

## True Colors

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## True Colors

by [kaybohls](#)

### Summary

In a world where everyone lives their life in black and white until the moment they first meet their soulmate, Rey's life has only ever been in color. It's been that way as long as she can remember, so she dresses in the brightest colors and most vivid patterns in hopes that, when the day comes, he won't miss her.

SOON TO BE A FULL-LENGTH NOVEL FROM LAKE COUNTRY PRESS! \*\*take a look at Chapter 7 for a BIG announcement!!

### Notes



RAE.

See the chapter title? Good. That's your homework...and your one clue. Is it a song? ...maybe... Should you listen to it? ...probably...

I hope you like it. MORE SOON. xoxo

Thank you to the moodie queen for this beauty!

## flickers

If you've happened to have stumbled upon this Work on or after August 11th, 2021, please read Chapter 7, first! There is a huge announcement, and this fic will be coming down on 8/13.

Grey.

It had been jarring, at first, but her eyes had adjusted to it as the time wore on - even at the painfully slow pace it did. Her eyes had, but Rey wasn't sure if she ever could...or if she wanted to, but as she sat, cross-legged in the center of their sofa, staring blankly at a scar on the wall, all she could think about was the grey.

Rolling the seam of the oversized black sweater that hung from her shoulders between her fingers, Rey let out a quiet sob when another wash of grief tumbled over her, stealing her breath in an instant as she struggled to break free of the suffocating feeling.

She reached up and slowly traced the never-ending loop behind her ear, a symbol of infinity - of her soulmate - that had been there as long as she could remember, letting it anchor her heart in something tangible and real. It had been real and would remain in her memory, no matter how grey her world had become.

It hadn't always been that way.

For as long as she could remember, Rey lived her life in a world filled to the brim with a blinding array of colors. She was special in that front since most people had to wait until they met their soulmate to be enveloped in the wash of luminous tones that painted every inch of their world. Part of her wondered if she should be resentful of it, but as she walked down the busy London street and looked over the symphony of dusty mauves and brilliant pinks of the beautiful English roses that filled a shop window as a crimson double-decker bus passed her by, she always brushed the thought away.

As she crossed the street towards Kensington Gardens, Rey couldn't help the smile from her face as she offered a friendly wave to a cabbie and looked over the way the city was awash with a springtime glow. Sure, she could be disappointed that she'd never get to experience the same shockwave of seeing her world shift from black and white to color that signified that she'd met her soulmate...but, in her heart, she knew they were out there, merely waiting for the right moment for their paths to cross again.

Then, without a doubt, she'd know. She'd have to know.

She lifted her hand to pull open the door to the quaint lobby at the ground floor of their building, striding up the stairs as quickly as her feet would carry her, rounding the rounded corner of the banister that guided her to the second floor.

With a jingle of her keys, Rey opened the lock and pushed open the heavy, wooden door, smiling softly when she heard the subtle sound of music streaming in from the kitchen.

“I’m home!”

“It’s about damned time,” a deep voice boomed across the music, eliciting a quiet laugh that tumbled effortlessly from her lips. She shrugged her bright butter-yellow jacket from her narrow shoulders, hanging it on a hook by the door as she toed off her turquoise and green t-strap heel and left them in a heap by the door.

Color was something that always fascinated her, something that she was helplessly drawn to, like bees to the blossoms in a springtime meadow. She’d always tried to encompass every inch of her life in the blessed rainbow at her fingertips, eager to cover her entire existence in color while she waited for her soulmate to find her. Maybe, if she was dressed from head to toe in a plethora, he’d be able to see her that much more clearly.

Her closet was bursting with it and filled her with joy every time she looked upon it, but, even when she’d get the odd look from an old man on the Tube, Rey couldn’t ever bring herself to not live every minute of her life awash with every bit of the rainbow as long as she was blessed enough to be able to see it.

