

**Never**

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# Never

by [Sulwen](#)

## Summary

“They should never have let me out here. I'd almost forgotten what it tastes like – the salt air, and the wind.” Adam pauses. “A kiss freely given.”

## Notes

This fic was written for the [Cockbert Big Bang](#), and I'm proud to have finished it even though it is very, very late! Make sure to check out the awesome art that accompanies the story by [@creativmind1281](#), [here](#)

I'm dedicating this story to [@argeneau](#), for giving me the original prompt of Adam and Sauli as slaves. This didn't go in the direction I expected, much less the one she probably expected, but I hope she enjoys it anyway! <333

My eternal thanks go out, as always, to [@silentdescant](#), who read parts of this and told me it didn't suck when I was about to give up. This story (as with many of my stories) wouldn't be here without her.

The door locks behind them.

Sauli knows it the second he hears the door shut and the footsteps behind it recede down the stairs. He walks further onto the roof, close to the edge, and looks out over the city. The sun is going down, and here and there lights are being lit, points of warm color in a darkening landscape. From this distance, they seem to sparkle, like the stars.

Behind him, Adam is still trying the doorknob, banging on the unforgiving wood and yelling uselessly. Sauli rolls his eyes. It's bad enough to be stuck out here at all – it'll be that much worse with this *child* for company. Sauli takes a deep breath and glances over his shoulder. He should let the idiot work himself into exhaustion. Serves him right for getting them thrown out here in the first place.

Still.

“Stop.”

Adam gives the door one last slam with his fist and turns around, eyes blown wide and wild, mouth open and panting.

“But they can't just--” he says, his voice high and incredulous.

Sauli cuts him off. “Yes. They can. They *do*. This is what happens when you disobey.”

Adam opens his mouth, like he wants to keep arguing. Then he closes it again and lets himself fall back against the door with a loud huff. “Well. It's not so bad. At least we get a break from *him*.”

Sauli nods, wondering if he should tell Adam about how cold it will get when the sun goes down and the mist rolls in. About how they have no food, no water, no fire. No shirts on their backs. About how a night can seem like an eternity, and the sight of Master's face at the end of it can seem as comforting, as welcome as...

Home.

He turns away and settles himself on the stone roof, legs and arms crossed. There's a short wall lining the edge, more decorative than anything and certainly not enough to keep anyone from falling off, and Sauli leans back against it, letting himself rest. It's good to sit instead of kneeling, to let his head lean back and lay against the cool stone. He closes his eyes, and is dozing in the next moment, as quick to sleep as ever. He does not dream.

\*

Sauli wakes slowly, to the sound of pain. It's Adam, of course, though he muffles himself as soon as he notices Sauli is looking at him. He's sitting in a corner, hunched over, and the stones behind him are streaked with traces of blood. His eyes go narrow as he meets Sauli's gaze, and he looks away again quickly, clearly embarrassed to have made any noise at all.

It's his own damn fault, Sauli thinks as he raises his arms and stretches the kinks out of his neck. Adam shouldn't have interfered. He should have kept to his own business. If he had, Sauli would be wearing those marks, and neither of them would be on the roof tonight. As it was supposed to be. As it should have been.

Adam resettles himself against the wall, grunting a little as he does so, as the wounds on his back meet rough stone again. He really shouldn't be sitting like that, with nothing to protect the broken skin from worsening. Sauli bites his lip and wonders how bad the bleeding is. Maybe he could at least look at it. Just to see.

*"What?"*

Adam's voice is over-loud and defensive, and it makes Sauli jump. His own voice is harsh and unfamiliar in response. He's never like this. Not with anyone.

"You're bleeding."

"Yeah, well."

"You should let me look at your back."

Adam pauses a moment. Then he takes a deep breath and runs his hands over his face, back through his hair, and his tone goes resigned. "Not like it matters. Let it bleed."

The wind picks up, and Sauli shivers, goosebumps rising on his bare skin. It's not cold yet, not really. Too early to be shivering. His hands rub over the plain cotton of his pants, as if they can pull the warmth out of the fabric and spread it to the rest of his body. He has a coat, a good warm one that Master gave him himself. It's inside, hanging in the slave quarter next to his hammock. He can almost see it, if he closes his eyes. But it wouldn't be punishment if he was warm, would it?

