

Happy/Sad

By

Alex Church

This work may not be used or replicated in any way without explicit consent from the author. For inquires, please contact Alex Church at churchalx@aol.com
Thank you, and thanks for reading!

INT. ALEX CAR

Lauren, a beautiful girl, is staring out the car window, looking perfectly content with life. Ominous, but happy music plays. She turns and smiles to look at Alex, the driver of the car.

LAUREN

What?

Flash to the present. It was a memory. Alex is in the same car, but obviously very unhappy. He shuts off the engine, grabs a bag from the back, and exits the car.

EXT. BRADEN HOUSE

Alex exits his car and walks up to Braden's house. Braden opens the door. He's a lanky looking boy who's happy to see his friend.

BRADEN

Hey.

ALEX

Hey.

Braden holds the door open, and they both enter.

INT. BRADEN'S HOUSE

The house is an old farmhouse, partially under construction.

ALEX

So.

BRADEN

So.

ALEX

This is where you live?

BRADEN

For a little longer. Then it's off to USC.

ALEX

How long?

BRADEN

Tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Wow. That's ah- Soon...

BRADEN

Yeah.

They stare at eachother awkwardly.

BRADEN

Alright, so.

Braden opens his bedroom door. Things are semi-packed. His cats are on his bed.

BRADEN

Here's where the magic happens.

ALEX

You've got a sword?

BRADEN

Yeah. It was a gift.

ALEX

Why have I never been to your house before?

He swings the sword and knocks over something. Braden sees his cats.

BRADEN

Cats, Alex. Alex, Cats.

ALEX

Hi Cats.

Braden stares at him for a second.

BRADEN

How're you doing?

ALEX

Fine. Why?

BRADEN

I don't know.

LATER

They're both eating in the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Dude, where's your mom?

BRADEN

I don't know, praying? She left money for pizza.

There's 46 cents on the counter.

ALEX

Don't you have a job?

BRADEN

And an elbow. Mint condition. Never left it's pristine skin covering. Funny story about elbows, I was exploring this subreddit the other day, and I came across this thing about a guy who didn't brush his teeth for a year...

While Braden prattles on, Alex is seen staring intently at a bottle of Tylenol, completely ignoring Braden. Braden sees what he's zoned out.

BRADEN

Hey, fuck this place.

ALEX

What?

BRADEN

We're going out! Tearing up the town! Lock up your daughters!

ALEX

Are you on speed?

INT. BRADEN'S CAR

They both get in the car.

ALEX

Where are we going?

BRADEN

I don't know.

MONTAGE

The boys drive around town. They get food, look at a bridge, and do other random things.

EXT. PARK

Lauren is swinging. She see's Alex staring at her.

LAUREN

What?

The memory ends, and Alex is swinging on a swing. Alone.

ALEX

[Realizing something] Holy shit.

Braden is spinning fast on a tire swing.

BRADEN

What?

ALEX

We're going to be adults soon.

Braden slowly stops spinning.

ALEX

We're going to be out from under
our parent's thumb. I can buy
cigarettes. We can vote!

BRADEN

And go to strip clubs.

ALEX

Yes, the quintessential transition
into adulthood. Getting into a
nudey bar without the need of a
parental chaperon.

BRADEN

Wait, did you go to strip club with
your dad?

ALEX

Of course not. It was my mom.

Braden leaves his tire swing and goes over to Alex.

BRADEN

Damn.

ALEX

What?

(CONTINUED)

BRADEN
I'm going to college.

ALEX
Yeah. You are.

They sit in silence for a moment.

ALEX
If you could tell your younger self anything, what would you say?

BRADEN
[considers] Don't take Pre-Calc.

They both laugh.

BRADEN
You?

Flash to a bathtub full of water.

ALEX
Enjoy the little things.

BRADEN
Do you realize that we've spent our entire lives being told what to do?

ALEX
What? You think that because your mom isn't right behind you, reminding you to breathe, that you'll forget to wipe or something?

BRADEN
No, asshole. Just that... I'm almost free.

Flash to Lauren in the car.

BRADEN
And, it terrifies me. I mean, I'm leaving. For the last eighteen years, this little slice of shit has been my whole world. And now...

