

Context - Ch 9: Mike and Will's physical and emotional bond/relationship becomes more intense. They sleep over at the Wheeler residence after the party. Mike's mom and Nancy sense something odd going on but can't put their finger on it.

Mike writes Eleven a letter/poem to try and help both of them with closure. El has a heart-to-heart with Max.

Chapter 9

After breakfast, Will and Mike go back downstairs. Breakfast was painfully awkward. Mike's family having *no idea* what happened between them minutes prior. Will is convinced Mike is partially a masochist. Mike kept playing footsie with him under the table and he was convinced he was going to faint from lack of oxygen. Nancy looked over at them with a confused expression a few times.

"What do you want to do today? And no you're not allowed to say *me*." Mike winks

"As much as I've *loved* the last few days, I think I actually need a break or I'm going to end up at the hospital needing it reattached Mike." Will chuckles.

"Fair enough. I can't help it, it's like you've awakened something in me that I've never felt before. You're not using any funky *mind control* shit on me are you?" teases Mike

"What? No Mike, *Christ* - I don't think that's a part of my gig. That's more El's realm." - "Did she...*ever*...?"

"Ever? What? Use mind control on me *during*...?" Mike doesn't have to finish his sentence, it's applied they're talking about sex.

"Yeah..." Will flushes, slightly embarrassed at inquiring.

"What would you say if I said she had?" Mike's eyes glisten topaz and he inches closer to Will.

“*Oh my God - Mike!* Seriously, get away from me. You’re ridiculous. If you can’t behave I’m gonna go home!” Will pushes him playfully.

Mike pouts. “*Boooooooooo - don’t go. I promise, hands off.*” **He raises his hands in a ‘I surrender’ motion.** - “But no, to answer your question. We never really... *got there* in our relationship. We talked about it sometimes but last night was the first time we... *you know.* I’d love to use mind control on you though.... - **Mike sighs longingly, looking Will up and down provocatively**-

“**Mike!**” Will can’t pretend he doesn’t like it, his dick pulsates under his shorts.

Mike snaps out of his trance. “*I’m not even sorry...*”

****Mike flops down on the couch****

“We should break down the air mattress and probably wash these sheets so your mom doesn’t see the giant cum stain don’t ya think?”

“Yeah, that’s *not* how I’d want to tell my parents about us. I also need to shower. I feel disgusting. Did you feel awful the day after microdosing in Lorena?”

“I definitely felt not myself? Kind of nauseous and dehydrated. Tired. Kinda... *slimy?* If that makes sense. Like when you’re sick.” - “Give the bacon grease a chance to digest, not sure the science behind that one but grease always helps hang overs.”

“Ew. Well, let me help you with the bedding stuff.”

****They break down the air mattress and strip the soiled bedding****

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Will asks, leaning diagonally over the mattress pulling at the fitted sheet corner.

“I was just recollecting how you bend and break for me... I can’t stop having flashbacks.” Mike’s pupils expand.

“Mike... *no.* Go away!” Will runs around the table attempting a get-away, he chases after Will.

Mike barely has to extend outward to grab at Will's shirt, pulling him forcefully into his own body with his lanky arms. He studies Will's face, fistful of his t-shirt. He locks their eyes and runs his thumb over Will's bottom lip.

"I was *serious* earlier, my dick is going to *fall off* at this point Mike..." Will whines trying to resist.

"Well, that *can't* happen... it's my new favorite thing about you." Mike smirks.

"Wow. You've been *using me* for my body?! I knew it..."

"You're the one who decided to hit the gym and get that new haircut this year... -*Mike kisses Will slowly*- Blame yourself..."

****Mike slowly backs Will up against the basement wall, pinning him with his body weight.****

"Mike..."

"I love when you say my name..." Mike moans

"Fuck!" -

Will grasps Mike's shirt and switches places with Mike quickly, slamming him into the wall, a picture frame rattles and some books fall out of the bookshelf.

Both boys chuckle -

Will presses his forehead against Mike's and grunts in frustration.

"So much for a *break* huh?" Mike smirks seductively.

"You're gonna pull *that shit* and expect me to be calm? You know *exactly* what you're doing... don't play stupid..." Will is pinching the corners of Mike's mouth with his thumb and index finger, as he growls his response. -*His eyes a dark moss green, his pupils widening.* -

****Will runs the backs of his fingers down Mike's veiny arms and reaches for Mike's wrists. He guides his arms above their heads, pinning them to the wall firmly. He kisses Mike as he intertwines one of his hands in between Mike's fingers and***

squeezes, his other hand cradles the side of Mike's face. Mike moans into Will's lips and snickers*

"Take a shower with me."

