

It is what it is

He was watching her: the way her body moved with her even breathing, the way her hair had fallen onto the pillow, tousled and tangled, the way her hand curled up in a fist against the sheets. With every passing second he hated her more. And himself.

It had started out innocently enough. Her storming in, holding a death certificate he wouldn't even look at. Her word was good enough; she wouldn't dare trick him. The look in her eyes told stories better left untold, so he never asked and she never said. Instead, she talked about Lilith. And he listened, not just because of what she said or of how sweet her voice sounded, but because he really didn't have anything better to do. With Dean gone life had slowly become meaningless. He lost count of the days; every hour was a success for him, as well as another hour of self-pity and self-loathing.

Ruby had come in and saved the day. With her speech she had given him just this little bit more will to move towards a new goal. A new goal other than drinking himself stupid and seeing just how many demons, ghosts, vampires or whatever he could send to hell before the amount of alcohol in his blood send him into a coma.

"You stink," she had said bluntly and pushed him towards a shower. And while he had tried to drown himself in the steam of hot water, she had gotten rid of anything that had even the smallest percentage written on the bottle – even the cold medicine. Not that he'd had a cold, but it saved him from the headache the next morning. He'd yelled at her for it and she'd taken it. Just like she'd taken the blows to her face every time she'd said Dean's name.

He never apologized for any of it. He treated her like crap, because she wouldn't let him treat himself like crap anymore. And she knew it. She just treated him that much nicer, even shared her fries with him. The wonder about it all must have been written in his eyes, because sometimes she'd smile, but wouldn't tell him why.

The first time he'd let her talk about Dean's death he was high on painkillers. The headache was killing him; not that he'd minded, after all, she couldn't take those away from him.

"It's soft and warm," she'd whispered. And he was too drunk to resist. The more he hated himself the rougher he'd handled her. If she minded, she didn't say. She was free to leave him, after all.

But now it was different. The faint smile on her lips while she slept was so peaceful it scared him. She was so sure of it all, so confident. And so goddamn forgiving. She'd get bruises on her arms and thighs, but she wouldn't mind, wouldn't even talk about them or cover them up or whatever. "It is what it is," she'd said one day when he'd planned on asking her if it hurt. He never even had to say it out loud, she'd read it in his eyes.

She sighed in her sleep then, stirred and turned around. Her foot touched his leg for a second and he shied away from the contact instantly. She was way too trusting. He could kill her in her sleep right then and there; she wouldn't even wake up. And yet, she slept next to him, probably dreaming of candy canes and unicorns. God, how he hated candy canes.

Where had this begun, this messed up life of his? After he'd done Lilith in? Probably. He'd finished his task, what else was he supposed to do except follow her? She's strung him along, finding demon after demon. And then she'd started the list. She'd actually started to write down the names of all the people he'd saved by sending those demons back to hell. She would put the list on the nightstand every day so he would see it. She called it the Sam Winchester list and she would joke about how, if they handed out their address, they'd get a ton of Christmas cards this year. And he would have to suppress a smile, but the twinkle in his eyes was enough to satisfy her.

He'd buy fries for her. And ketchup. If she were allowed to, Ruby would only eat fries and ketchup. And somewhere down the line it had become their tradition. While she would sit in the car and write names he would order in: pizza, fries, burgers... Anything and everything with enough grease to drown yourself in. Not that he'd give any thoughts to drowning himself anymore. Maybe he would drown her, though.

She was stirring again.

"Stop it, Sam," she murmured. He smiled, but only because he knew she couldn't see it.

"What?" he asked.

"It is what it is." She simply answered.

She turned and fixed her eyes on his face. He bent down to kiss her, biting her bottom lip in the process. In return she put her hand to his cheek, caressing his mouth in the most gentle manner with her thumb. He snapped, but she pulled her hand back before he could bite her.

"Go back to sleep." He said, his eyes cold. And then she rested her head on his stomach, entwined her fingers with his hand and moved her foot between his. Soon, her breathing evened out again.

How had it come to this? It was moments like this when he didn't care. And then there were other moments, like when he was driving the Impala, or listening to a radio station called "The 80s live on" or when he'd look in the mirror and notice the necklace. And in those moments, he wanted to hit Ruby in the face. And more than anything, he wanted her to hit back. But he knew she never would.