

**DELETED SCENE – Ori’s house, and then Nick’s**

**Ori, Vela, Nick, and PurplGrrl**

“I think Jane just pulled up.”

I took the stairs two at a time, then stopped when I got to the main floor. Was she here for Del? Did she think he lived here?

“She’s just sitting in her car,” Vela said from her post by the front window. She was against the wall, peering through the slats in the blinds. I stood behind her, catching sight of the Taurus parked in front of our house. A few seconds later Del pulled up. Jane stepped out of her car at the same time he did.

He glanced at the house, and then put his arm around her, leaning in close, whispering in her ear.

“Get away from the window,” I said.

“Ori—”

“Just get away.” I turned on my heel, forcing myself not to run. I strode through the kitchen and out the door into the backyard. I hopped the fence that separated our yard from Alli’s and knocked on her back door.

“Hi, Ori.” Alli’s mom looked a little surprised. “You haven’t come to the back door for a while.”

I could hear Del’s and Jane’s voices but couldn’t make out what they were saying. I smiled at Mrs. Wilcox.

“Yeah. Kind of forgot about it. Is Alli here?”

“No, I’m sorry. She’s with Troy. Is there something I can do?”

“No, that’s okay. I’ll catch her later.”

I walked around the corner of their house, out of her sight, waiting for her to get back to whatever she'd been doing. After about five minutes, I figured she was back to doing whatever she was doing so I hopped their back fence, running through the yard of neighbors I had never met.

The dog rose to its feet on the back porch, barking at me. Buddy? Barney? I'd heard them calling him but couldn't remember his name.

"It's okay," I said as he ran over and jumped up on me, trying to lick me. I managed to reach their gate and escape out the front, where I stood on the sidewalk, looking up and down the street before texting Nick.

*You home?*

*Kaitlyn is here - Nick cell 4:35pm*

*Can I come over?*

*Kaitlyn is here - Nick cell 4:35pm*

*Come on, man.*

*Fine. But Kaitlyn is here - Nick cell 4:35pm*

#

Nick sat really close to PurpleGrrl – I still couldn't think of her as Kaitlyn - on his couch. She still had blue hair and had on hand on his thigh. I'm not sure why I noticed that, but I did. The TV was on, but the sound was muted for a commercial.

"So, what are you guys doing?" I asked as I sat down in a chair next to the couch.

"'Mythbuster' reruns," PurpleGrrl said. "They're trying to shatter car windows with sound."

"I love this one," I said, settling back with a smile at PurpleGrrl.

Nick glared at me.

We watched the rest of the episode without saying much. When it was over, Nick stood up and looked at me.

“Help me get some snacks, dude.” He looked at PurpleGrrl. “We’ll be back.”

She looked from Nick to me and nodded.

Once we were in the kitchen, Nick opened the cupboard.

“So what’s your story?”

“No story,” I said. “Just wanted to hang out.”

“Taylor.”

“What?”

“Spill it.”

I sighed, then told Nick what I’d seen.

“So Jane’s with Del right now, at your house?”

I nodded.

“That’s cold.” Nick ripped open a bags of Barbecued potato chips, tossing a few back.

“But why hook up at your house?”

I shrugged. “To rub it in my face? Who knows. I just had to get out of there.” Something poked at me about Nick’s question. Something about who Jane was and what she would and wouldn’t do. To stop the poking, I grabbed a handful of chips and stuffed them in my mouth.

“Everything okay in here?” PurpleGrrl was standing between the family room and kitchen, looking concerned.

“Perfect,” Nick said, grabbing the bag of chips. “Get those sodas, would you, Taylor?”

I turned to the fridge just as my phone dinged a text in my pocket.

*Where r u? – Vela cell 5:05pm*

*Be home later.*

*Jane wants 2 talk 2 u - Vela cell 5:05pm*

I'll bet she does.

*She can talk to Del.*

*She came 2talk to U – come home - - Vela cell 5:05pm*

*I'm busy.*

*Can we talk? – Jane cell 5:06pm*

*Talk to my brother.*

I turned my phone off and slipped it into my pocket.

“Who wants a Coke?” I held up the cans to Nick and PurpleGrrl.

#

I got home at dinnertime, having called my mom to make sure all trespassers were long gone.

“I wish I could have been there for your gig yesterday, honey,” Mom said. “Vela said you were fantastic.”

I didn't look at Vela, whose eyes were trying to burn a hole in the side of my face. She'd practically jumped me when I got home.

“You are so wrong about Jane,” was the first thing out of her mouth when I walked through the door after PurpleGrrl dropped me off. I had ignored her and headed upstairs to wash my face.

“I'm serious, Ori,” Vela said through the bathroom door. “Did you read all of her texts?”

I frowned. When I had turned on my phone to call my mom, there had been five texts and one voice mail from Jane. I hadn't listened to any of them.

"She came to talk to you," Vela said.

To say what? That right before we both thought we had something, she got sucked into Del's orbit? That she was sorry that she was like every other girl in the world who met me and then met Del? And she invited Del to witness the whole humiliating event?

No thanks.

*Would Jane really do that?* a tiny voice asked.

"She asked Del to come so you guys could work it out," she said, as if reading my mind.

I opened the door, startling her into stepping back. "That's why she left with him after our gig, too."

Vela groaned. "Listen to the voice mail. Read the texts. Talk to her, Ori."

"Is dinner ready?"

She had breathed in, then let out a sigh. "Yeah."