Will's eyes flash open at the words.

"Are you *bonkers*? Your entire family is home."

"Holly has a playdate with Mary at the park, my dad has to take her because my mom has a pilates class. Nancy is meeting up with Steve to get lunch in thirty minutes..."

"*Oh wow. How...-his breath catches at Mike releasing one of his arms to grab him under his shorts*- convenient...*"

"*Convenient* for me. Yes..."

"*Fine. But, you have to behave until then. Hands off.*"

Mike releases Will from his hand and chuckles.

"Deal."

Mike kisses Will's forehead and slithers away from the wall.

For the next 45 minutes they do their own thing. Practically on other sides of the room. Will doesn't trust Mike. He's acted feral ever since their hook up in Will's bedroom.

Will starts a new drawing after he adds some modifications to his portrait of Mike. It looks like Mike is writing. Maybe a poem? Will isn't entirely sure.

"Hey. What are you writing?" Will walks over to Mike and sits beside him on the couch.

"Just a letter to El. I was going to just write my thoughts out into a poem to get them out of my system but I think I'm going to give this to her."- "Is that ok?"

"Of course? Why would I have a problem with you giving El a letter? She's still going to be in our lives, I don't want her to not be... do you?"

"No. Of course not. I still want her in our lives too. I just hope she's *able* to be... she looked so... *distant* in Dustin's car. She was practically a

wooden board as they drove away. I still feel guilty about displaying affection like that right in front of her...”

“Mike. We all had sex. I don’t think it gets more *displayed* than that. We don’t have anything to feel guilty about... we can’t change how we feel.”

****Will takes one of Mike’s hands to hold and caress sympathetically with his thumb****

“*I know*. I just wish she wasn’t collateral damage in all this...” - “I think giving her this will help us both with closure and moving forward. Do you want to read it?”

“If you’re comfortable with that? You don’t have to show me. I can respect your privacy.”

“I wouldn’t have asked if I felt that way. If you want to read it, here.” - “I’ll be right back. I heard my dad, Holly and mom leave already but I’m going to go check what Nancy’s up to. I love you.”

****Mike stands and kisses the top of Will’s head, handing him the paper-****

Will looks down at Mike’s words scribbled in blue ink.

His hand shakes a little, he isn’t sure why he’s so nervous all the sudden. Maybe the thought of reading the most intimate thoughts in Mike’s head, especially about El -*him and El*- threatens Will in some capacity? Maybe it’s just fear to see *those words* on paper - *in his handwriting* -

Will closes his eyes and focuses on slowing his breaths.

I don’t have to read it, Mike said if he wanted to he could.. I could just put the paper down... -

“*Shit* -” Will opens the folded paper. He begins to read, his curiosity peaked...

*I wish love wasn't so poetic.
I wish I didn't know what it felt like to become undone, and in
opposition, become so whole.
I wish the only demand love made was itself.
Like love wasn't the word, but only the action. Maybe then,
people would say it less and do it more.*

*I think about how people use the word -
They haven't seen their favorite song naked, but they've seen
you without your shirt on. And they'll only say they love the
song. I think you are the music.
I think that's where the poetry lies -
In what is said and never done. In what is always on the
precipice of being lost because the value of the word never
really existed to them.*

*It is then I must ask, who is to blame?
After all, I am not the poet who devised the meaning of the
word.
I only comforted and listened. I danced and I kissed.
It was once that talking stages were only seen in theatre.
And when love stood in front of us, it did not move.*

*Now the phrase, "I didn't mean to hurt you," eats me alive.
Love does not commit treason in such a hateful act, as to try
and justify how someone else has been hurt.
Regardless of intent, still, I am hurt. Hurt at how I hurt you.
There the action lies to rest, maybe it was never true love at
all...*

Will hears Mike and Nancy conversing upstairs -

"Hey, when are you leaving for your lunch with Steve?"

“Why do you care? Also, what was up with you and Will at breakfast? How much did you drink? Will looked ghostly and panicky. More than he has in the past anyways -”

“Shut up Nance. It was a long night, yeah. When are you leaving?”

“Next 10 minutes. I’ll be back in like two hours.”

“Cool. Tell Steve we said hey. Why are you meeting up with him anyway? Can you drive Will home later?”

“Do I look like a taxi service? And, not that it’s any of your business but he asked me to meet up to give him girl advice.”

