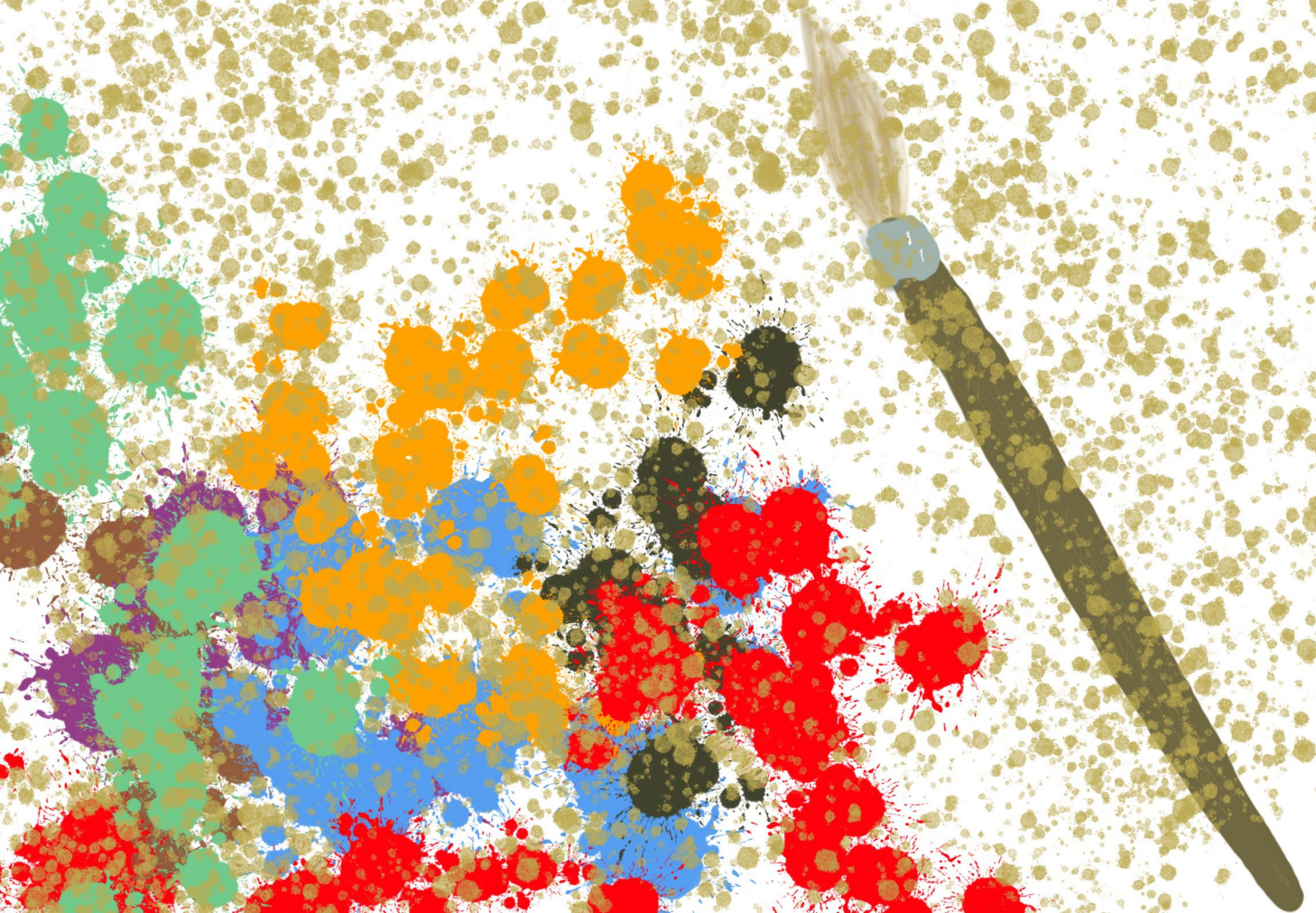
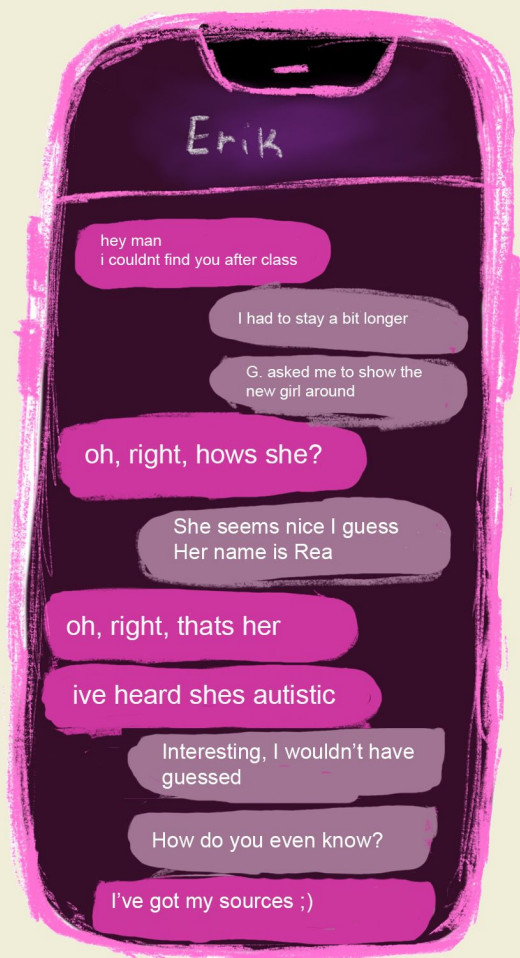