He pushes himself up off the stone, ignoring the stiffness in his hips, and crosses the roof to Adam's corner. Adam is dressed exactly like Sauli, white cotton pants and nothing else, no shirt or shoes or coat. He's bigger than Sauli, both in height and breadth, and so probably warmer. The look on his face, though, stops Sauli from being jealous of that warmth -- that tightness around his eyes Adam can't quite hide.

He doesn't look up, not until Sauli says, "You shouldn't have done that."

Startling blue, then, and a startling heat in them. "Done what? Tried to help you? Stopped you from being *tortured*? Fine. I'll remember that next time, and you can have the whipping instead of me."

Sauli shakes his head. There's so much Adam doesn't understand. "It's not torture, Adam. It's punishment. I deserved it."

"You didn't--"

"If Master says I did, then I did. That's all."

"Oh really? What gives him the right?" Adam pushes himself onto his feet and straightens to his full height, looking down at Sauli with the lights of the city at his back. "He's no better than me or you. He's just a man. The only thing that makes him different is his *money* -- but maybe you've just been a slave too long to see that."

Sauli's hands tighten into fists, and his teeth clench hard around all the words he wants to say. "Don't talk about him like that."

"Why not? Why do you believe these things that obviously aren't--"

*"Because I have to!"*

The yell is loud enough to echo, and it shuts them both up fast, staring at each other and listening to the wind carry the words away.

Finally, Sauli looks down at his bare feet. His toes look small next to Adam's. "Can we...can we not..." he says, and his voice sounds just as small.

"Yeah. I'm...yeah," Adam says, and though he doesn't say so, he sounds sorry.

"Will you let me look at your back now?" It's something to say, to move them back onto safer ground.

Adam doesn't answer, just nods and turns around, letting Sauli see the crisscrossing red marks that cut through his freckled skin. Most of them are raised, red and angry, but not broken. Only two or three of the welts are actually bleeding, and those only lightly. They'll probably be knitted together again by morning and healed in another week, not even a scar left behind. Sauli hopes so, anyway. Adam's obviously not happy here, and scars don't bode well for resale value.

"Is it bad?" Adam asks, his voice stiff, like it wants to shake but isn't allowed to.

"I've seen worse." Sauli reaches into his pocket and finds nothing, not a single scrap he can use to clean the wounds. He thinks a moment, watching a new trickle of blood work its way down Adam's back, connecting the dots. Then, not letting himself question why, he tightens his fingers and *tugs*, pulling hard enough on the fabric of his pocket to break the thread and free it from the rest of his pants. It leaves him with just a small strip, but it's enough to lay over the worst of Adam's broken skin. He presses his palms very gently on top, knowing it will absorb the blood and help the skin heal itself, and Adam hisses at the pressure.

"Okay?" Sauli asks, not letting up.

"Yes. Fine," Adam says, and, as an afterthought, "Thank you."

Sauli takes a breath, wondering how much he should say. Adam is so new. So volatile. It's impossible to tell if he can be trusted.

And yet. He *had* sacrificed himself today, put himself in Sauli's place, taken his punishment. He couldn't have known what would happen.

"I do this, sometimes. In the Quarter."

Adam turns his head, half-looking at Sauli over his shoulder. "Yeah?"

"I fix people up. It's not...it's not wrong. They've had their punishment. I'm just helping them get back to work as soon as possible."

Adam makes a sound then that Sauli's never heard from him before, tiny little huffs that sound almost like laughter. His body shakes under Sauli's hands, and he has to press harder to keep from losing his makeshift bandage. Adam catches his breath again, and his skin is warm, so *warm*, even under the blood.

"Is that right?" he asks, and Sauli doesn't even know what he's asking about, can't remember what he's just said. He should stop touching Adam now. He shouldn't be touching him at all.

He pulls the cloth away and looks at the welts again. They're clear of blood now, and no more is leaking out. Sauli takes a step backward, and Adam turns around to meet his eyes again.

"Better?" he asks.

Sauli nods. "Yes. No more blood."

He looks down at the cloth in his hand, stained red now, and hands it awkwardly out to Adam without quite knowing why. Adam takes it from him with the ghost of a smile, a smile echoed in his voice when he says, "Thank you."