She padded around the corner in her teal tights, straightening the hem of her green, polka-dotted skirt, unable to keep the grin from her face when she looked upon the lopsided grin of her flatmate.

“Sorry I’m late,” Rey stepped to his side and welcomed the half-hug he gave her as he pressed a kiss on her head.

“You should be,” he groused with a fake frown of his plush lips, unable to hold it for long before he looked over her, from her red lips to her polka dots, with a boyish chuckle, “You know, Sweets, one of these days, you’re gonna blind someone with all...” he lifted his large hand and gestured in a wide circle in her direction, “...all this.”

“I haven’t blinded you yet, have I?” Rey giggled, reaching around him to pluck a piece of fruit from the bag of snacks he was packing.

“Listen,” Ben planted his hands on his hips and lifted his brow to give her a pointed look, “Just cause we are in the same boat of ‘all color, all the time’ doesn’t mean that I want to wear sunglasses every day of my life, just in case you walk into the room, Color Girl.”

“But all the better for you to see me with,” she laughed, tugging her crimson lip between her teeth as he held her gaze while his mouth melted into another one of his lopsided smiles.

“*Go* . Get packed, we have to leave here in an hour if we are going to make it to the dinner on time, and for the love of God, please stop eating the snacks that I am packing *for you* to eat on the trip,” he put his hands on her waist and gave her a little spin and a playful push out of the kitchen with a shake of his head as she smiled at him over her shoulder.

Rey didn’t know how she got so lucky to find a friend like Ben Solo, but she’d thank whatever gods she’d have to for the color he’d added to her life in addition to everything else.

She skipped down the short hallway to her bedroom at the end, her heart full of excitement of all the festivities to come. In a rainbowed flurry of fabric, Rey tugged her suitcase from the back of her already jam-packed closet, tossed it on her bed, and proceeded to fill it to the brim with what any normal person would consider too much for a weekend away.

Rey threw herself over the top of it once she tried to fit at least one more pair of shoes, smushing the lid down with a little grunt as she tried in vain to zip it shut when a deep chuckle rang out from the doorway.

Throwing her gaze over her shoulder with a pout, Rey sent an upwards puff of air past her lips to send the stray chestnut hair from her eyes with a pout.

“Are you just going to stand there, or are you going to help me, Hotshot?” Rey grumbled, pressing down onto the jam-packed bag as she climbed on top of the lid.

Rey watched as Ben pushed off from the doorframe and strode over to her with a sly grin, holding her breath as he leaned down - so close that she could feel the heat of him through her sleeve and the smell of his shampoo wafted over her as he gave a tug on the zipper.

His dark eyes, more like warm bourbon on a winter night than merely *brown* , flickered to hers, so close that Rey quickly found herself caught up in the electrifying feeling of the closeness.

It was over as quickly as it began with an awkward clearing of their throats and a quick scrub of Ben's long fingers through his hair.

“So, uh, you ready to get on the road? We got a long way to go, only Hux would think to have his wedding in fucking *Wales*. ”

Rey stood up from the top of her suitcase and strode back to the closet, simultaneously reaching behind her to undo the clasp on her skirt to let it fall to the floor around her feet. She tucked her thumbs into the waistband of her tights, shimmying down her hips with a casual nod towards the luggage on the bed.

“Do you mind? I'm just going to change real quick and then we can leave,” Rey smiled at Ben, completely unaware of the pink tinge to the tips of his ears hidden behind a curtain of hair and the way he clenched his claw as he averted his gaze from her bare legs.

“I...uh...yeah, sure. I'll meet you downstairs,” Ben grumbled, stepping forward to lift the suitcase from her rainbow-quilted bedspread, turning quickly to bound out the door as Rey let out an effervescent giggle.

She heard the door close behind him and let out a quiet sigh as she looked over her eclectic shoe collection, reaching out to trace her fingers over the pair of bright yellow heels that resembled a lemon meringue pie than anything else, letting out a quiet laugh when fondly remembered that she'd been wearing them the first time she'd met Ben.

