

He stands up. "But one thing I do appreciate about you, Gracie? You always know when to keep your mouth shut."

He leaves without another word.

I finally let out the breath I didn't know I was holding.

A few minutes later, James returns. I sit up and for the first time in 5 months, I initiate eye contact with someone.

I hold his puzzled gaze, and don't hesitate.

"James, I need the police. There's someone I need to report."



"And how are you today, Grace?" I hear from behind me.

I take a deep breath and turn around, and Stan is holding out his coffee to me.

I take a sip.

His eyes widen, and I see him taking in my newly shorn hair, my lack of makeup, and my full-toothed smile.

"This is really good, Stan." I say softly.

I get my first genuine smile from him.

"You're doing well, Grace. You're doing real well."

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Two roads diverged in a wood and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference
-Robert Frost