Sauli's cheeks heat, and it's stupid, it's so stupid. He nods again and goes back to the spot where he'd fallen asleep earlier, feeling Adam's gaze on him the whole way. Maybe he can fall asleep again, skip this entire ordeal. He can at least pretend.

Anything to keep Adam from saying the things Sauli can see starting to build in his eyes.

\*

Sauli doesn't sleep. Instead, he watches the sky. He can't remember the last time he was outside after dark, but he does remember the stars.

Slowly, slowly, the sky shifts from darkening blue to true black, and the last rays of sunlight disappear. There is no moon tonight, but Sauli doesn't miss it. The darkness just means the stars look even brighter, more plentiful. They have names, some of them, but Sauli doesn't know any of them. It doesn't matter. They're still just as beautiful, scattering over the blackness like...like the freckles on Adam's skin.

He lets himself glance through the darkness, looking for wherever Adam might be at the moment. He hasn't been able to stay in one place for more than a few minutes at a time, pacing up and down the length of the roof, looking out in one direction, then another, then a third. He's been back to the door several times, examining the knob, the crack between the wood of the door and the stone floor, the hinges. At one point he'd laid down on his back, which made Sauli wince just to think about, and stared straight up at the sky.

The one place Adam hasn't been is Sauli's little space along the wall. He seems to sense that Sauli would rather just keep to himself, and Sauli's grateful for it. He doesn't have the energy to argue more tonight. He doesn't *like* arguing at the best of times, but the past weeks since Master bought Adam right off the last shipload have sickened him of it more than he's ever been in his life.

Right now, Adam's poking around the wall just opposite Sauli, looking down over the side. The bloodied strip of cloth is tucked into one of Adam's own pockets, hanging out just enough for Sauli to glimpse the red on white pattern of it. He yawns and wraps his arms around himself and lets himself consider.

He doesn't know what it is about Adam, exactly. More than anything, Adam is just...confusing. Sauli knows what to expect from other slaves, even the ones who are new to Master's house. But Adam doesn't act like a new slave. Adam doesn't act like a slave at all.

Sauli wonders if he realizes how much easier it would be for him if he just accepted what he *is*. No slave has ever risen above his station through the wanting of it. The chains are too strong.

The mist is starting to come in off the ocean, now -- almost too light to see, but Sauli can smell it, salt and sand and the white of cresting waves. Soon, it will be thick enough to obscure the lights of the city, and the ground below them, and even the stars in the sky. He looks up at those unnameable stars again and takes a deep breath of the sea air, watching as long as he can, burning the images into his memory. They'll be inside again soon enough, a different sort of exile.

\*

Sauli's shivering hard, eyes closed tight and mind trying not to dwell on how cold he is, when he feels a touch on his shoulder. It's soft but still unexpected, and it startles him, eyes flying open and finding Adam staring down at him through the mist.

"You're freezing," Adam says.

Sauli blinks. "Yes."

"We could...if you want. It'll be warmer." Adam sits down next to Sauli, still watching him, but not touching. Not *yet*.

Sauli swallows hard. He's never been out here with another person before. That's not what it's for. You're supposed to get through the night alone.

"But if you don't want to, I understand. I mean, I know we're not allowed to, but it's not like anyone will ever know, and I just thought--"

"Adam."

"What?"

"Just...stop talking. Please."

Adam's eyes widen, but he shuts his mouth, and Sauli forces his arms to unwrap from where they've been clenched tight around his body, bringing his hands instead to cover his eyes, trying to get his thoughts in order.

It's wrong.

Master will find out.

He shouldn't be warm. He was meant to be whipped and wasn't. This is no more than he deserves.

Even if...

Even if Master doesn't find out, Adam will still be here. Still sharing space in the Quarter, his hammock within view of Sauli's own. Still fetching and carrying and cleaning, working close enough to Sauli to steal a quiet word, a glance, a touch...

His eyes open, and he looks to the sky. But the mist is strong now, thick, and he can't even see the outline of the wall around the roof, the safe places to stand...much less the stars. It's as if the world doesn't exist at all, everything narrowed down to the cold and the stone under him and the heat of Adam's eyes.

He lets himself look. Adam is still, so still, not even breathing. Just waiting.

It's a strange sort of power to be given, and Sauli feels out of his head, dizzy and floating, as if he's spent too many hours tending Master at the pipe.