Opposites from the start, Ben was always more of a fan of the color black. An irony, considering that, he too, had lived most of his life in the brilliant hues only those who'd met their soulmates had bestowed upon them.

They'd first met when their respective flatmates had dragged them both along on a first date, too nervous to be on their own. A movie seemed like an oddly dull choice for a first date, and it only got worse when Rose and Armitage started snogging in the first twenty minutes of what might have been the fifth...or was it sixth....sequel in the *Revenagers* movies.

Rey let out a sigh and kept her focus on the popcorn in her lap, casually popping piece after piece into her mouth while she tried to ignore the furiously flying hands to her left. She ducked when Tago's hand slipped and accidentally reached for her hair, letting out a groan before shifting over a seat.

As she settled into her new seat, more annoyed than ever, Rey lifted her gaze with a huff when a deep chuckle of laughter rang out into the darkened theater. There was certainly nothing even remotely funny happening on screen. With a glare, she met the dark eyes of Ben Solo, who was stuck in an equally awkward position...but then he just had to wink at her and give her a lopsided smile, Rey couldn't help the spread of her own across her freckled face.

The man, who was practically larger than life, hoisted himself from his seat and vaulted his long legs over the snogging couple between them like they were nothing but air. He landed with a soft *thump* in the empty seat beside her, leaning towards her in a way that took her breath away, when she was sure he was really only trying to keep some distance between his back and the ginger-rose behind them.

“So, you come here often?” he let out a deep chuckle as he stuck a thumb over his shoulder, “I’m kidding...but can you believe these two fuckers?”

“Oh God, let’s hope it doesn’t get to that point while I’m still sitting here...” Rey bemoaned as she reached to stuff a handful of popcorn into her mouth.

“I...please don’t get the wrong idea...but...” he scrambled with a quick scrub of his hair while Rey warily watched him as she slowly chewed her popcorn, “Any chance you wanna get out of here before the lovefest behind us escalated past PG-13?”

“Are you kidding me?” Rey’s eyes widened, mumbling over the food in her mouth, “I would love nothing more right about now. Take me away, I beg you.”

“Excellent,” he beamed, rising to stand before holding a hand out towards her. With a deep breath, Rey tucked her popcorn beneath her arm and slid her fingers into his palm. It was so wonderfully warm, and Rey could swear she felt a subtle squeeze along with the tiniest zing that she passed off as a blip of static electricity. He pulled her to her feet, uncaring of the other audience members around them

Rey’s breath caught in her chest as he tugged her to her feet, meeting her wide-eyed gaze with an unexpectedly serious look playing on his lips.

“I’m Ben.”

“Rey,” she murmured with a breathless smile, losing herself for a split second to the way his hand felt against her own.

“Sod off ya bloody wankers!”

They both let out a series of fitful giggles as she turned heel and ran, letting their feet carry them swiftly from the darkened theater and into the busy London street. Her hand never left his for a moment, running along behind him as he towed her down the street, looking over his shoulder every once in a while to offer her another one of his lopsided smiles.

Rey couldn’t quite put her finger on it, the strange familiarity about it, but it was something so welcome and made her feel *so sure* that he wasn’t any normal person at all. It warmed her heart in a way she couldn’t describe and, even though she didn’t realize it then, her world had suddenly become more colorful than it ever had been before.

Ben pulled her down the block and around the corner, and before Rey knew it, her hazel eyes were alight with childlike wonder as she breathlessly looked over an array of brilliantly neon colors that painted every corner.

Already blinded by color, her ears were enveloped by the slow roll of heavy bowling balls rolling against polished wood, followed by the chaotic clatter of bowling pins tumbling down at the end of each lane that blended in against the steady beat of Roy Orbison crooning from the jukebox against the wall.

Rey lifted her eyes to Ben with a brilliantly bright smile, “How...what? I had no idea this was here? *The colors...* All of London can be so....”