ALEX
The good thing about growing up, is that it forces you out of your own anonymity. You've gotten so used to the way this world turns that if you don't leave, you'll never stop following it.

BRADEN
We've.

ALEX
What?

BRADEN
You said You've gotten so used to
it.

ALEX
Yeah.

BRADEN
You're not leaving?

Flash to Lauren.

ALEX
I was supposed to start classes two
weeks ago. When I told them what
happened, they gave me a month. I
told them to fuck off.

BRADEN
Do you still miss her?

ALEX
Every day.

Alex's eyes tear up.

BRADEN
You know it isn't your fault.
There's nothing you could've done
Nobody knew what she was going
through. Not eve-

ALEX
I tried to kill myself.

BRADEN
What?

ALEX
Two years ago. I took a bottle of
pills, I got in a bath, and I tried
to kill myself.

BRADEN
Alex. Why didn't you tell me?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Because you didn't know! You couldn't see that something was wrong. Not you, not my parents, not the fucking counselor, nobody knew, except for her. She felt something off that day. She came to the house, she made me puke them up, she hid it from everyone so I wouldn't be committed. She knew. But I didn't. I didn't know. I should've known.

Alex breaks down.

BRADEN

Alex-

ALEX

No! Don't you dare tell me it wasn't my fault. She literally pulled me from the brink of death, fixed what was broken inside, and then kicked me forward so I wouldn't let myself fall again. She is the reason I'm alive, and I'm the reason she's dead.

Braden holds his friend as months of pent up emotion pours out of Alex. Right as Alex starts to calm down, Braden speaks again.

BRADEN

She called me that night.

ALEX

What?

BRADEN

Right before she did it, she called me. She said that you she couldn't talk to you, because you'd come over, and she didn't want you to see it, but she didn't want you to blame yourself.

PAST

Flashes of Lauren and Alex fighting. Alex walks out. Lauren cries into a journal with SLUT and FAT written all over it. Lauren approaching a gun.

(CONTINUED)

LAUREN V.O.

All couples fight. Some breakup.
But that's not why I'm doing this.
A whole can't exist if half of it
is broken. I am unfixable.

The line ends. Braden, halfway dressed and in a rush, appears shocked. He gets in his car and drives fast. Lauren grabs the gun, and slowly brings it up to her mouth. A heavy knock is heard on the door.

BRADEN

Lauren!

Lauren, crying, slowly backs into her basement.

BRADEN

You are loved, Lauren! Nothing is
broken.

A shot rings out.

EXT. PARK

Alex is sitting, stunned.

BRADEN

I'm sorry-

ALEX

Let's go back to the house. It's
almost dawn.

INT. BRADEN'S CAR

They drive in silence. Alex stares out the window.

ALEX

You're going to be fine.

BRADEN

What?

ALEX

In college. You'll be fine.
Whatever you think will go wrong
probably will, but you'll survive.
It's what people like you do. When
shit gets thrown at you, you don't
shut down. You wake up, wipe the
corn off your face, and carry on.

(CONTINUED)

BRADEN

Thanks.

They pull into Braden's driveway.

BRADEN

I should have told you earlier.

ALEX

No, you shouldn't have. If you did, I would've gone right back to where I was two years ago. But this time without her to pull me out of the water.

They start to get out.

BRADEN

For what it's worth, I'm glad you didn't die.

ALEX

Me too.

EXT. BRADEN'S HOUSE

Braden climbs up the steps to his house, but Alex doesn't follow.

BRADEN

You coming?

ALEX

I think... I think we've got to do this next part on our own.

BRADEN

Yeah.

They stare at each other for a moment.

BRADEN

So, is this the part where we hug, and get all bromancy?

ALEX

I mean...

They both stick out their hands and shake. They turn away from each other for a second.

(CONTINUED)

BOTH

Fuck it.

They hug. In a bro way. Alex goes back to his car, Braden climbs up his steps.

ALEX

Thank you.

BRADEN

For what.

ALEX

Saying what I couldn't.

Alex gets in his car and drives away, Braden enters the house. The sunrise is just about to crest over a hill, when a remixed version of Churchill's "Happy/Sad" plays, and the credits roll.

END