*Master...*

The thought is fleeting, and then gone, banished into the mist. In the next moment, Sauli is moving, and Adam opens his arms, and everything changes.

\*

It's not huddling for warmth, not even from the very beginning.

Adam's chest is broad, and his arms are strong, and Sauli's legs fit against his hips so easily. The position, straddling Adam's lap, puts their faces at a level, close enough that Sauli can feel each puff of Adam's breath ghosting against his neck. Goosebumps rise on his skin again, but not because of the cold.

The kiss, when it comes, is devastating. Adam's hands come up to cradle Sauli's head, press him in closer, and Sauli's arms go around Adam's neck, and it feels like falling, like they've tipped right off the rooftop and are hurtling toward the ground. Adam's mouth is clever and skilled, and it would be easy to relax into the kiss, let Adam take them wherever he wants to go. But that's not the way it works, not the way *they* work, and Sauli tilts his head and opens his mouth and fights Adam for control, his heart beating faster at every scrape of teeth and bruising clash of lips and deep lick of tongues.



Adam smells like earthy spices, cardamom, maybe, or ginger, and when Sauli moves his head down to lick at the long curve of Adam's neck, he tastes like the salt of the sea. His moan is the rush of the wind, and his thrusting hips are the roll of the waves, and Sauli doesn't even think, just lets himself be carried away on the tide.

He's hard, and Adam is hard under him, and Adam's hands drift down to take Sauli by the hips, pull him in closer. But closer isn't close enough, and there's hurried shuffling for a moment or two, frantic tugging at fabric, until finally skin meets skin, and then, *then* it's just a race to the finish, devouring kisses and thrusting hips and tightening fingers, building and building and building to the beautiful aching tightness of release, breathless heat and light, twin stars burning in the cold vastness of a darkened sky.

\*

Sauli doesn't open his eyes for a long time after. Instead, he turns toward Adam and hides his face in the warm softness of his neck, and Adam's arms tighten around him. They haven't said a word. What is there to say?

It's true night now, pitch-black and *cold*, and as Sauli's heartbeat slows and the sweat begins to dry on his skin, a sinister chill comes over him, so slow he hardly notices it until he's actually shivering.

Adam stirs at the shaking, and it's his low murmur that finally breaks the silence. "Come here."

Sauli lets out a breath and opens his eyes, and Adam is looking down at him, watching him with a grave expression. He doesn't know where Adam wants him to go. He can't get any closer than this.

"No, come *here*," Adam says again, as if that helps. And then Adam's doing the moving for him, rolling onto his back and pulling Sauli on top of him, wrapping him up in arms and legs and running his hands up and down Sauli's bare skin. The position leaves Sauli staring right into Adam's face, and Adam is kissing him again before he can think, kissing him like he never wants to stop, slow and inevitable and so *warm*.

But this isn't...

They...

He *can't*.

"Adam," Sauli says, muffled. Adam is still kissing him. "*Adam*."

"Shh, baby, it's all right. I've got you," Adam says. It's meant to be comforting, Sauli thinks. It's not. He turns his head violently away and squirms out of Adam's grip, finding his feet and turning his back. Away from Adam's warmth, the cold is biting, and he wraps his arms around himself, knowing it makes him look weak and not caring. He grabs for his pants and clumsily tugs them on.

“Sauli?” Confusion, and the beginnings of hurt. As if Adam hasn't been hurt enough tonight.

Then again, welts heal.

“Don't call me that,” Sauli says tightly.

“I don't...”

“*Baby*. Don't call me baby.”

Sauli can sense the wounded look on Adam's face without even turning around. “I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...I thought you wanted...”

“You don't understand.”

There's a long silence, broken only by Sauli's uneven breathing and chattering teeth. He waits, halfway bracing himself for Adam's approaching footsteps, the touch of his fingers.

They never come.

\*

Sauli doesn't know how long he loses himself in the cold. He curls himself up in a ball next to the door, not sure if the trace of warmth he feels there is real or imagined, and wishes more than anything to be on the other side, where things are safe and ordered and *normal*.

He doesn't know what makes him turn, glance out over the roof and into the mist. For a long moment, he can't find Adam at all. He stands, forcing aching joints into movement, and strides out toward the center of the rooftop, peering into darkness.