“Grey?” Ben answered for her as he stuffed his hands into his pockets with a shrug, “Yeah, it can be, can’t it? I took one look at you, though...you’re the most colorful thing I’ve ever seen in my life...and trust me, I’d know...I’ve seen plenty of it.”

“You...you have?” Rey breathed, following to a countertop where he handed over his silver credit card with an oh-so-American, *thanks pal*, to the man on the other side. Their conversation paused for only a moment as they gave their shoe sizes and retrieved a pair of hilariously colorful shoes -



his laughably *so* much larger than her own, but Ben didn't miss a beat as they sat down in their lane.

"My whole life. As long as I can remember, at least," he rambled off as he toed an oversized sneaker from his foot, ones that held the only color in his entire outfit, with a single red stripe running down the side, "Why? How long's it been since you met yours?"

"What makes you think I have?" Rey tugged her lemon-meringue heel from the persimmon tights that covered her legs down to her toes, replacing them with the bowling shoes and holding them out in front of her to appraise the rainbow that graced her feet.

"Please," Ben chuckled with a shake of his dark hair, "I can look at you and tell you it's no secret you have *The Glimpse*."

"Because of all my colors?" she stood up and gave her turquoise, floral skirt a spin, "I'll have you know that they exist whether or not people can see them."

"Yours match too nicely for you not to have it," Ben pursed his lips as he stood and strode over to palm a 7 kilogram, blue bowling ball, tossing it from hand to hand like it weighed nothing at all.

"You think I match?" Rey beamed, bouncing to his side to select a yellow, *much lighter* ball from the rack, "Oh, *I think I love you*. That's very kind of you to say, Mister Solo. It's no secret how much I love color, but I suppose..." she paused and anxiously tucked her bottom lip between her teeth, "I suppose that I like to dress in bright colors because...if...if the reason I have *The Glimpse* is because I've met them, they have it too...then I want to stand out so they can find me, you know?"

"Makes sense," Ben nodded with a tug of the corner of his mouth - the faintest of understanding smiles, "If you don't blind them, first, that is."

Rey pouted towards his back as he stepped forward and effortlessly hurled the ball down the lane, obliterating the pins with a loud clangor of pins against pins. She couldn't deny the way his subtle swagger somehow added to his whole aura, making her heart twinge in the strangest way when he goofily spun on his toes and gave her the silliest thumbs up. A burst of effervescent, girlish giggles erupted from her lips, so effortless and almost freeing with the way they lifted her up from the inside out.

The laughter stopped, no matter how many times they saw each other after that, instantaneous

friends after being brought so fortuitously together by their respective friends. The time went by quickly with Ben by her side, a presence she was always grateful, especially once Rose and Tage moved in together, and she and the American playboy switched flatmates.

She had been sure that things couldn't get any better than they already were, but living with Ben was as easy as breathing and had a natural ease to it that Rey didn't even have with Rose. And as the months turned to years with him by her side, the more it started to feel like she'd known Ben Solo her entire life.

That was the funny thing about life. It was always full of the cruelest surprises, giving and taking away without a second glance, and sometimes, you'd realize the gift you'd been given only once it was too late.

She was tired. So, so tired. More tired than she'd ever been.

Sleep never came easily, no matter how hard she tried. It should have been easier than it was, with the grey hidden in the darkness, but it was always in the back of her mind. It followed her every movement, acting as a cold reminder of what was and what had been.

Rey would pull herself from the bed, wrapping herself in the softness of black sheets as she padded across the cold wood floor with bare feet. She lifted her eyes out the window to the London street below, looking across what used to be the emerald green view of Kensington Gardens. She let out a quiet sigh as she looked across the shades of grey and decided to distract herself, with a tremble of her chin, with fixing a cup of tea.

