He knew it as well as anyone, and yet hearing her say it made him feel like shit. He felt like he needed a long, hot shower, but even that wouldn't be enough to get the filth out of him. He felt even more disgusting than he had all day. Even the feeling of cooling jizz and cum-caked clothing didn't feel as gross as whatever it was he was feeling now.

“I... I know... I knew...” Heather softly sobbed.

Jared felt a pang in his gut that he hadn't felt in ages. It took him a moment to even process what it was he felt. This strange sense of general disgust at himself had a name. It was a feeling, an emotion he had thought he had done away with years ago, but he couldn't deny it anymore. He felt guilty. For some reason, despite everything Heather had done to him, Jared still felt guilt at what he had put her through.

“You're just as guilty of this as he is then. You played along knowing full well what would happen in the end. You could have left at any time, but you chose to stay.” Lindsey sneered.

“N-no... You don't understand.” Heather pleaded.

Jared's skin was bristling, and he didn't understand why. This was something new. It wasn't just guilt anymore. He felt the need to do something. He felt the need to step in, but he wasn't sure why. The things Lindsey was saying angered him. He didn't understand how she could blame Heather for the way he had treated her.

"Oh? Then enlighten me." Lindsey replied.

"Y-you don't understand. I knew it was all fake. I knew he didn't really like me, but I wanted it anyway. I wanted to feel loved. I wanted to feel loveable. It didn't matter if it was fake. It didn't matter so long as we could keep pretending." Heather choked out between sobs.

Jared felt lower than dirt as he listened to Heather sob the words, and he silently chastised himself for it. He tried to remind himself that they both knew what they were in for. They both knew it was just make believe to suit both of their needs, but at the same time he couldn't bring himself to accept it.

Jared's thoughts returned to what they had talked about earlier. Something Heather had said stuck in his craw. She was right. He had been there to help her in her time of need. He had willingly gone out of her way to be good friend even when there was no direct benefit to him. He plaid nurse. He gave her a shoulder to cry on, and he hadn't even hated it. Looking back on it, Jared wasn't even sure if he hadn't fallen for the ruse too. There were times when he genuinely liked being with her.

“As I thought. See? That wasn’t so hard.”

Lindsey said matter-of-factly.

Lindsey began to stand back up. She seemed sure in her victory, and to an extent she had already won, but Heather had one last thing she wanted to say.

“What about you?” Heather asked between sobs.

“What about me?” Lindsey asked back, but she didn’t seem too interested in the reply.

“Why do you stick with Jared if you know what he’s like?” Heather asked. She had almost stopped sobbing, but not because she was feeling any better. She was just so exhausted that she no longer had the will to keep crying.

Lindsey lips contorted into a menacing shape that was half smirk, half sneer. “Isn’t it obvious?” she asked. Lindsey chuckled softly and then went on to explain, “We’re perfect for each other. He’s hot. He’s talented. He knows how to get what he wants and use anyone he can to get it. He’ll go far, and so will I.”

Heather sucked up a wad of snot and wiped her nose on the sleeve of her sweatshirt. “Do you love him?” she asked.

“How naïve. I enjoy him. That’s all that really matters.” Lindsey replied.

“You’re right... you are perfect for one another.” Heather replied meekly.

Jared was shocked, but he wasn't necessarily surprised. One thing he had learned over the course of the evening was that he had underestimated Lindsey. It had started to become apparent back at dinner that she was more in charge of the situation than Jared had given her credit for. For some reason he had just assumed she was yet another easy mark, but she had never been one of his conquests. She was playing him every bit as much as he was playing her. The same strong, empowered attitude that had drawn him to her now deeply unnerved him. He was simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by her, and yet at the same time he knew that as long as he was in his current condition, he had nothing to offer her. If he wanted to stay with her, he had to get back to his former glory. He had to somehow beat whatever it was that Heather had done to him.

"We're done here." Lindsey stated. She turned and began to walk towards the door.