“Right. Is the girl you? He’s still in love with you ya know? And can you just do it out of the kindness of your heart Nance? Please?”

“Shut up. No he doesn’t. And, fine. I’ll see you later. Plenty of food in the fridge. I love you.... You look different?”

“Different? What do you mean?”

*“Is that... -*Nancy touches the side of Mike’s throat*- a hickey?”
Mike touches the side of his neck, his heart flutters and his cheeks flush.
Fuck -*

“Uh. Yeah maybe, El and I hooked up at the party. I guess I didn’t realize she left a mark. Goodbye sex...”

“Gross Mike. I didn’t need the details. Whatever, see you later.”

Will hears Mike walking back down that basement steps. Tears streaming quickly down his cheeks onto the paper. His hands shaking again. His vision blurs the remaining words.

“So, Nance is leaving in the next few minutes. She saw the hickey on my...” Mike stops abruptly when he realizes Will is sobbing.

“Hey! What’s wrong?!” -Mike looks down at Will’s hands, the blue ink blotted with tears and smearing -

“I’m so sorry. I have no idea why I’m crying. It must be residual from the mushrooms and just the intensity of the last few days catching up with me. I’m exhausted.”

“Was it what I wrote? I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have asked if you wanted to read it...”

“No. Don’t do that - I had a choice, you said I could read it, if I wanted to. Don’t blame yourself for being honest. That’s something I admire about you. You’re always so good with words... it was beautifully written...” - “I didn’t finish it, I got overwhelmed. But, I think you should give this to her, you’re right. It would be a great token of closure, for both of you.”

“Are you sure you’re ok?”

“Yeah. Just give me a few minutes.”

Will blots at his tears with tissues from the table. He looks up at the ceiling and closes his eyes. Focusing on slowing down his breathing and recentering his nervous system. Mike’s words were so raw and honest. They were also prepossessing and well articulated. He didn’t expect to have such an innate reaction.

“Shower?” Will smiles over at Mike, his eyes puffy and tone slightly nasally.

“Will... we don’t... we don’t have to do that anymore. Not after what just happened. You’re right. We’ve been going at it like rabbits, maybe we should take a breather. We can shower separately.”

“We’ll conserve water if we shower together. You know how passionate I am about saving the environment...” Will protests

“You don’t have to deflect like that, you know? I care about you. I want to make sure you’re actually alright...”

“And that’s so... *honorable*. But... I’d be a whole lot better with your cock in my mouth. Let’s go.”

****Will takes Mike’s hand and guides him up the basement stairs to the main floor****

“Do you like your showers super hot or kind of mild in temperature?” Mike asks as he messes with the temperature gauge. Will is stripping off his pjs.

“Doesn’t really matter to me. Whatever you prefer...”

They both step into the shower and let the water hit their skin. The warmth from the water soothes the soreness they both have in their muscles. The steam helps Will's sinuses too.

Will wraps his hands around Mike's mid section and kisses his shoulder blade. Mike puts one hand in front of him against the shower tile and exhales softly. He runs his other hand through his damp hair as Will continues to plant kisses along his back. He turns to face Will, his pulse quickening. His hair is partially slicked back, his long eyelashes beaded with water droplets and water trickles down his face and off his bottom lip -

"*Fuck* - every mundane thing just looks... *so sexy* when it's you doesn't it?" Will asks

Mike laughs. "What do you mean? I'm just standing here..."
Mike's train of thought disappears as he feels Will's fingers wrap around his dick.

"Tilt the shower head so it doesn't pelt me in the face..."

****Will begins to kneel down in front of Mike.****

Mike looks down at Will, large blobs of water dripping from the ends of his black curls and off his chin. He reaches down and molds Will's chin between his thumb and first two fingers. His erection grows and twitches a little. Will smiles up at him, he kisses the front of Mike's thighs and groin. Mike's knee buckles and soft whimpers come out of his mouth. He grabs the top of the shower door with his other hand to try and steady himself, the other hand still caressing Will's face.

"I've *barely* touched you yet and you're already whimpering huh?"

"Shut up...." - "You know *exactly* what you do to me Will..."

"Not fully. *Not... yet.* But I can't wait to find out..." Will suctions Mike into his mouth

"**Shit!** -" Mike groans "You caught me off guard. *No fair..*"

"Mike... *shut the fuck up* and just enjoy this..."

Will continues to suckle at him. Mike's knees buckle again. Will chuckles.