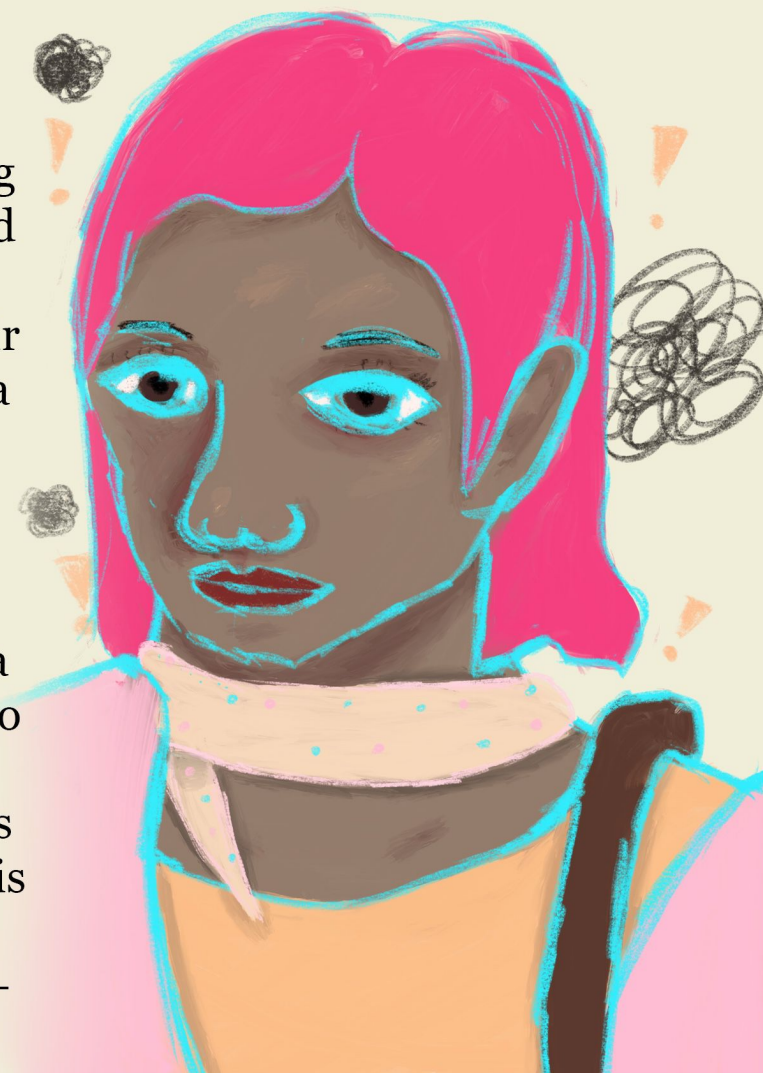