*"A cup of tea makes everything better, Starlight. Even the greyest of days will seem like they've got a little color with hot tea between your hands."*

Her father's words echoed through her mind as she poured the steaming water from the kettle into her cup, watching as soft brown swirls seeped from the bright turquoise, umbrella-shaped tea infuser - at least, she *knew* the tea was brown and the umbrella was blue. Had been, at least.

The heavy reminder of what had happened washed over her, seeping through her skin like a cold rain, and along with it came her tears. They hung heavy on her lashes until, one by one, they slipped down her cheeks in hot, silvery tracks to land with a tiny splash in her tea.

Her heart ached as the seconds slowly slipped by, crawling along at such a painful pace that Rey

wondered how much longer she'd be able to handle the weight of it on her shoulders. She lifted the tiny umbrella from her cup and poured a splash of milk through the slowly wafting steam with a sigh, losing herself to the clouds of swirls as they circled up from the bottom of the cup. She imagined them like clouds in the sky, passing her by as she drove down the long, winding road that was her life.

# Colorblind

## Chapter Summary

“Distracted driving kills, you know.”

“Yeah, yeah, so you’ve told me a million times before. I get it,” Rey muttered with a sly grin as she reached over to unbuckle her seatbelt and shift her body halfway into the backseat.

“See, I don’t think you do, Sweetheart,” she heard Ben growl from behind her.

“How so?” Rey shuffled through the bag of snacks he’d so lovingly packed.

“Your colorful ass is in my face right now and I find myself *thoroughly* distracted by it.”

## Chapter Notes

Rey and Ben are friends as best as they come,  
I start to wonder, are their fates intertwined?  
If you have tissues, best grab some,  
Cause if you’d have a clue, it might be ‘Colorblind’.

Don’t get confused, these clues aren’t about me,  
I’ll leave those to another anon, whose fate is yet to be seen.  
She’s tricky as they come, a real troll, you could say.  
Where is Anda, what part could she play?

When push comes to shove, it’s really simple, you see.  
You and I have something in common, that’s something I’ll say.  
It could be a brain cell, that is yet to be seen  
But I’d say it’s more likely, that you won’t suspect me today.

xoxo

“Pass the crisps.”

Rey watched the clouds fly by her window as they made their way past herd of sheep in green, rolling pastures, smiling to herself when Ben let out a grumble from the driver’s seat to her right.

“Get your feet off my dash and pass the crisps yourself,” he tapped his long fingers on the camel-colored leather-wrapped steering wheel, keeping his gaze ever vigilantly on the road, “Distracted

driving kills, you know.”

“Yeah, yeah, so you’ve told me *a million times* before. I get it,” Rey muttered with a sly grin as she reached over to unbuckle her seatbelt and shift her body halfway into the backseat.

“See, I don’t think you do, Sweetheart,” she heard Ben growl from behind her.

“How so?” Rey shuffled through the bag of snacks he’d so lovingly packed.

“Your colorful ass is in my face right now and I find myself *thoroughly* distracted by it.”

Rey snatched a bright blue bag of salt and vinegar Chipsticks and promptly plopped back into the roomy seat with a giggle.

“If it’s so distracting, then don’t look.”

“I can’t help it if it’s so big it has its own center of gravity,” Ben said with a sidelong gaze before leaning over her and pulling her seatbelt back across her body. Rey held her breath at the close contact, unable to ignore the frisson of goosebumps that ricocheted down her legs as the firm muscle of his arm brushed over her chest, “Seatbelt.”

“Yes sir,” Rey playfully saluted before ripping open the bag and stuffing a handful in her mouth. She let out a happy sigh as she turned her attention back out her window, watching the English countryside roll by while the sleek, black Range Rover cruised along each kilometer.

They made excellent time, crossing the distance from busy London across the border to Wales in what felt like record time to Rey. It wasn’t long before she was out of snacks and more than ready to stretch her legs, just in time for them to pull up a long, gravel drive with a stately stone manor rising at the top.

