

## CHAPTER 64

I probably shouldn't ~~of~~ **have** burst out laughing when Kage gets to this part of the story, but I do, earning myself a little scoff from him and an eye roll - but he's smiling. That's all that really matters to me at the moment, ~~is~~ - that we're enjoying ourselves, with his mind off of everything that is happening to him right now. We're a couple **of** days into our Winter break and it's still evident that the phone call with his dad - **necessary as it was** - **has** ~~definitely had~~ taken ~~it's~~ **its** toll on him, ~~even if his dad should know what's happening.~~

Sentence 1:

**shouldn't have, not shouldn't of** (*of* is a preposition, not a verb, and can NEVER be used to follow words such as *should, could, would, had* or *must*). This is a very common written error which stems from mishearing the contraction of *shouldn't have* (*shouldn't've*) as *shouldn't of*.

Awkward mixture of past and present tense: *shouldn't have* (past) ... *but I do* (present) corrected so all in present tense.

Last sentence:

Awkward final clause, reworded without changing essential meaning of sentence.

Corrected to bring all into present tense (*had* -> *has*).

Redundancy: If something is *evident*, it is also *definite*.

Kage had been particularly affected by it today. Since ~~Kage~~ **he** is the only emergency contact his mother has, the hospital sends him all the updates. They send a nineteen year old high school kid the updates - it's not sounding good.

~~Since~~ **They** don't seem to be very empathetic staff, **either**. They called today to talk to Kage about her insurance plan. It seems to be crap, so they're asking for more money. Her condition seems to only worsen, and she's not coming out of her coma - she's going to have to be there for **quite** a while longer, but the undertone ~~sounds like~~ **implies** she won't be if Kage can't somehow cough up the money... if that doesn't give you the hint.

It hit him pretty hard - and he's too ~~prideful~~ **proud** to call his dad back and explain the situation. Not that I would call that bastard for help either - not when his first worry is a stupid bike.

*Proud* is more common usage than *prideful* (but either is okay).

Long story short - I'm happy to see Kage getting his mind off of it for a moment.

"It's rude to laugh!"

"How could I not laugh? You were a jerk the first day of school, I'd say a door to the face was deserved!"

"I hadn't done anything to deserve it, yet!" Kage crosses his arms as he defends himself, faking a pout - but I'm not going to get guilt-tripped today, not even by those puppy-dog blue eyes.

"Oh - so you come to Fisher's Class and just decide to be an asshole to me?"

"Well that..." Kage pauses, stressing his words to catch my undivided attention, "you deserved that."

"How the hell did I deserve to become the new kid's fresh meat?" I start to scoff, but the look in Kage's eyes tells me that I'm not understanding part of the story - he knows something that I do not. I don't even have to ask 'what?' - I simply glare him down until his smile widens and he takes a small, dramatic breath, rolling his eyes as if pretending to be contemplating whether I'm worthy enough to know.

"You cut me off so rudely, when I was going to tell you the best part willingly."

"I'm sure you can find it in that obnoxious little head of yours to continue on."

"You're right, I can," Kage nods, smiling to himself. "Alright, so I get knocked to the ground, right?"

"Magically."

"Shut up," Kage scoffs, pausing for a moment as he tries to think. "So I'm sitting there with my nose bleeding, and I look up to see the bastard who did it already halfway down the hall, running away."

"You saw who hit you?"

"Yep."

"**He** hit you in the face and took off?"

"Yeah, can you believe it?"

"No," It comes out as a laugh, going along with the shrug and the shake of my head, "and to top it off, it made you late for the worst teacher in school's class."

"Can you imagine how irritating it was? But I guess luck was on my side."

"Why do you say that?"

"The little shit who hit me was in my science class, too."

~~"They were?"~~ "**He was?"**

Avoid using the plural when referring to a single person.

"Yeah," Kage has got a glint in his eyes that is humorously sinister while he practically spells it out for me, "got stuck with him as my science partner, too."

No sooner ~~has~~ **have** the words left his mouth ~~when~~ **than** my jaw hits the floor, "You're not seriously going to blame that on me?"

"There's nobody else to blame!"

I think we legitimately argue for the next ten minutes over whether he is telling the truth. Basically it consists of childish 'Nuh-uh's' and 'Uh-huh's,' but it seems like a real conversation in the moment. I don't remember hitting anybody with a door, and Kage argues that I was in such a panicked rush that I didn't notice. (Apparently, despite understanding that, it ~~doesn't~~ mean he was forgiving enough to let

it go and not pick on me for ~~the following~~ weeks afterwards.) I argue that he's mistaking me for someone else, and he starts being a cheeky bastard and says that it's impossible for him to mistake me for anyone else.

Redundancy: *the following* and *afterwards* mean the same thing.

At least Kage is being completely honest with me when he says that he had every intention of making my life worse - which he admits was incredibly salty of him. When I ask him to elaborate on what he possibly could have done, his ~~old~~ **whole** evil plan unfolds. He was going to date Violet. He was going to let me down for the science project. He was going to let Justin bully me.

But he just didn't have it in him after he got to hang out with me a bit more. By the time he broke his hand, I had completely won him over - only God knows how.

"You sound like a freak. ~~did~~ **Do** you know how excessive that sounds? You were legitimately **(actually?)** plotting to ruin my life."