morrigan

BIAISED



Isa opened the door, his body exhausted. Days were finally getting longer so the fact the sky has turned indigo actually meant something. The teacher asked him to show their new classmate, Rea, around and Isa agreed but it exhausted him. Rea seemed nice enough, she smiled a lot and talked to him enthusiastically but he was just too tired to even attempt to enjoy it. Isa sighed and called out to his father to let him know he was back. Not waiting for a reply, Isa went into his room to rest before going back to his daily routine: dinner and talk with his dad, homework, shower, sleep – wake up, hope the bus is on time, school, work, return, repeat. His phone lit up with a message:



Isa sighed and put his phone away. He knew Erik wanted him to keep asking but he was too tired. He loved his best friend and he was willing to do whatever for him but right now, he needed to rest.

Spring ✿

Summer I.

Isa was tense. It seemed everyone was after him. With schoolwork piling up, he could no longer keep up with his old job but now that summer was approaching, he needed to get another. He even found a good one that would leave enough time for him to enjoy the holidays – he would look after a small group of children at the local library. He could somewhat choose his own hours, the pay was decent and he loved being surrounded by books, it always helped him with creativity. He used to babysit for their neighbours before they moved away and he helped at a summer camp a few times, so he even got some references – and yet they told him he wasn't the right type. What does that even mean?

"Hey man, what's up?"

"Oh, hi Erik. Not much," he said. Even with his best friend, he'd been feeling uneasy.

"You didn't get it?"

"No, okay, I didn't, and I have no idea what I've done wrong."

"Maybe it's just because you're a guy."

"That's nonsense. People at the library are nice and they know me, they..."

"Look, man, I'm not saying they thought to themselves "hey, here's an idea, let's not hire boys!" but like... people still automatically assume girls are nurturing and caring and whatever."

"Oh, people, huh? Do you mean like you?" said Isa, uncharacteristically venomous.

"Hey, man, what the hell? I didn't mean that as an insult and I don't think it's fair, to boys or to girls, but it is how that works, no? And what do you even mean by that?"

"I don't know, aren't girls too emotional for you to even bother talking to them?"

"That is rich coming from you. Have you even talked to Rea since she's come here?"

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"She has so many similar interests to you and I think you'd get along well but you refuse to even talk to her just because she's autistic."

"That's not true, I have nothing against autistic people, we just... didn't vibe. But you know, that reminds me... why had you stopped talking to Lily?"

"What the hell are you insinuating – that I stopped talking to her because she's trans? Cause you know that's not true – the only person who has trouble with trans people is you, you're only okay with Lily cause she isn't nonbinary."

Isa clenched his fists, pushing nails into the palms of his hands "Oh, I have never said anything about her being trans, just that she's girl, and as we've established you seem to have something against them."

"Oh, and yet I am the one who talks to Rea, how could that be?"

"I don't owe her friendship – and you two aren't friends either, that requires more than just one talk."

"Oh, hey, Rea, care to join?"

Isa looked where Erik's eyes have wondered, where Rea stood.

"To hell with you Erik. To hell."



Summer II. ☀

Even now, in August, the days were too hot. If Isa didn't work, he just lay down in bed and only got up when the sun was setting. The heat positively turned him into a nocturnal animal. He walked down the streets towards his favourite park; sky still carried the residual sunlight as he breathed in the warm evening air. Sitting down on a bench he listened to the cicadas as he rested his eyes.