"What? But what about the antidote?" Jared asked.

"Oh please." Lindsey scoffed. She let out a wry chuckle and rolled her eyes. "If she had one, she would have offered it already." She explained.

"Then what happens now?" Jared asked.

"First we talk to daddy. He'll be ever so happy to hear that his precious secretary was into such dirty dealings." Lindsey said. Her voice slipped back into the baby talk she liked to use when she was buttering up

her father. The sheer speed at which she switched personas made Jared feel even more uncomfortable about the situation.

“Please... no...” Heather pleaded.

Jared looked back at Heather. She was a mess. Her sobbing had caused her mascara to run down her face. Her nose was running. Her eyes were red and bleary. She looked disgusting, and yet Jared couldn't feel strangely drawn to her. The gnawing pit in his stomach returned in full force. He once again felt he should intervene on her behalf, but he wasn't sure why. She had nothing to offer him right? She was useless to him. It wasn't like he had feelings for her, did he?

Jared's shuddered just thinking about it. He didn't want to even entertain the notion that he had enjoyed being her boyfriend. He didn't want to allow himself to think of what might have been. Sure she wasn't that hard on the eyes, really... She had a nice sense of humor too, and she was actually an interesting person to talk to once you got used to all the science jargon...

The pit in Jared's stomach grew so intense he felt like he could throw up if he didn't do something about it. He felt so shitty and so guilty. He just felt dirty and disgusting, and he now knew why. It wasn't just that he had ruined Heather. He had ruined both of them. He had created this whole slacker persona and refused to believe that he could be anything else. He hadn't let himself even entertain the notion that he

could actually be in love. He had told himself over and over again that his relationship with Heather was a mere means to an end and nothing else, but now he knew better and it was too late to do anything about it.

Lindsey was already waiting at the door. “Well? Are you coming?” She asked.

“Wait...” Jared said. There was a tense pause where the two of them just stood there staring at each other as if waiting for something to happen. Jared didn’t know what he was going to do or what he was going to say. He just knew he couldn’t leave things as they were.

Jared swallowed hard in order to get the lump in his throat to go down, but it didn’t seem to be going anywhere. He slowly turned around to look back at Heather, the girl that had once been his girlfriend even if he hadn’t thought of it as such at the time.

“The antidote. Is there one.” He asked.

She slowly shook her head. “No...” she said softly.

Jared felt his heart sink. He had lost everything. Not only had he ruined things with Heather, but he had lost his libido too. His dick was going to be a super-sensitive wreck for the rest of his life. He could kiss his academics goodbye, and he could forget about gymnastics. He couldn’t dope anymore, and even if he could get juice up without getting

caught, he couldn't do so much as a split without soiling his suit.

Jared silently slunk over towards where Lindsey was waiting for him. Despite everything he still didn't want to leave yet. Even though Heather didn't have an antidote for him, he felt like he should still try and do something for her. He knew as well as anyone that Heather didn't have much of a life outside of academics. If she got expelled from school, her life was pretty much over, and that was even if she managed to get off without a major lawsuit or even a prison sentence. Her life was even more fucked than his.

"...but... I'm close..." Heather croaked softly.

Jared stopped mid-stride and looked back at her. "How close?" he asked.

Heather didn't reply. She merely pointed to her computer. The same computer she had been trying to bock him from seeing earlier. It started to make a bit more sense now. At the time she was trying to stop him from seeing the unfinished cure. If he knew she had nothing to offer then she would have been busted even earlier.

Jared walked over to the computer and checked the screen, but he had no idea what he was looking out. There were tabs upon tabs open. Each one showed diagrams and formulas of chemical components. There were words with more syllables than he had had girlfriends.

"I... what...?" Jared murmured as he scrolled through the notes.

"She's bluffing." Lindsey said from the doorway.

"But what if she's not?" Jared called back.