Ben looked over the grey house with a low whistle as he swung his black suit-jacket over his broad shoulders and held out an arm for Rey. She slipped her hand through the crook of his elbow, lifting her wide-eyed gaze to the ivy-covered facade.

“You know, when they said they were getting married in a castle...I thought that they were joking,” she breathed as they stepped forward and he knocked on the door. It swung open in an instant, and the pair of them were quickly swept inside by two pairs of hands, giving each other a wayward glance when they were abruptly separated by the bride and groom.

Rey milled about the room, murmuring hellos and how are yous in a wide circle of the main sitting room before finding some blessed quiet in a corner with Rose. The smaller woman grew silent with a grimace as she looked up at her old flatmate from school.

“There’s...there’s a problem.”

“What kind of problem?” Rey answered with a furrow of her brow, her mind instantly going to the normal issues that would plague a bride, ready to solve whatever it was like any Maid of Honor was supposed to do, “Whatever it is, we’ll get it figured out.”

“I mean...” Rose fretted, coiling a ribbon of her black hair around a finger, “It’s not a *problem* problem, I guess. Tage thought it would...be funny I guess? But then it just sorta worked out this way and there’s no going back and I’m really sorry, please don’t be mad.”

“Don’t be mad? Mad about what?” Rey searched Rose’s round face, planting her hands on her hips with a frown, “*What did you do?*”

Five minutes later, Rey trudged up the stairs, half-amused and half-annoyed as she walked down the long corridor of the third floor or the over-the-top manor. She rounded a corner and walked up to a heavy wooden door with a golden plate that read *The Fairytale Suite*, emblazoned in exquisite, curly lettering.

With a jingle of the key in the lock, Rey pushed it open and closed it with a soft slam as she leaned against with a sigh that quickly melted into a smile when she met Ben’s equally perturbed gaze from across the room.

“They think they’re so fucking funny, don’t they?” he grouched, dropping his luggage onto the floor with a *thud*.

“It won’t be that bad,” Rey laughed, setting her own suitcase down upon the deep purple bedspread of the elegant, four-poster that was the centerpiece of the luxurious suite, “It’s not like we haven’t been in close quarters before. I mean...we *live* together, Ben. Will this really be that

different?”

“Rey...” Ben growled with a flash of warning, waving his hands towards her, “There’s only one bed.”

“So?” Rey leaned forward and unzipped her bag, proceeding to pull her clothing from inside to hang in the wardrobe.

“So...what...are we supposed to *sleep together*?” he barked, pacing back and forth across the lush, ivory carpet.

“What are you so upset about?” Rey balked, looking around the room to find any way to try and ease his mind. The bed was more than big enough for the two of them, plus a spacious, eggplant velveteen sofa at the foot of the bed and a clawfoot tub situated in the corner by a towering window, “I mean...if the idea of sleeping in the same bed as me bothers you *that much*, I’ll sleep in the tub, okay?”

“Stop,” Ben scowled at her with his hands on his hips, “Don’t be ridiculous. You’re not sleeping in the tub. I will.”

Rey barked out a loud laugh, planting the last of her rainbow-hued shoes in the bottom of the wooden wardrobe before turning back to her best friend.

“Now who’s the ridiculous one?” she continued to chuckle as she strode across the suite to where Ben still paced in a quiet fury, until she reached out her hands to still him. Her heart gave the smallest flutter when she could feel his racing pulse begin to slow and the warmth of his skin bloom through the soft cotton of his shirt beneath her fingertips.

With a quiet sigh, Rey gently skirted her hands up the hard plane of his chest to cup the curve of his face between her hands. His gaze instantly softened once he was centered in hers, giving her a tiny nod as she held his eyes with hers. “It’s going to be fine and really isn’t a big deal. We aren’t strangers, we’re *us*.” Ben blinked back at her before wrapping his arms around her waist to pull her into a hug. Rey reciprocated it with one of her own, nestling her cheek against his shoulder before whispering with a quiet giggle, “I won’t bite or steal the covers, I swear. Plus, if it’s really an issue, you can stay in the wardrobe. It’s so big, I think that Narnia is back there somewhere.”