"Hi, Isa," a voice snapped him out of his daze.

"Oh, Rea, hi. What are you doing here?"

She shrugged. "It's calm here in the evenings and I needed to get out of the house, it's scorching in there."

Isa nodded. It was surprising to see her outside of school but somehow it felt familiar. Rea always seemed tense, as if her friendly smile was just a mask she was wearing around people. But here, between the rustling trees, she was peaceful.

"You look much more relaxed than at school... there you always act so..."

"Weird?" she smiled.

"I wanted to say 'tense'."

"But you meant weird, didn't you?"

Isa wanted to say that he didn't but seeing her face – not angry, but sad, resigned – he couldn't bring himself to lie.

"I get that a lot," Rea said. "I am always the odd one, the strange one, the one who is too direct, awkward... I guess I just don't know how to behave," she chuckled and smiled at Isa before turning more serious. "I get overwhelmed easily and school is just... too much. I try, but it isn't enough, I still can't deal with the noise and smells and I still don't understand how to talk to people..."

Isa tried to find the right words but none came – „I'm sorry.“

Rea shrugged: "It's the norm for me, I don't really need pity."

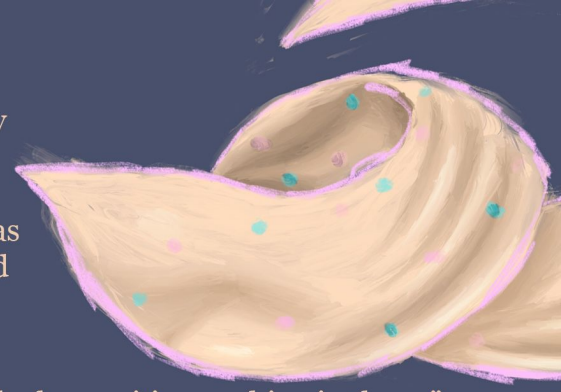
"I... I didn't mean... I want to apologise for how I treated you. I don't know why I behaved like that, really."

"Thank you. I guess people often don't even realise... we often don't know we're prejudiced."

They sat in silence for a moment.

"You like to draw, right?" Rea asked. Confusion flashed across Isa's face. He opened his mouth slightly but then he smiled.

