

# ***The Next Chapter***

*by*

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Cast of Characters

EMILY :

19

DAR :

19

Place  
Park

Time  
Afternoon

**DAR:** (*Teasing.*) It's the drugs...they've rotted your brain.

**EMILY:** Don't say that. No really...I'm fine. Nothing wrong with my brain.

**DAR:** You're different.

**EMILY:** I am different but my mind works, maybe not as good as it did before everything happened but it has more mileage to go.

**DAR:** Why did you go to California in the first place, Em?

**EMILY:** Career.

**DAR:** Couldn't you be a singer here in New York?

**EMILY:** I needed...I needed to get away from here, I needed to understand things better.

**DAR:** (*Sighs.*) But you've always known who you are.

**EMILY:** I know. I just needed something new, I needed change. I couldn't stand being here anymore. I needed time to think, to be myself, without anyone else's opinion on how or what I should be thinking or doing.

**DAR:** I get it...I missed you.

**EMILY:** I know.

**DAR:** For the first few months, I did nothing but bum around.

**EMILY:** Why?

**DAR:** I didn't have my little buddy with me anymore and everything sucked. I considered moving out to California with you.

(*They both laugh.*)

I thought maybe there was something out there I was missing. You didn't even call me, Em. I mean...you told me that you'd be in touch and it never happened. I kept waiting for your call. Those months were painful. I wanted to call you but I thought you'd be busy, or happier without hearing from me. I wanted to give you that freedom. Eventually so much time passed, I figured you moved on to some great new life and forgot all about me.

**EMILY:** I thought about you every single day.

**DAR:** Did you?

EMILY: Every day...

DAR: ...Em, what happened to you out there?

EMILY: It's all the past Dar, none of it means anything anymore.

DAR: What happened? Why didn't I hear from you?

EMILY: ...I wanted to call you, hear your voice, I needed a lifeline but I refused an outlet, cause, I don't know, I wanted to get through it on my own. I wanted to learn how to be my own person without depending on anyone.

DAR: But I'd be there for you in a heart beat.

EMILY: That's just it, I know that and that's the whole point. I didn't want to burden you with my problems. You never did that to me and I didn't want to be the one always doing that to you.

DAR: ...You aren't yourself Em. I mean, you're you but you aren't you, does that make any sense?

EMILY: Makes total sense.

DAR: (*Not pushing.*) Yeah.

EMILY: This has been the most difficult time of my life and the strangest thing about it all is that it's exactly what I need...doesn't even make sense, right? In some way, I needed the pain but I can't understand it.

DAR: ...But you're back now and you're going to get on track with things in the city you love. I'm around you again and you're around family, so -

EMILY: Don't remind me.

DAR: (*Laughs.*) They haven't changed.

EMILY: Never will.

DAR: I haven't even heard of any of your latest music. Didn't you say you were cutting an album out there or something?

EMILY: I was but...ah, it didn't work out.

DAR: Why?

EMILY: I fell in love.

DAR: ...Oh...did you?

**EMILY:** I fell in love real hard. Justin...he was something really special, he is something real special but; he opened me up to things about life, myself and he gave me things I needed and then he broke my heart.

Everything was taken away from me on one day. I thought I was building this wonderful life for myself. I was happy, I was recording, I was in love...I was barely getting by but it was such a great feeling to be my own person and carve out my own path...then things began getting the best of me, I started to gradually lose my core, my foundation; what was giving me life was also taking it away and I didn't realize it until, until...this one night...we were all out, with members of Justin's band, he had just finished a gig and we were all getting blasted at the bar. I was helping to load up the van with equipment but started feeling lightheaded and so I laid down in the back. I was so lit, I couldn't even talk straight...then I heard this moaning sound coming from outside, and so I got up and walked out the van to find Justin having sex with this woman.

I went ape sh't. I just remember raging. I grabbed some microphone stand from the back of the van and went to work on all his equipment with it. Everything didn't seem real, I was just in some mad rage I couldn't get myself out of. The next thing I remember was waking up in my bed, as if from a nightmare, but when I tried calling Justin, he was no where to be found.

Turned out that one of my microphone swings hit something that reached Justin's head and put a major gash across his temple. Could have killed him for real...I never saw him again. I was told about it all from Tom, the drummer, with a threatening message to never go near him again, so...that ended that.

I think I had a nervous breakdown after that and that's when I; that's when I was escorted back home and so...here I am.

**DAR:** I had no idea.

**EMILY:** Of course you didn't, how could you?

**DAR:** That guy Justin is a waste. You know that, right?

**EMILY:** Eh, it's all part of the wannabe rock star life we thought we were living. Who knows?

**DAR:** You just need to get back to your roots.

**EMILY:** Right now, I'm just trying to get back to living a normal day without...

**DAR:** I know...

**EMILY:** It's been so rough...I, I can't sleep. Sometimes, I don't know if when I'm sleeping, I'm awake or when I'm awake, if I'm sleeping. Everything seems like I'm stuck in some sort of fictionalized novel. I keep turning the pages to try and get to the next chapter but I never get to the next chapter...

**DAR:** It's gonna take some time. You've been through a lot.

**EMILY:** You're the only normal person I know Dar...everyone else is fucking insane.

**DAR:** Hey...you survived. You're still here, right?

**EMILY:** Guess so.

**DAR:** My dumb ass is still here.

**EMILY:** Don't say that, you're far from dumb.

**DAR:** Oh, come on, don't tell me you forgot about what a jackass I am.

**EMILY:** Actually, you're right, you're pretty dumb.

*(They both laugh.)*

**DAR:** And don't you forget it.

**EMILY:** You always make me laugh, always. Thank God. I don't think I've laughed in weeks. Almost thought I forgot how to laugh, too...

**DAR:** ...Not with me around.

*(Dar performs a made up character impression that only he and Emily seem to know and Emily cracks up with laughter.)*

*(In a disguised voice.)* "I haven't seen ya in quite some time. So nice to see ya back in the woods. Welcome back to the land of the crazies. HE-HA-HEH!!! HE-HA-HEH!!!"

**EMILY:** I love you.

**DAR:** *(Pause.)* You're gonna be alright Em.

**EMILY:** I know. I know I will.

*(Dar puts his arm around her.)*

**END OF PLAY**