

When I was a kid, I hated the sun.

I blame three things at first -- my blue eyes making me more sensitive to light, my pasty skin for making me sunburn easily, and that the sun is a deathball that conned us all into believing it allows for life.

I eventually learned that the third thing was just an overactive imagination of a five-year-old boy, but the other two were true and there were a lot of other reasons. In the summer, the sun made me want to tear off all of my clothes, and in the winter, it burned as if it was supposed to be warming us but it was still damn cold.

I told my dad this when I was six. I said, "I hate the sun and I wish I could go and grab it and throw it in the garbage."

And my dad said, "Well, you'll need good gloves for that."

I said, "It's not a joke."

And dad laughed because everything was a joke, everything I said, and so I let my silent resentment of the sun fester inside of me like a burning, well, sun.

Sometimes, dad would point up to the sky and say, "Watch out, it's coming for you," and I rolled my eyes and wanted to say, I hate the sun, I'm not scared of it, but by then I'd learn saying anything just made things worse.

So I grew up. I graduated high school. I got a degree in "science" as my dad liked to call it, and I worked as a "lab person" as my dad liked to call it, and started seeing "a really nice friend" as my dad liked to call my boyfriend.

His name was Christian and we hadn't known each other long, about three months. We met on Tinder as a casual little thing, and then my dad happened to go to the same Chipotle we were eating at, so I had to introduce him as my boyfriend and my dad did his usual bit of asking why I needed to add the word boy before friend, and then Christian, for unknown reasons, kept coming over to my apartment.

Christian and I laid in bed, naked, as really nice friends do. He squeezed onto my thigh hard, and I squeezed back, and he smiled and said, "I'm really happy I met you," and I said, "Likewise," and I stared into the empty dark.

I always appreciated the night more, which shouldn't be surprising given my sun hate, but I liked the calm of the air, the soft flatness that darkness gave everything. The sun always made things too warm, too fast, too much in its brightness and energy. It didn't make sense, I knew that, but I didn't much care for making sense of my sun hate. The sun sucked, and I was glad to be away from it.

"What are you thinking about?" Christian asked.

The question penetrated the darkness in a not-so-nice way. It was one of those relationship questions that I'd heard before and asked before. I'd known Christian long enough that I knew he was quiet and only asked questions he wanted answers to. So I knew there were two ways to go. A classic, Oh, nothing, haha or well, the truth.

So, like a dipshit, I said, "It's silly," which really, wasn't either way, and just prolonged the fact that I'd have to choose.

"It's fine, I don't judge."

And well, I didn't really know if that was true. We talked a lot, but really, everything was too fresh. We talked about simple things, about funny stories we did with our friends, or cities we visited, or places we wanted to go. He rubbed my thigh rhythmically, and my thoughts followed that pattern, back and forth, the truth or an easy nothing.

"No, it's really nothing," I said and Christian shrugged and didn't press which somehow made it harder.

It was a stupid thing, yes, to hate the sun, but it was stupider to say out loud. I knew that. I told my dad and he basically laughed and kept laughing about it. But, so what? There was stupider shit to want than for the sun to blow up. Christian put his head in the crook of my shoulder and his breaths slowed and I said, "Well, actually."

Then he looked at me, eyes easy, a small curve of a smile.

"I hate the sun. I mean like, really, really hate it. Like, if someone set up a crowdfunding thing to launch a nuke to blow it up, I'd donate my salary. Always have. Just, hate waking up and seeing it first thing every day. Just hate the heat and everything."

Christian was silent.

"I said it's silly," I said. I didn't look at him the whole time I was talking. I was staring at the darkness between me and the ceiling. At the coldness of the air. At the breathlessness of my words. "Stupid as shit, to be more accurate."

"That's it?" Christian asked.

"What?" I said.

"I thought you were gonna be like, I have a foot fetish or something."

"It's still dumb, right?" I said. "Like, really stupid?"

"No. Not really, anyways. I hate the smell of asphalt and rain. People say they love it, but god, I hate it everytime it rains."

"I love that shit," I said, a little too loud, and Christian laughed.

"We all got our little things," he said, pulling me in tight. "We're all just a bunch of weirdos."

I smiled and looked at him and he smiled back and I said, "I'd never told anyone that."

"Thanks," he said, and kissed me.

The next day at work, I couldn't figure out why I lied to Christian. I just wanted it to be true, because it kind of was. I told my dad but that was because I was an idiot six-year-old and I said words, not really meaning anything with them.

Whenever my dad asked me if I still hated the sun, I said no. I'd never really told anyone that. Sure as hell couldn't tell my dad that I ever really meant it.

In the middle of the day, Christian texted me. "Found this," he said, with a link to a GoFundMe for something called the Nuke the Sun (for Fun) campaign that he made. All it had was a single sentence saying,

The sun fucking sucks, let's get rid of it.

"LOL that's so fucking funny! Thanks for that, made my day!" I texted.

But I couldn't laugh. I couldn't really smile. But my chest hurt, and I thought about Christian, sitting there, going through whatever the hell it took to do this, just for this little thing. It hurt in a way that felt good. That there was someone willing to do something so stupid just for me to feel okay about myself.

At night, I tried to find the campaign but it was taken down because, well, it was easy to guess why.

"It's gone," I texted. "Looks like I have to keep my salary 😞"

All he sent was "😭" and it was somehow the only emoji I'd ever smiled at.

*This is a super cute story and I feel endeared to our protagonist. I want him to succeed at life, or to realise something and have a character arc.*

*And that's probably gonna be the biggest criticism I have about this story. I don't get to cheer on our protagonist because they don't change. It's a good piece that focuses on a single character and explains their situation and gives them a happy ending. I don't come away from learning anything, or feeling like your character accomplished something.*

*Maybe it's too vague for me to understand. You can see above where I totally mess up what "Allows for" means :P. Maybe the fact that he found someone is the character arc.*

*I really like when it's Christian and the character, and we get her internals. I was entertained and there is a bit of tension in the conversation. I didn't understand how he lied to Christian thought because he seemed to tell the truth about the sun.*

*Regardless, this made me feel fuzzy inside. Kind of a giggle-squee feeling. Well done!*