Check meaning of *legitimately* here. Whether plotting to ruin someone's life is a **legitimate** thing to do is debatable.

"Hey! It's not like I'm proud of it! I was in a bad spot and figured I'd drag someone down with me - I really didn't like you to begin with."

We share a small laugh, studying ~~the~~ **each** other.

"Well, I'm glad you didn't do it."

"Me too," he agrees, "I like how this turned out much better."

\* \* \*

Believe it or not, hospitals still accept visitors during the holiday season, and this is where we find ourselves late evening on the 21st and mid afternoon on the 22nd, due to getting more updates on Kage's mom. Since it's so close to Christmas, I've been hoping ~~they'd~~ **they might** lay off with the phone calls, but it doesn't seem like they will. Luckily my mom is pretty sympathetic for the time being.

Past/present tense mixture: *I have been (present) hoping they would (past)*

"So does this mean that you're going to stay here for Christmas?"

"I'm not really sure if my dad even wants me to come up anymore. He took the bike as a personal ~~offense~~ **insult**." Kage shrugs, closing the car door behind him and we look up to the large hospital building in front of us. It's ~~probably~~ the second time he's been here in under twenty-four hours, but he wanted me to come with him this time around. Luckily my mom had some time to come drop us off, but we're going to have to figure it out when it comes to going back home, since she's going back to work.

"I'm sure your dad would want to see you every chance he got, it's why he tried bribing you with the bike in the first place."

"Both of my parents can be really childish," Kage huffs at me when I give him the look, waving me off, "what you saw with my mom was the absolute extreme, she's not usually that bad."

"She was that bad every time we went to see her, Kage," I mutter in reply, watching him set his jaw, but he takes a deep breath and looks ahead of us as we head up the walkway to the main doors. "I'm not trying to get you angry with me or talk badly about your mom, or anything like that... I just have nothing to compare it to."

"No, it's not your fault, it's mine for not being smarter about how I approached this."

"I think this was inevitable," Kage looks at me as I say this, the weight of his gaze is heavy, but I somehow keep a clear head, "from what I saw, she was never very stable, and a tragedy like this was in her stars."

"I've never liked the idea of destiny or fate."

"It's not a matter of either of those, it's a matter of action and consequence, and this is the consequence." I reply, letting Kage open up the ~~front~~ **main entrance** door of the hospital for me ~~as we walk in~~, but he doesn't say anything further to me. We walk inside and are met with the friendly face of one of the nurses, who looks at Kage with familiarity.

Redundancy: *as we walk in* (you say this again in the next sentence)

"Good morning, Mr. Xander, you here to see your mom?"

Kage nods, keeping quiet as the nurse walks over to the desk and grabs two passes. ~~Walking~~ **She walks** back over and ~~handing hands~~ them to us, ~~and~~. I follow Kage down the hallway, to a much quieter part of the hospital. It's too quiet: silent like death. There are other nurses and doctors entering the exiting rooms (**wards?**), but their footsteps are hardly detectable, and the doors are designed to close with a tender heart.

The staff look our way, but once they see the passes, they let us continue without interruption.

We ~~nearly~~ walk **almost (or nearly?)** to the end of the hallway, finding one of the last doors ~~and~~. I don't think either of us breathe as Kage opens the door, revealing a ~~rather~~ heartbreaking sight. His mother looks very small with all the machinery around her - her skin is nearly as white as the sheets she ~~lays~~ **lies** on. Despite it still being eerily quiet, this room is probably the loudest out of all of them; there's the monitor that tracks her heartbeat going off, something else that's helping her breathe, and an IV drip. That's what I can make out in this sea of hospital equipment anyways. I have no idea what all the tubes are for, or where they're coming from, there's too many.

Sentence 1:

*Nearly should refer to the end of the hallway, not to walk (i.e. to nearly walk would be to crawl).*

~~His mom is a sad sight to see.~~

Redundant: You have already said this in the previous paragraph.

A large bandage covers one of her eyes and forehead, wrapping itself around her head. Most of her left side seems to be broken, or I can assume so by the fact that there's a thick cast that wraps all the way up her left arm and leg. Must of been her left side because she was in the passenger seat - her left side ~~is~~ **was** closest to the driver's side... which got obliterated.

A terrible way to go for Shawn.

"Has she woken up yet? Does she know what's happened?"

"No." Kage replies. I don't have to look at him to know that he's struggling at the moment. I'm struggling and I don't even like this person. At the end of her bed, there's a Clipboard **hanging up** with some information ~~hanging up~~ - and it's at this point that I realize that I ~~haven't~~ **don't** even know ~~h~~ this woman's name... or I didn't take the moment to remember it anyways.

*It's the **clipboard** that's hanging up, not the **information**.*

"Her name is Lindsey?"

"Legally, yes."

"Legally?"

"She's paranoid. She has so many names that she goes by, uses for jobs and new 'friends.' She thought changing her name a whole bunch of different times would make it confusing for my dad to find us."

"But she kept your dad's last name? Xander?"

"I said she was paranoid, not that she was smart," Kage shrugs, the look in his eyes is somehow empty. "Most of these choices were made by alcohol, anyways. I think that, subconsciously, she still wants to be with my dad."

"I suppose so. It sounds like it was kind of sudden."

"Sudden, but expected."