“You think that’s funny huh?” Mike looks down at him, breathlessly
“A little.. What are you gonna do about it?” Will eggs him on. He likes getting Mike all riled up.
Mike takes the bait and replies,
“Open your mouth... as wide as you can... I’ll show you *exactly* what I’ll do about it...”

Will does as he’s told. Some water trickling into his face.
Mike grabs himself to guide slowly all the way into Will’s mouth. The further into the back of his throat, the more Mike whines.
Will closes his eyes and breathes deeply through his nose, the tip of Mike’s dick touching his uvula.
Will gags a little, saliva dripping down his chin.

“Focus on breathing through your nose ok? And tap my leg at any point if it’s too much...”
“If what’s too much?”
Mike's eyes are glowing. “Me fucking your face...”
Will’s eyes widen and he blinks a couple times trying to process Mike’s words.

“Is that ok?” Mike’s tone is lower, raspier...
Consenting without words, Will simply reopens his mouth and nods his head ‘yes’, maintaining eye contact.
Mike smiles. He tilts his head back slightly and guides himself back into Will’s mouth. Feeling Will’s flattened tongue wiggle under him and spit drip down his testicles, Mike groans quietly, into the back of his own throat.

Mike thrusts back and forth a couple of times, his length and repetitive motion tickling Will’s gag reflex. Will gags, closing his eyes to focus. The sensation makes his nose tingle and his eyes burn. -**Fuck Mike is so sexy though...**-

“Sextape” by Deftones plays in the background -

***“Floating under water, ever changing picture.
Hours out from land. In tune with all our dreams.
The ocean takes me, into watch you shaking...
Watch you wave your powers, tempt with hours of pleasure.
Take me one more time, take me one more wave, take me for
one last ride...
I’m out of my head tonight.***

***The sound of the waves collide.
After hours with me, fusing all our powers.
Here’s to all our dreams,
Take me one more time, take me one more way, I’m out of my
head...”***

“Open your eyes. Eyes on me. -*Mike tilts Will’s chin upwards with his fingers*- Focus on your breathing. In and out through your nose, remember?”

Mike thrusts back into Will’s mouth and holds his hips steady once at the back of his throat, tears stream down Will’s face and he salivates excessively again. Mike moves his hips backwards and forward again, increasing his speed with each thrust. Mike grabs chunks of Will’s hair and tugs primitively.

Will acclimates and takes his dick deeper each thrust. Mike whimpers and moans escape Will’s mouth in between thrusts.

“Look at me. I wanna see your eyes when I cum.”

Will opens his eyes again and looks up at Mike, tears continue to stream down his face, he whimpers faintly into Mike as he continues thrusting forward.

Will takes some initiative back and grabs Mike’s buttcheeks, holding Mike deep at the back of his throat. The unpredicted motion makes Mike practically collapse. His eyes roll into the back of his head and he grips the shower door forcibly to steady himself as Will bobs his head and gags on his penis. Will hums around his tip and Mike looks down at his face, Will’s eyes

glaze over like thick fog and the bathroom lights flicker turbulently. Mike cries out from pleasure and cums into the back of Will's throat.

"*Holy shit -*" Mike's eyes flutter and he tries to slow his breathing. The water hitting his back, now turning colder. Will rises from his knees and kisses Mike's face.

"Can we *actually* bathe now?" Will chuckles. His cheeks deeply flushed.

"*Seriously...*" Mike rolls his eyes and shoves a bar of soap into Will's hand from the shower bar - "You're something else..."

"You love it."

"I do, I love *you*.." Mike leans into Will and kisses his swollen lips mercifully. - "That's the only time I ever want to see you crying again, got it? You're only allowed to cry when it involves my dick."

He bites down on Will's bottom lip, Will simply nods his head in agreement, forgetting English at Mike's request.

****They finish their shower and as they wrap towels around themselves, they hear the front door lock click and the door shut****

"We've *reaaaallly* got a thing for timing today..." Mike snorts

"Mike? Are you here?" Karen Wheeler shouts from downstairs.

They both hear Karen begin to ascend the stairs. Will's pulse palpitates and he looks at Mike fearfully.

"Will, relax..."

"*Relax?* Mike... *your mom* is coming up the fucking stairs and we just fucked in the shower?! You want me to '*relax*'?" hisses Will in a whisper.

****Knock* - *Knock****

“Mike? Is Will still here too?”

“Hey mom! *Uh...* yeah. He is. We’re in here. We wanted to shower off the hang over. Be right out!”

Will slaps his bicep.