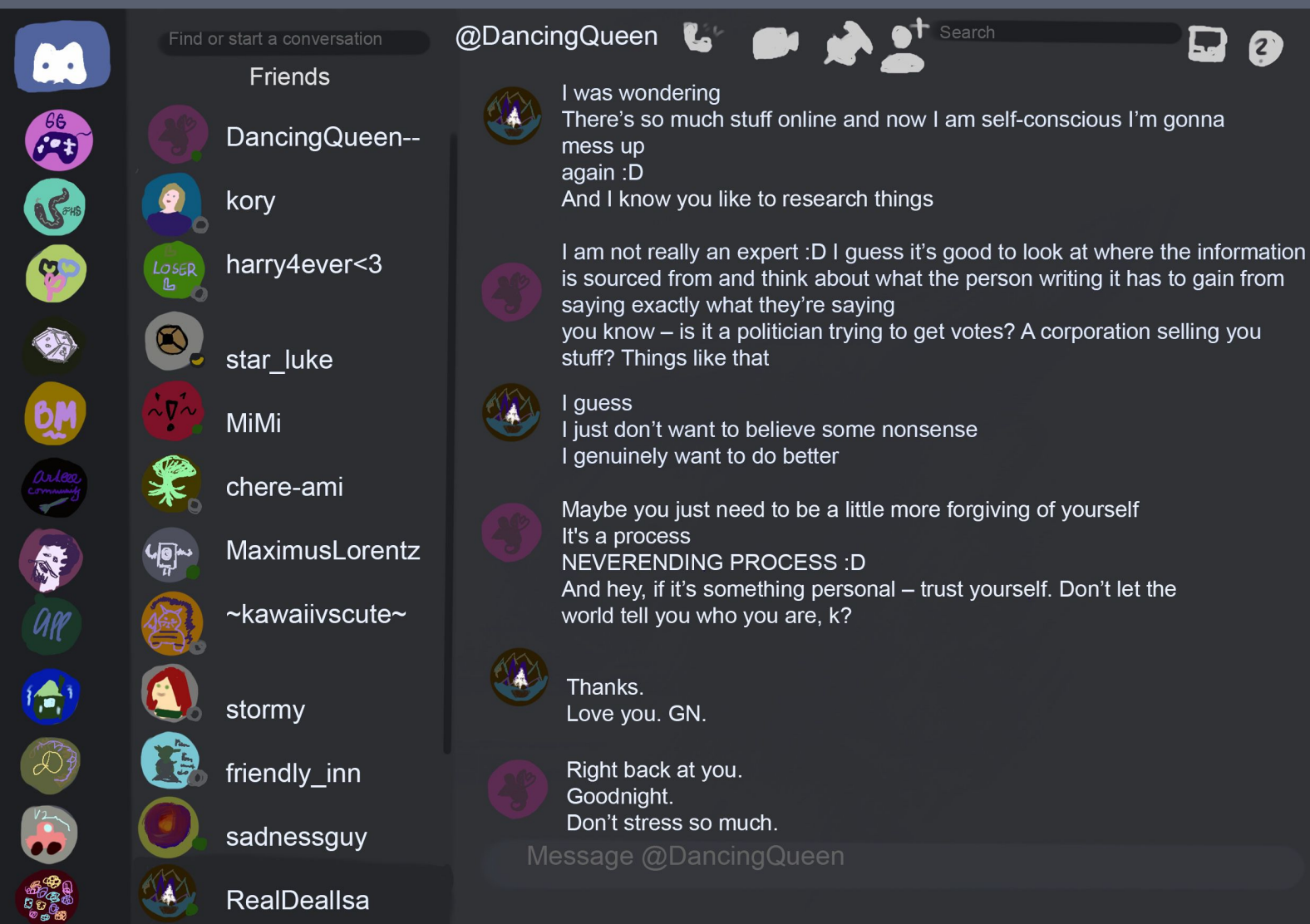
"Yea. And you do comics, riiight?"









Autumn I.

Isa had been researching – again. It felt like the only thing he'd been doing for the past month. It started with trying to learn more about Rea, trying to unravel his own biases. He didn't want to believe Erik – at first – but now, that he knew more, he saw that indeed, he'd probably almost let the opportunity to get to know Rea slip because she seemed odd to him. He didn't really think about it that way but it was apparently pretty common for people to subconsciously clock autistic people as weird and not talk to them. He felt embarrassed about not realising sooner, though Rea had assured him time and time again it was all good. They were friends now.

There was another problem though, there was one other thing that struck Isa. One comment about...



Find or start a conversation

@DancingQueen     Search  

Friends

- DancingQueen--
- kory
- harry4ever<3
- star_luke
- MiMi
- chere-ami
- MaximusLorentz
- ~kawaiiiscute~
- stormy
- friendly_inn
- sadnessguy
- RealDeallsa

I was wondering
There's so much stuff online and now I am self-conscious I'm gonna mess up again :D
And I know you like to research things

I am not really an expert :D I guess it's good to look at where the information is sourced from and think about what the person writing it has to gain from saying exactly what they're saying
you know – is it a politician trying to get votes? A corporation selling you stuff? Things like that

I guess
I just don't want to believe some nonsense
I genuinely want to do better

Maybe you just need to be a little more forgiving of yourself
It's a process
NEVERENDING PROCESS :D
And hey, if it's something personal – trust yourself. Don't let the world tell you who you are, k?

Thanks.
Love you. GN.

Right back at you.
Goodnight.
Don't stress so much.