Adam comes into view slowly, standing and looking up at the stars, arms hanging motionless at his sides. He seems *taller*, somehow, and it's not until Sauli comes closer that he understands why – Adam is standing on the narrow ledge, bare feet on stone, tipping his toes into the emptiness beyond. The wind kicks up just at that moment, and Adam sways with it, and Sauli's heart jumps into his throat, sudden and choking.

A sound escapes him, shock and frozen horror, and Adam turns his head, looking back over his shoulder with eyes leached of their color. His face looks *wrong*, somehow, without the veneer of confidence and hot rebellion Sauli's become used to over the past weeks – eyes too wide, too desperate. Lips parted and panting, quick exhalations that turn to fog in the chill. And his voice, when it comes...his voice is not his own, a trembling reckless *thing*, afraid and full of spiderweb-cracks.

“You're going back to him.”

Sauli wants to rush forward, wants to grab Adam by the heels and drag him back onto safer ground. It's something in Adam's eyes that stops him, some strange trick of the light that strikes him as a warning. Too soon and too close, and there's only a split-second between standing and falling.

A deep breath. Then... “What choice do you think I have?”

Adam's eyes close. “There's always a choice. We could run.”

Sauli can't help it. He laughs. “Run? Run *where*? It's a child's dream, Adam. You must know that.”

“But you would. If...if it was...you would. You'd come with me. You want to.”

For a moment, Sauli hesitates. Then a violent shiver runs through him, and he remembers the cold, and the stone under his bare feet, and the slave catchers with their dogs, and he wants to be sick. He swallows against bitter bile and takes a tentative step forward.

“Please come down,” he says, quietly, the words carried away on the wind almost before they've left his lips.

Adam opens his eyes and turns away again, and his hands come up to tangle in his hair as he bows his head, staring down into the darkness – darkness that seems endless, but is certainly, *importantly*, not.

“They should never have let me out here. I'd almost forgotten what it tastes like – the salt air, and the wind.” He pauses. “A kiss freely given.”

“Adam...”

Adam whirls around again, throwing his balance and tipping wildly, and Sauli is moving before he can think, rushing forward and grabbing for Adam's outstretched hands, holding tight and pulling with every last bit of wiry strength. They stumble back onto the roof together, and Sauli's head hits the stone so hard it sets his ears ringing, but Adam is safe and warm and heavy on top of him, and that's all that matters. In this moment, that's everything.

Sauli wraps his arms around Adam and holds tight, and when his breath comes back, he whispers, gives Adam a truth and an offer, and knows that it will never be enough.

“I can't give you forever. I can't even give you tomorrow. But...let me give you tonight.”

And Adam takes a shuddering breath and closes his eyes one more time. When he opens them, he looks like himself again, the fire, and the hunger, and Sauli can taste it on his tongue, feel the strength in Adam's hands as they come to clutch at his hair, his face. It's easy to let himself forget, in the heat of the moment, and for a long while, morning doesn't even exist.

\*

Sauli feels dawn coming before he can see it, before the sky begins to lighten and the birds begin to sing. His eyes feel heavy and dulled, and he has little pains all over – his head, and the soles of his feet, and the palms of his hands. His knees.

He'd knelt for Adam, but not out of deference, not because he'd had to. He has never knelt willingly before. He'd do it again in a heartbeat, if only there was time.

Instead, he presses himself into Adam, turns his face into Adam's chest and breathes him in. He's not sure if Adam's slept, but he's awake now, and his arms tighten at Sauli's motion, his head bending to press a kiss to Sauli's forehead.

They have to talk about it. Soon. Now.

Sauli never wants to talk again.

He swallows. Kisses Adam's chest. Smiles at the way the light dusting of hair feels against his lips, and lets Adam reach down and pull him up by the chin and kiss the smile away.

It's like pulling shrapnel out of a wound, every word of it, but Adam is childish and clinging to the pointless idealism of a man still free in his heart, and Sauli has to say it if it's going to be said.

“We can't let them see us like this.”

Adam speaks over him as soon as he realizes what Sauli's going to say.

“No. Not yet. It's not even light yet. Can't we just...” His words are too-quick, already desperate, and tears prick at the back of Sauli's eyes.

“We *can't*. You know...” A sudden thought strikes Sauli, and his heart sinks sickeningly. “You do know the penalty for fraternization. Tell me you know.”

