

these veins are borrowed (this heart only beats for you)

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by [easystreets](#)

Summary

J.D has never lost a fight.

Notes

Thanks for reading! i apologize for any inaccuracies. TW: for physical child abuse (mentioned), violence, and a bit of gore (as a treat). Title from Bodysnatchers 4 Ever by Leathermouth!

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

J.D has never lost a fight.

Well, except with Dad, but c'mon– that's different. It's different because it has to be. It's different because if J.D kept a running tally of all the times Dad made him wear sweaters in 90 degree Florida heat (three times, and by the fourth they were already moving to Ohio and the bruises had mostly healed, so it didn't matter), or the letters they got in the mail from CPS that J.D wasn't supposed to open (two, they eventually– unsurprisingly– gave up), well...

He'd have to think about it. J.D *really* doesn't want to think about it. So he doesn't, and he's fucking unbeatable.

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Veronica shouldn't be watching this.

There's fights almost everyday. In the hallway, or in the band room, or on the bus. Always, she watches, despite herself: the tension leading up to it, the first punch, flesh against flesh. The contact, the intensity, the emotion.

It's kind of, and okay, this is something she wouldn't even tell Martha, how she imagines sex would be like.

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It doesn't hurt.

Not if you separate feeling from living, which J.D is excellent at.

Instead of Ram pushing him so hard into a bulletin board that his breath catches in his throat and he's coughing, choking on his own spit and maybe a bit of his own blood, he's not here.

He's somewhere else. With Mom, and they are walking somewhere hot and warm and sunny, somewhere that doesn't smell like a lunchroom or have a malfunctioning boiler.

Ram twists his elbow hard, and J.D shoves him backwards into the cinderblock wall. Part of him is enjoying watching Ram's hands scrabble against the wall, like he's not used to flailing, and the other part is deciding if he and Mom want to go to Disneyworld or Disneyland. Both, they decide. The sun is so hot on his back, and Mom's hand is warm in his.

Ram's fingernails are digging into the back of his palm. J.D stomps on his toes and though Ram's screaming, J.D can't hear him over Mom saying, "Do you want to ride Splash Mountain first?"

Yes, Dream J.D says back. Very much yes. He steps back for another punch. Mom asks if he wants ice cream. J.D is so distracted, between kicking the shit out of Ram and deciding if he wants chocolate or vanilla that he almost doesn't notice the girl.

Watching him. Watching him with this *look*.

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Sometimes Veronica wishes she were a boy.

Girls fight, and it's so cruel. Every conversation feels like she's playing Battleship, like there are a million rules that nobody bothered explaining to her.

Boys fight, and it's simple. Fist meets face. Whoever can't take the heat loses. *No hard feelings*, she heard a football player say to another, bloodier football player, once.

Veronica is all hard feelings.

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The girl. She's still there in the corner.

Ram is nearing acceptance of the fact that he's a fucking loser that will amount to absolutely nothing when J.D takes a good look at her. He can afford to, after all. He's a winner, almost. A couple of good, fast hits and Ram'll be out.

She looks too good for him. She looks— accomplished, like she should be on a brochure for an Ivy League. Her hair is dark and it looks like she's trying to hide behind it. J.D understands that feeling all too well.

J.D shakes his head. Ram's gaining a second wind, and the rest of the cafeteria is still watching.

Besides, she probably has a boyfriend. Girls like that always do.

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He wins. The guy who isn't Ram wins, and the crowd diminishes quietly.

Not-Ram stands in the corner, blowing on his knuckles. Veronica walks closer, not towards him, just in his general direction, and catches a glimpse of how mangled they are.

"Oh," she says, before catching herself. "Those are— are you okay?" It's a stupid question, but she can't not say something.

The flesh on his index and pointer fingers is wet and shimmering with blood. They're skinned where his hands missed Ram— not that he missed often, Veronica privately thinks Ram has the agility of a senile hippo—and met the wall instead.

He looks at her. Really, actually looks at her. His lip is bleeding and his nose is crusted with blood and snot from the first punch.

"I won," he says slowly. "I won."

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She's talking to him, and he doesn't know what to do, and he doesn't know how to do anything without bringing fists and gore and blood into it, and she's— gentle, showing him to the first-aid station in the nurse's office, grabbing bandages and ice and warning him, saying,

“This is going to hurt,” with iodine in a tiny paper cup, and then, “I don't even know your name, I'm sorry.”

“J.D.,” he says.

“Veronica.”

It stings and he relishes it. The touch of her hand in his is almost too much.

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Later that night, she goes home with J.D.'s number. Not— not like that.

Veronica also goes home with J.D.'s blood under her fingernails.

She tries— and fails— not to think about it as she's scrubbing it out.

End Notes

Thanks again! If you feel like connecting, please leave a comment! You can also reach me on Tumblr @3asystreets

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