Message @DancingQueen

Don't stress so much... if only Isa knew how to do that.



“What are you still doing here?”

Isa didn't even look up at his friend “I don't know what to do. I am just overwhelmed.”

Rea looked at him sympathetically: “I can relate.”

“I just always thought that all people felt like this. I used to get so frustrated with people who'd say they just never felt like guys or girls, that they always kinda wished they were different, because that's just what everyone experiences, that's what I experience and I am still a guy a...”

“Hey, hey – breathe, Isa, it's ok.”

Isa turned to her and nodded a few times, resting his head against the wall.

“When I said I can relate, I meant it – in a way. I know it's not the same as being trans, maybe it's a bad analogy but– I am overexplaining myself again, am I not? –“ said she, sharing a smile with Isa “I couldn't really accept being autistic when I was a kid. There was this one character on TV and I hated when my parents compared me to them and I would get annoyed with the character... I'm just trying to say, I get the “you're not special” kind of feeling when actually, you just don't want to accept your own difference.”

“How... how did you get over it?”

“Time, Isa. Time and learning – but I am not perfect, there's days where I still wish things were different, and I can be so mean to myself over it. It's all going to be okay. YOU are going to be okay, Isa, I know that. Or I am as close to knowing as I can,” she smiled at them.

Autumn  II.

Isa walked down the now almost empty halls. They liked staying in the art room, just drawing. Sometimes Rea would join them but on Fridays she had dance lessons.

“Hey.” Erik stood next to the doors to the classroom which startled Isa.

“Uh... What you’re doing here?”

“...Look, I’m sorry, I miss you. I shouldn’t have blown up at you like this. You were right, I have my own issues, and I used you as an outlet for that.”

“I... missed you and I am sorry, too.”

They stood facing each other for a moment before embracing. They had been friends for years before the fight and now, nothing mattered besides that. It was silly, really, to stop talking for so long over something that seemed so minor now.

“You were right as well, you know,” said Isa. “About Rea. I let biases I didn’t even really know about – and I didn’t WANT to know or think about – stop me from talking to her. I would have preferred if you and me haven’t stopped being friends but... thanks. She’s great.”

“Right, I’ve heard you two are dating now,” said Erik with a smirk – but it was more of a question than a statement.

Isa grinned at their friend: “Maybe, maybe not... We are for sure more than romantic partners though.”

“More than... what do you mean?”

Isa shrugged, still smiling. It kind of felt good to be the one teasing their friend. They stopped near the school exit; it was almost time for Rea’s class to end and they almost always went out on Fridays.

“I’m happy you’re happy. I wanted to approach you so many times, but you always seemed so stressed, and then the coming out, and I just didn’t want to add to that... I’m sorry. I should have come sooner.”

“Apology accepted. We are talking now, that’s the most important thing, I would have hated if we left high school not talking. Besides, I could have approached you as well, so... Sorry again?”

“It’s alright. I really am happy for you. You seem so... content,” he sighed. “If you don’t want to tell me, it’s fine, I just... how have you gotten there? I still feel mortified – that I treated the girls differently, especially Lily. You went through so much more and yet...” he trailed off.

Isa smiled: “I guess you are kind of right, though I still struggle, you know – but I am okay with that. Having biases and prejudices, that doesn’t make you a bad person. Not trying to fight those, not learning – that does. I know I’ll always have to work on myself so I can grow to be a better human being, but that’s fine, that’s good.”

Erik contemplated it for a moment before nodding.

“Thanks.”

A few people appeared in the hallway, Rea among them. They smiled at each other.

“Aaah, I see, your girlfriend’s here. Will you have time for me this weekend?”

“I haven’t said she was my girlfriend, good try though. But yes, I will, just... text me, okay?” Isa said over his shoulder, leaving with Rea.

“You haven’t said she wasn’t either!”

Isa didn’t reply, they just laughed, truly happy to be alive.



Winter ❄️