

Saints and Sinners

Chapter 3

He gripped her shirt with both hands, slowly began lifting it up.

First, Sally's belly was exposed. Not totally flat, but by no means was she fat or overweight. An average woman with a pretty face and an impressive bust.

If it'd been a normal situation, Jack's heart would've been racing.

About to see a naked woman – in the flesh – for the first time? His hands were trembling at just the *thought* of what waited for him under Sally's shirt. But his heart wasn't racing. Wasn't even *beating*. It was frozen between heartbeats, trapped in place the moment he'd slipped the ring on his finger.

How was blood getting around his body without his heart pumping it? *Was* the blood in his veins moving, or was it frozen too? And, if the blood was frozen, what was transporting oxygen to his brain and muscles?

When time was frozen, did he even need to breathe?

It was an absurd thought to be having in that moment. He was in the middle of stripping a woman naked. Why the fuck was his mind focusing on the mechanics of his ability to freeze time?

"Nervous," he spoke aloud, staring at the woman before him. "It's just nerves. Take a deep breath and—"

Except... Would taking a deep breath even do anything?

Did he need to breathe?

Jack shrugged. He let go of the woman's shirt, took a step backwards – eyes not moving from her.

The shirt remained frozen in place where he'd left it. Her belly exposed, the cloth bunched up underneath two heavy breasts – totally ignoring gravity.

He inhaled a deep breath, held it, began counting.

One. Two. Three.

How long could he hold his breath for normally?

Less than a minute, probably. Thirty to forty seconds, maybe? A little more? He had no idea.

Nine. Ten. Eleven.

Part of him berated himself, told him that this test was stupid. That it could wait. He had all the time in the world – literally. Why was he doing this *now*? There was a pretty, busty woman right in front of him. A woman just *waiting* to be stripped and played with. Surely, this dumb experiment could wait.

Thirty-three. Thirty-four. Thirty-five.

By now, he should be feeling some kind of discomfort, right? His lungs should be demanding air, demanding that he exhale and inhale fresh oxygen. But they weren't. His body wasn't demanding anything. His lungs weren't screaming at him. There was nothing.

Forty-eight. Forty-nine. Fifty.

So what? He didn't need to breathe while time was frozen? How did that help him in any way?

It didn't.

Not in any way Jack could think of, at least.

But it was good to know all the same. Good to know what the ring was capable of. Good to know its limitations.

Where had the thing even come from, anyway?

Sixty.

Jack looked down at his right hand. At the layer of darkness coating his body and the ring of glowing red letters that were slowly rotating around his finger.

"What *are* you?"

But the ring provided no answers.

He shook his head, looked back at Sally.

Shirt still bunched up under her tits, belly still exposed. She sat statue-still on her little sofa, eyes on the frozen television screen. Like the rest of the world, she existed in greyscale – no hint of colour, just blacks and whites and greys.

Her body stood out. In Jack's vision, it felt *wrong*.

Sally's body was a shade darker than everything else around. As if there were a dark shadow over her, though there was nothing casting such a shadow.

And, of course, there were the clouds above her head.

Black, interconnected clouds. All with odd white symbols scratched into them. Sally's thoughts and feelings.

Jack forced himself to ignore them.

He stepped up to the woman again.

"Sally," he said, reaching down and grasping her shirt. "I've wanted to do this for so long... You don't mind, do you?"

He tugged the shirt up, watched as the bra-clad tits came into view. They didn't bounce or jiggle, but moved vertically in defiance of gravity as Jack lifted the woman's shirt up around her neck. Her body was easy to move – like a doll's, all he had to do was grab a part of her and reposition it. There was no resistance at all. And so, he pulled her arms upright, pointed them at the ceiling.

Before long, he was yanking Sally's shirt up along her arms and over her head. When he tried to toss it aside, the shirt froze in mid-air as soon as it left his fingers.

He spared the floating, frozen shirt a quick grin before giving Sally Saunders his full, undivided attention.

"Now *that*," he whistled, "is what I'm here for."

It was impossible to say what colour the bra was. In this greyscale world, it appeared to be on the darker side of the monochrome spectrum. But the bra's floral patterns were clear as day.

It wasn't a particularly sexy bra. Not lingerie or something that was *meant* to be seen and admired. Yet, when it was squeezing down on *those* melons, it was hard *not* to see the raw sex appeal of the bra. It had to be several sizes too small, what with the amount of tit-flesh spilling out over the cups.

The two huge tits completely ignored gravity. Both hung in the air just below the woman's chin, drawing Jack's eyes like magnets.

He did nothing but stare for a long moment, appreciating the two massive melons and their floral-print prison. Then, a wide grin on his face, he reached behind her back with trembling hands.

The bra-straps were tight, digging into Sally's skin.

