

SECRETLY

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They had no reason to be there. They were not sick. They were not mad. They were just humans. They were just them.

Since his arrival, Jukka's view has not changed at all. Sitting by the window and observing all the white curves of external nature. If he only could appreciate the everlasting paleness. In Lapland everything was cold and dismal that day, as every other day. His thoughts were non-existing. Nothing. That was in his head. And it was probably for the best, considering the cruelty of his actual situation. Jukka has not smiled since being here.

Hanne has just finished her second therapy. Those sittings helped her deal with her problems, yet not with her past. Secrets. That was all she had and all she fought against. Although she felt satisfied with local services and therapists, Hanne has not smiled since being here.

As she was passing all the abandoned walls, she noticed a bearded, pale, thin and empty young face.

And as Jukka was drowning in his unreal thoughts, he did not remark anything else. "I'm sorry," said Hanne and came closer to Jukka from behind, "do you like honesty?" She asked then, as if she was collecting random people's answers for her questionnaire. It did not surprise Jukka. All the weird people were here and it was okay, it made sense, for he was also one of them. "I'm sorry," he responded and for the first time today he has turned his head, "it depends." Something about that lady was just too weird. The shape of her clavicle and folds of her jaw line. Immaculate, yet so odd! "I have never smiled," said Hanne and looked deeper into his eyes. He must have turned back, so she would not stab him with those stiff daggers. "Me neither," answered the lad. They both had just never been happy with themselves. Then he looked out the window and paid attention to the frosty lake next to the psychiatric hospital. That was the first time those two met.

For no reason, perhaps, Hanne was passing that window more and more often. And every time Jukka was not there, she sat on his chair, wondering, what was the true reason behind this waste of time and watching that disgusting winter.

"*Today, the therapy is cancelled, for doctor Toivanen feels sick,*" was written at an old grinding door. And as more and more patients came and read the notification, the more happily they left the corridor. Until one dark-haired young woman with the most honest eyes one could ever imagine came. As she read the words, her face looked even more static. "Bad news?" Asked Jukka from behind. Hanne freaked out a little bit, she did not expect anyone to talk to her about something bad in here. "Yes," answered she earnestly. Jukka lift his eyebrows and looked around. The

whole miserable community still felt hope. Girls smiled at guys, guys bragged about unrealistic things, they had a good time, although their mind was not okay. "A guy died yesterday. Committed a suicide. And now they cancel therapy," speculated Jukka aloud. "Sad news," answered Hanne with no sympathy. It was just a statement for her. For both of them.

"What is wrong with you?" Asked Jukka nervously and immediately started chewing a gum. And then the mysterious lady turned around and just left him there. For he deserved it. And that was the second time those two met. In the middle of the night, Hanne left her pathetic, decaying room, and went out for a walk. She sheltered the biggest secret in her mind, she begged herself to tell everyone and at the same time, she would hate herself for that. Spreading the most sacred mystery of her life? No.

But then she slued around and accelerated into that filthy building. They were sitting on her bed, while they were talking until six am. So many unimportant and meaningless stories, so many books they managed to gossip, so many wishes, so many plans and so many reasons for their life choices. Yet not one smile.

And as Jukka came every night to Hanne's room and they chatted, the more they hated their lives and the fact that they are both crazy. Or considered to be crazy. By the other people, by the community. They were so close, at any moment they closed their eyes at the same time and just chattered, the connection between them was becoming deeper and deeper. Yet not one smile.

"We have never smiled," became their secret password while one of them was standing in front of the door at night.

"Let's just leave," said Hanne on one of those endless nights. "Just go. We can say that we are better off without them right now. Better off with each other." Imagining they would both leave just seemed so ironic. They were exactly those patients, who needed a professional help, for they both held so many unsolved problems in them. For they had never felt the real happiness one feels. For they had never been satisfied with themselves.

And so they left. One freezing night when it was snowing very heavily, so they could not even run. They did not sign any papers, they just ran away. Psychiatry will be there forever, it can wait for them. They will not wait for their fall. They will not wait for the moment they will separate. Maybe they will stop understanding one another, maybe they will fight over their opinions, maybe they will take something the other says too personally, or maybe one of them will just stop existing. They did not have any time for that. They just needed to leave at this moment. Right now. Nothing can stop them. The whole situation actually seemed rebelliously pleasant. Yet not one smile.

The frosty forest, six am, sitting on the ground and imagining eating blackberries. "I have a secret," said Hanne. And Jukka, with his thin throat and almost infantile visage, only nodded. He knew that.

Hanne leaned over and begged Jukka to close his eyes. He would have never done that, but his trust in her was just too deep. There was no way out. So he closed them. A photograph. Insecurity. Nervousness. Waiting. There was a little boy in the photo, could have been about eight years old, in his pajamas in a cozy living room with red-painted walls. He was standing next to the fire place, annoyed and probably spooked. That jaw line and that clavicle were unforgettable. It was Hanne. So beautiful, so immaculate, yet odd!

No words. No need to say anything. Despite the winter, Jukka took off his jacket and sweatshirt. "I have not had a surgery yet," said he and looked at Hanne's honest eyes. Although he kept no photo with him, the person in the photo would have exactly the same sight as young Hanne did. And there would have not been a little unconscious boy, it would have been a girl.

And then they both sat down and closed their eyes in the middle of the forest. And a hunter, who just passed them by and continued finding a doe, was pretty sure, he just saw two young people smile.