“Why the *fuck* would you say that?”

“What else was I supposed to say Will?! We’re both in here, I can’t just have you jump out a window.”

Will groans into his hands, “This is my fucking worst nightmare...” - “I can’t breathe...”

“Will. Will! *Snap out of it* - Just follow my lead ok? Don’t talk.”

****Mike unlocks and turns the door knob****

“Hey mom. How was your class?” Mike flashes a toothy smile. Karen crinkles her forehead and looks at her son. She then looks at Will behind him, both of them in towels.

“It was... *fine....* Why are both of you wet?”

“We both showered, I *just* said that. It’s chilly standing here like this. And awkward, can we?” Mike motions at passing by.

“Together?”

“*Hmmm?*” Mike squeaks out

“You showered...? *Together...?*”

“OH! No. *Of course not.* Will needed help with the temperature gauge, you know how finicky it is. I came back in here to help him right before you got home!” Mike tries to deflect, lying horribly.

Will wants to crawl into a coffin -

“*Right....?* But... Why were you *both* in here now?”

Mike cuts off his mom, beginning to panic. “Look! Mom, why the 21 questions? I brushed my teeth after adjusting the dial. This is *super awkward* standing here, practically naked, in front of my mother. I’m sure

Will doesn't want to stand here in a towel in front of you either. Can we go get dressed please?"

Without waiting for a response, Mike sneaks around her and walks towards his bedroom. His carotid artery throbbing.

Will attempts to smile at Mrs. Wheeler and fears he looks like he's having a stroke. -*That's how he feels.* -

Flashbacks of Mike in his mouth dance across his thoughts - his cheeks itch.

Karen is looking at Will unequivocally, her brows scrunched together. Will looks away from her face and slips past her, following Mike.

Once his bedroom door is closed, Will leans up against it and hyperventilates.

"Mike?! *That* was your attempt at *not* looking suspicious?!"

"Shhhh!" - "She's still standing *right there* Will. Stop talking."

"This is my nightmare.... *Fuck Vecna*. Your mom almost just stopped my heart from beating. She *definitely knows* something is up. You didn't see the way she was looking at me..."

****Karen knocks lightly at Mike's bedroom door, causing Will to practically jump out of his skin - ****

Mike groans into his hands. "What's up Mom?"

"Do you boys want lunch? It's midday. I can make something -"

"Yeah! Sure mom. That would be great. Thank you! Be right down."

Flash forward to Monday at Hawkins High School -

El meets Max during her lunch period. She feels awful at how defensive she was with Max at the party, she projected a lot of her emotions onto Max and she's never been anything but an amazing friend. El wants to apologize now

that a couple of days have past. She also got a letter from Mike that she isn't quite sure how to process and needs advice.

El is listening to *"Special" by SZA* as Max approaches her in the quad area-

"You never saw me as an art piece, you saw me as an ordinary girl..."

I wish I was special, I gave all my special away to a loser.

Now I'm just a loser.

I used to be special. But, you made me hate me.

Regret that I changed me, I hate that you made me just like you..."

"Hey! What are you listening to?" Max grabs El's headphones and pulls herself up onto the rockwall El is dangling her legs from-

"Boy, you got me fucked up, now I'm getting fucked up.

Why'd you have to treat me like an ordinary girl?

Thinking about us fucking..."

-Max sighs.-

"El, come on? This *emo* shit -" "Are you listening to the *actual* lyrics?"
- "You are allowed to be sad and emo. I love you regardless, but we aren't going to self deprecate over *Mike Wheeler*? OK? Chin up. You have *literal* powers. You are one of, *if not the most*, extraordinary people on Earth! I'm not going to have you forget who you are, not under my watch, *solely* because Mike wants to tickle Will's pickle. There are *plenty of fish* in the sea. You're gonna be just fine! I promise!" Max gives her shoulder a little squeeze as she leans into El's body smiling.

"I'm well aware. I think it's reasonable to need more time to grieve. Even if *he doesn't*." El looks down shamefully into her lap at her hands. She picks at her cuticles a little.

"Absolutely! But, listening to depressing music isn't going to help either. Cut that shit out -"

“Fine. I think I’m still recovering from the dopamine crash from the shrooms and...” El trails off.

“*And....? What?*”

“Mike and I had sex. At the party. And, he delivered this to my house the next day.”

****El takes the folded paper with blue ink out of her back pocket and hands it to Max.****

Max is slack-jawed.

“Uh. *I’m sorry....* Rewind? You what?! When!”