He'd never unhooked a girl's bra before. Never even *touched* one. His first few attempts at removing Sally's were awkward failures. But, on his fourth attempt, the latch came undone.

He closed his eyes as he dragged the bra straps up Sally's arms. Kept them closed as he pushed the discarded bra off to one side, set it floating in the air motionless.

"Okay," Jack whispered softly. "Let's see what you've got..."

With an eager grin on his face, Jack opened his eyes.

The woman's tits were big. Very big. But he already knew that much. The size of them, and the fact that they were frozen in the air like they were, made for a pleasant sight. But it was Sally's nipples and areola which drew Jack's gaze and his appreciation.

Wide, puffy, dark areola. Inverted nipples.

Smooth breasts, save for the indented lines from where her bra had been. No veins; just clear, pale skin.

"Nice," Jack grinned, reaching out to fondle one of the tits. "Very nice."

His fingers and palm sank into the softness without any resistance. When he squeezed, he felt a shiver of pleasure tickle its way up his spine. And, when he pulled his hand away, he saw the clear indent where his hand has been moments before.

A thought occurred to him.

Slowly, he reached towards her other tit – flicked the nipple a few times.

“I wonder, will you feel that when I unfreeze time?”

It was an interesting notion. The things he could do if that were the case...

“Only one way to find out.”

He turned his back on the busty woman, walked to her bedroom and hid himself inside.

Head filled with ideas and possibilities, he reached down for the ring. He gripped it, pulled it off his finger. And, in an instant, colour returned to the world.

In the other room, he heard a woman yelp.

A yelp. Then a gasp.

“Huh?” A feminine, surprised voice said – the sound of it faint through the apartment's walls. “What the-”

Jack slid the ring back onto his finger.

And the world froze once again.

It was a bizarre sensation.

He'd spent what felt like hours toying with Sally's body. Groping and flicking and pinching and slapping her tits, fondling her ass and sliding his hand down her pants. He'd spent so long exploring her body with his fingers, soaking in the greyscale sight of her. And yet, in reality, only *seconds* had passed.

The real-world time between him ringing her apartment's doorbell and the frozen moment he was stranding in right then couldn't have been more than a minute or two.

He looked down at her, smiled.

Sally's shirt was back on her body, though her bra was not – Jack had stashed that in his hoodie's front pocket. A little bonus prize for today's experiments and fun. Sally was seated in the same spot she'd been earlier, wide eyes looking at nothing in particular.

Above her head, a single black cloud with unreadable white text.

“Sally, Sally, Sally,” Jack hummed. “What're you thinking?”

He knew.

The woman's thoughts were written clearly enough on her face.

Eyes wide with shock and panic, mouth twisted in a grimace. Her body was tense, rigid.

How many times had he frozen and unfrozen her?

A dozen? More?

And each time, she'd been met with a wave of new sensations. Clothing vanishing off her body and a barrage of flicks and gropes and slaps. For Sally, it'd all happened over the course of just a few seconds. An onslaught of sensations and events that made no sense to her.

Jack reached up, touched the black cloud above Sally's head.

The panic and horror and discomfort flowed down his arm; everything he'd been expecting. The confusion. The sense of being violated.

From that cloud, another spawned.

When Jack touched that one, the events of the past minute played out rapidly behind his eyes. The thoughts of a very, very recent memory.

He grasped the cloud, pulled it away from the first.

And watched as it evaporated into nothing.

“If I'm right,” he spoke quietly, “that should have erased it. You'll forget everything that's just happened to you.”

He'd have to test it more later, come up with a scientific experiment or something that'd let him confirm his suspicions. But, for now, this would have to do.

"You'll still feel something when I unfreeze time again – I did have to put your shirt back on, after all. And you'll probably notice your bra is missing. But everything else *should* be gone. Or maybe it won't be. Who knows! Guess I'll find out when I come back here tomorrow..."

As he walked away, Jack fingered the bra in his hoodie pocket. The thing, with its big cups, barely fit in there.

He left the apartment, was walking down the building's corridor, when something caught his eye.

A faint, red glow coming from a particularly dark shadow.

Jack did a double-take, stared at the spot. But the red glow was gone, and the dark shadows didn't seem quite as black as they had a moment ago.

He shook his head, reached for the ring on his finger and pulled it off.

By the time he got home, he was completely exhausted.

He couldn't stop staring at it.

A plain, black metal ring. Sitting there on his bedside table.

A ring with the power to stop time and erase memories.

And... What else could it do?

If he could erase memories, could he also *alter* them? Could he mess with peoples' minds? Warp and twist them?

What was that ring capable of?

When a knock came at his bedroom door, Jack instinctively snatched the ring off his side table, clutched it in a white-knuckled grip.

"Come in," he called.

The door opened and in she walked.

Devyn.