"What's it matter? Once she's dealt with we can give the notes to the real scientists. Let the experts sort it out." Lindsey replied.

"She is the expert." Jared said flatly.

"Oh come on, Jared. Once I talk to daddy she's as good as done for. There's no way she's going to find some cure while living in a van by the river." Lindsey replied flippantly.

"Then you're not going to talk to your dad." Jared said.

Lindsey was taken aback. "You're not seriously going to defend her, are you?" she scoffed.

"She's close to a cure. I say we give her a chance." Jared replied.

"A chance? Jared, there is no chance. She's done for. One word to daddy and she's gone." Lindsey replied.

"You will not tell him." Jared said firmly.

"Or what?" Lindsey replied with a sneer.

“Or I’ll admit to the doping and the serum.”
Jared replied defiantly.

Lindsey cocked an eyebrow questioningly.
“What good will that do? Then you’ll both go down. Your academic career will be shot. Your Olympic hopes will be gone completely.” Lindsey stated.

“Exactly. If you ruin her, you ruin me.” Jared replied.

Lindsey rolled her eyes. “Oh god... you’re so much cuter without a conscience.” She groaned.

“So does that mean we have an agreement?”
Jared asked.

“No. It doesn’t mean that, but if you’re determined to waste your time on her, then I won’t stop you. After all, I know you too well to think this bleeding heart will last more than a week. Once you come back to your senses you’ll turn her in yourself.”
Lindsey replied.

Lindsey looked over towards Heather who was still cowering in the corner. “Looks like you’ve gotten yourself a stay of execution. Don’t fuck it up.” She said flatly. With that Lindsey turned and left the room leaving Jared and Heather alone.

Jared turned to look down at Heather. Even now he knew that he should feel angry. He knew that he should be furious at what she had done, but he didn’t feel that at all. He felt a strange mix of several emotions, and each of those emotions felt shittier than

the last. He felt some modicum of pity for the woman who sat huddled in the corner, but more than that he felt disgust for himself. He knew that he was to blame for so much of what had happened. He knew that he had ruined something perfectly good because he was more interested in the appearances than he was in his own feelings.

Jared turned and left without saying a word to Heather. He still wasn't sure if he had done the right thing, but he knew he couldn't just let Lindsey rat Heather out. Heather deserved better than that, and for the first time since he and Heather had started dating, Jared wanted to do what was best for her and not him.

Jared wasn't naïve enough to think he had any chance of being friends with Heather ever again. They had both done too much to harm the other for that. There was going to be too much bad blood between them for them to ever be more than just acquaintances after the events of this past day, but at least he felt better knowing that they both had a chance at a life after this. Heather could salvage her academics and maybe even find a guy that's right for her, and Jared... Jared had to hope that Heather succeeded in finding a cure. In the meantime he had Lindsey, but he wasn't even sure how much he could claim to even have her. Jared had seen Lindsey's darker side today. He had seen into her very soul, and it was like looking into a mirror. Lindsey had been right when she had said they were perfect for one another. She had the same twisted idea of what a relationship

meant that Jared had had. The only difference was that Lindsey actually believed it. It wasn't some lie that she had bought into like Jared had, and Jared was no longer sure he could go back to being that guy he had been before. Not only did he no longer have the steroids or the sex skills. Just the thought of going back to his old habits made him feel sick to his stomach.

Jared knew that he was stuck with Lindsey, for better or for worse. He didn't have the skills in bed to woo other girls. He didn't have the athletic or academic success to wow much of anyone either. If he never found a cure he would never amount to anything, and that brought up another issue altogether – an issue that terrified Jared more than anything. What would Lindsey even see in him if he never recovered? She had made it clear that he was but a means to an end just like Heather had been to him. If Jared could no longer live up to his part of the deal, he would be cut loose without so much as a tear shed by the girl who claimed to be his girlfriend, and Jared couldn't even say he blamed her. He would do the same thing in her situation. In fact he had done just that.