“Upstairs. After I left you and Dustin downstairs.”

“So? You felt fine? You just wanted to go upstairs to find Mike?

Wasn’t he with Will though?”

“*Uhm.* Yeah, he was...” El’s cheeks become rosy.

“But he left? And you and Mike had sex? Was that your first time? Wait -” **Max blinks, contorting her face at her recollection of that night**
“But, when I came to get you guys *all three of you* were in the *same room...*”
El doesn’t respond right away. Max’s brain playing detective, her wheels turning - she gasps.

“El. *No fucking way? No. Way.* You... the three of you?! **NO WAY!**”

“Keep your voice down, *holy shit* -” “Yes, we... *we did...*”

“I think I’m going to pass out. *That’s why* you made that face when I mentioned Will being like your *brother.*” Max laughs mechanically.

“I’m glad this is so funny to you...”

“NO! No, I’m sorry. It’s not like that. I’m just in shock.” - “How was it?”

“*Nice try.* I’m not giving you details pervert.” - “Will you read the letter now please?”

Max tries to contain herself and opens the letter, she begins reading -

*I wish love wasn't so poetic.
I wish I didn't know what it felt like to become undone, and in
opposition, become so whole.
I wish the only demand love made was itself.
Like love wasn't the word, but only the action. Maybe then,
people would say it less and do it more.*

*I think about how people use the word -
They haven't seen their favorite song naked, but they've seen
you without your shirt on. And they'll only say they love the
song. I think you are the music.
I think that's where the poetry lies -
In what is said and never done. In what is always on the
precipice of being lost because the value of the word never
really existed to them.*

*It is then I must ask, who is to blame?
After all, I am not the poet who devised the meaning of the
word.
I only comforted and listened. I danced and I kissed.
It was once that talking stages were only seen in theatre.
And when love stood in front of us, it did not move.*

*Now the phrase, "I didn't mean to hurt you," eats me alive.
Love does not commit treason in such a hateful act, as to try
and justify how someone else has been hurt.
Regardless of intent, still, I am hurt. Hurt at how I hurt you.
There the action lies to rest, maybe it was never true love at
all...*

*She asked me what my love language was. I almost forgot how
much I hated that question.
And what's worse is I hated my answer even more -*

I told her it was ‘acts of service’ because that seemed easier than telling her that my love language is one that only someone else is fluent in.

The question itself almost angered me, because no explanation could have made her understand.

Understand why, this isn’t her “faultiness” or to understand why -

I took the trash out for her when it was freezing cold.

Or why I made her such decadent meals or always waited for her smiles of approval.

Flowers don’t need a reason to be bought, that’s why I compiled wildflowers for you at that airport. I wish I could’ve bought you flowers after I deflowered you...

She doesn’t have to be sad for me to want to make her smile.

I’m not telling her she’s beautiful everyday so she knows that I love her. I’m telling her she’s beautiful because she really is.

And I wish she knew it too.

She doesn’t understand why I kissed her forehead. Or why I say I love you each time I hang up the phone.

She doesn’t know that I pray every night for her happiness and safety.

She often mistakes my patience for tolerance.

Though, I would wait. I never meant forever.

She’ll ask me what else she can do, but never know a single thing I truly need -

Meanwhile, I’ve made calendar items and mental lists of things she’s mentioned years ago.

See my love is natural, but my language is what makes things happen.

***And without any action, other than attention - I'm only ever giving her time of mine to waste, hers too.
And I'm not sure either of us have much of that left. Time... it's a finicky thing.
And maybe it's my fault,
For speaking a language to her only someone else is fluent in...***

"Woah..." Max has goosebumps on her arms as she finishes reading, tears stinging her eyes. "Heavy..."

"Yeah. You're telling me..."

"How did you feel after reading this?"

"Angry? Sad? Embarrassed? Shame? Denial? More anger... and then, acceptance?"

"OK. Well, that's pretty on point with the stages of grief. I think as hard as this was for you to receive and read, it was probably 5x more difficult for Mike to write and actually give you..." - "Gotta give him some kudos. That was some *intense* shit he wrote. He really is *in love* with Will. *Holy shit.*"

"I know... I'm glad he wrote it. I think we both needed it to move forward."

Max glances down at her wristwatch.

"Are you going to be OK? The bell is going to ring any minute. I can skip if you need me..."

"No. No, don't skip class. I will be fine. Call me later?"

"Of course. I love you Jane. Everything is going to work out in the end."

****Max hugs her and jumps down - El returns back home.****