Wearing a pink bunny onesie that covered her from toes to neck. Baggy enough that it concealed her figure, but cute all the same. Her hair, as always, was in a bob-cut with bangs over her forehead, a mixture of bright blonde and sandy brown.

She smiled, glanced at Jack's desk then back to him.

"Hey," Devyn said, voice soft and sweet. "Do you mind if I borrow your computer for a bit?"

"Uh," Jack's mind kicked into motion immediately. There was a *lot* of porn on his desktop computer. "What for?"

"School stuff," Devyn shrugged. "Gotta do some research for a biology essay and my laptop's not working. Would it be okay if I borrowed your computer for a bit? It won't take too long, I promise!"

"I..." Think! He had to come up with an excuse not to let her- "Sure."

Jack's eyes widened in horror as soon as the word left his mouth.

"Great!" Devyn smiled brightly. "I'll just go get my notes and a snack. I'll be right back!"

Stupidly, Jack remained stunned still after his sister darted out of his room. It took his slow, dumb brain a couple of seconds to realise this was his only chance to boot up the computer and clean up his desktop and browser history.

He launched himself off his bed, began doing just that – slipping the black ring into his pocket as he waited for the computer screen to turn on.

By the time Devyn returned, Jack's computer was clean.

Not *totally* clean. If his sister went searching, she'd find a mountain of downloaded photos and videos and bookmarked sites. But, with any luck, she wouldn't do that. Devyn was, as silly as it might sound, a 'good girl'. She wasn't the type to snoop or pry for

information. If she said all she wanted was to do some research, that's all she'd do.

Though...

Was she a 'good girl'?

A few days ago, Jack wouldn't have doubted it. But then he'd seen her at that party with Drake Damilio. Smiling and laughing and enjoying herself in the company of that asshole. She'd spent the night there.

Could she have slept with him?

Just the thought made Jack's gut twist.

"I'll be as quick as I can," Devyn promised, sitting down at his desk. "Just need to look some things up, is all..."

"What's the essay about?" Jack asked, sitting back down on his bed, eyes on the computer screen. No way was he going to risk looking away and letting his sister stumble upon his porn collection.

"Anatomy," Devyn shrugged, attention focused entirely on her search.

Jack stared at the back of his sister's head.

Had she slept with Drake Damilio?

Was... Was there a way for him to find out?

The ring in his pocket. He could slip it on his finger, use it to look through Devyn's mind. Maybe... Was it possible that he could search through specific memories, find out *exactly* what'd happened during the party – and after it.

Jack didn't have time to ponder the idea before another popped into his head.

If she was frozen in time, he could explore his sister's body. Just like he'd done with Sally.

His beautiful, perfect, amazing sister...

Slowly, his fingertips began sliding into the pocket.

"What do you wanna do?" Devyn's voice cut through the silence. Jack's flinched, froze. "After school, I mean. What kind of a job do you want to have?"

"I... I have no idea."

"No dream jobs or anything?" Devyn pressed.

"Emperor of Earth," Jack smirked. He moved his hand away from his pocket. "God of Mankind. I dunno."

Devyn turned her head, flashed a grin at him.

"I try not to think about it," he told her honestly. "Worrying about the future is a pain. You never know what could happen, or where you'll end up. Wasting time thinking about it is pointless. Much better to just take life as it comes, you know?"

His sister didn't say anything, just nodded her head and turned back to the computer screen.

"You never know when something could happen," Jack added quietly. "Sometimes, life throws you a curve ball. You can't plan for everything."

He looked down at himself, at the pocket where his black ring was.

From there, the pair of them remained mostly silent.

Twins. The closest bond two people could possibly have. If his life were a film, he and Devyn would've been the best of friends. Inseparable. Probably, they'd have some kind of psychic connection to each other or something. But no. There was none of that.

For all that they'd shared a womb and been born together, there was no special connection between the two of them.

They barely spoke. Barely knew each other.

Weren't twins meant to be closer than this? Weren't *siblings* meant to know each other better, be closer to each other?

In all ways that mattered, Devyn was barely more than a stranger to him. A beautiful, perfect stranger that he just so happened to share his birthday with. His birthday, and his home. And his parents.

How much longer would she be in his room studying?

He should talk to her, make her laugh, form the connection that'd been missing their whole lives 'til now. He should tell her about Drake, let her know how much of a shithead he was. He should... what? Pretend like they were a normal family? That *he* was normal?

Jack shook his head, leaned back and rested his head on his pillow.

What was the point?

Devyn was out of his reach. She was the perfect, beautiful girl who shone in the spotlight. And he was the creep who hid in the shadows and watched. Even if she *wasn't* his sister, he'd have no chance with a girl like her.

Not without intervention.

When Devyn left his room, notebook in hand, Jack found himself reaching into his pocket again – fingers wrapping around the cold, black ring. He pulled it out, lifted it up above his head, stared at it.

“What *are* you?”