Adam swallows, and Sauli is tucked so close he can feel it, the contraction and release of the muscles in his throat. He moves one hand up to rest gently on Adam's neck, where he can feel the breath rushing in and out. One more detail to remember, after dawn comes.

“Yeah. I know what they'll do. What they'll *try* to do,” Adam says, his voice steely.

Sauli's eyes widen, and he shakes his head. “Adam, don't do this. *Promise* me you won't try to fight them. We'll just...”

“What?” Adam snaps. “Pretend it never happened? Just go back to the way things were before? Well, if it meant so little to you...but I can't do that. I'm not *built* like that. I can't.”

It's infuriating, and Adam is going to get himself beat again or sold or fucking killed, but right in this moment Sauli has to kiss him again, because it's stupid and pointless and he's crying for real now, but Adam is still fighting and maybe will always be fighting, and there's something beautiful about that too.

There's no talking for a while, then. Sauli shudders through each breath, and Adam's fingers are gentle on his face, brushing away the tears. He feels raw and exposed, an open wound. He can't go back like this. It's written all over his face, confessions in his eyes.

Adam's voice is soft when he speaks. “What can I do, ba...Sauli? How can I make this easier? How can I fix it?”

Sauli shakes his head. There is no fixing this. No going back.

“You can call me...if you want.” He doesn't recognize his own voice. This is someone new. Different.

“But you said...”

“Lie to me. Make me believe, the way you do. Make me feel it.”

And Adam does, kisses Sauli's eyes closed and whispers lies in his ears, *baby* and *love* and *mine*, and for a while, Sauli believes him.

\*

When the door opens, Sauli is standing in the farthest corner of the roof, facing the sun as it rises out of the ocean. The light on the waves is beautiful and painful at once, too bright, and maybe it's the reason for the watering in his eyes and maybe it's not. The guard's touch on his shoulder is firm but not overly so. Sauli is a good slave, long broken. Sauli doesn't fight. Sauli never fights.

He turns and lets them lead him back to the door, put him on his knees. Adam isn't there, and Sauli holds his breath and bows his head and waits for the struggle, the dull thud of boots on flesh and Adam's voice yelling itself hoarse and eventually, maybe, the crack of the whip.

It never comes.

Instead, footsteps, and the pop of Adam's knees as he kneels next to Sauli. Quiet. Obedient. *Good.*

In that moment, Sauli wants so many things. He wants to reach out and take Adam's hand, show him that it's all right, that it's better to give in. He wants to turn to Adam and grab him by the shoulders and *shake* him, and scream that this isn't what he wanted, that Adam deserves better than this, *is* better than this, better than whatever Sauli has become. He wants his hammock, and quiet, and a dreamless sleep.

Then, the unmistakeable sound of Master's boots, and his hand held out for Sauli to kiss, and his deep voice asking, always asking for more.

Sauli's answers are as perfect as always, old habit, and Adam echoes him, and each successive “Yes, Master” and “No, Master” makes the world look a little darker, a little more hopeless. This is the real world. This is the way of it. Stupid to believe, even for a moment, even for a night. Adam is the same as the rest of them, easily broken once the right pressure has been applied. They will go back to their lives, good slaves, and outside the sun will rise and set and the waves will crash and the stars will spin on, and none of it will matter.

Maybe Adam should have jumped. Maybe Sauli should have jumped with him.

\*

The next night, or a few weeks later, or years, maybe, Sauli wakes in the middle of the night to a whisper and a touch, and something smooth and heavy slipped into his hand.

He blinks his eyes open, and immediately thinks he must still be dreaming, because in his hand is a knife, and the touch is a gentle hand on his shoulder, and the whisper is a never-forgotten voice in his ear, a warm, strong voice that calls him *baby*.

Adam is grinning sharply, and the knife in his own hand is dripping red, and his eyes are alight, *alive*.

“You'll come?” he whispers, harsh and quick, devastatingly hopeful.

Sauli stands, and kisses him, and nods breathlessly, his heart pounding desperately in his chest. They have to go, now, and Adam is already resettling his grip on the knife, but Sauli can't stop the words coming.

“You didn't leave me. You didn't give up.”

And Adam looks back over his shoulder, and reaches out to take Sauli's hand in a bruisingly tight grip, and speaks with the iron-clad certainty of the destined, one word that Sauli will remember to his last breath.

“Never.”

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