It felt like home, tucked in his arms, probably more than it had any right to be, and Rey quickly

found herself second-guessing every single second that ticked by that she spent there. With a quiet clearing of her throat, she pulled away and peered up at him through her lashes.

“We’ll make the best of it...but in the meantime, we ought to get dressed for dinner, yeah?”

“If you say so,” Ben heaved a great sigh, pulling her to his broad chest one last time as he tucked the tip of his nose into her hair, giving her one more blessed squeeze before releasing her, “I’ll take the bathroom to change, if you want.”

“Okay,” Rey whispered with a soft, almost bashful smile playing on her lips as he bent down to gather his suitcase from the floor and carry it to the toilet. The door closed softly behind him and she was left deliriously alone, realizing suddenly that apart from him was something she didn’t want to be.

A few hours later, with a full belly, a faint buzz that was only increased by the late hour, and Ben Solo by her side, Rey wandered through the cocktail hour, happily chatting with the other close guests of Armitage and Rose that were staying in the stately manor like they were.

Ben looked down at her with a soft smile as he handed over a fresh glass of champagne, taking her hand in his with a tug as he leaned down to whisper in her ear.

“Come ‘ere. There’s someone I want you to meet.”

“Ben Solo, you’re so serious!” Rey jibed playfully, following him as he towed her across the elegantly wood-paneled hall, “What, is it your mother or something?”

“Something like that,” he chuckled with a wry smile as they strode up to a small, stately woman on the other side of the room. She lifted her gaze to meet Rey’s with a smile and a twinkle in her dark eyes that were oh-so-familiar, “Rey...this is my mother, Leia Organa. She’s been invested in the future of her *other son* for a while and just *had* to come see wittle Armie get married,” he let out a nervous bark of laughter before awkwardly getting back to the introductions, “Mom, this is Rey Kestis.”

“L-Leia Organa?” Rey breathed, looking from Ben to the woman and back again before anxiously extending her hand to shake hers. Leia answered her with a kind smile and a laugh.



“I’ve heard a lot about you, Rey,” the older woman squeezed her hand, holding onto it as her brows creased together, “Kestis, you said? Not any relation to Cal Kestis, is it?”

“My dad,” Rey answered with a nod, “He was a member of parliament for a long time. He teaches at Cambridge now.”

“Ahh, Cal! We go back a long time...now I know where I know your face from!” Leia clapped her hands together with a bright belt of laughter, “You’re the petit four girl.”

“The...what? *I love petit fours* ,” Rey’s mind reeled from the exhilaration that Ben’s mother knew her dad.

“No... *the* petit four girl. From Easter in ninety-three. You wanted them so badly...if I remember correctly, your father told you no, and you couldn’t reach them on your own, so Ben here helped you. Then the whole tablecloth came down and all the desserts with it. It was a whole thing and a giant mess. Bennett had icing behind his ears for weeks.”

“I don’t remember this,” Ben grumbled, his fair cheeks tinged with pink as he looked down to meet Rey’s eyes.

“I...I think I might, but I...I had no idea...why didn’t I realize that I met you before?”

“It was a long time ago, Sweetheart,” Leia answered, reaching out to squeeze Rey’s shoulder, “Sometimes childhood memories are funny like that, but I assure you, I’d remember those freckles anywhere. And it was after that that Benny here started seeing things in color.”

“I hardly remember a specific timeframe, mother,” he grouched with a deep set frown, clearing his throat as he looked across the room like he was searching for an escape route.

“It’s so foggy for me,” Rey murmured, pressing her fingers to her temple, “I remember the day. I remember the cake - but why can’t I remember anything else before then?”

“Maybe there wasn’t much for you to know until that moment, dear,” Leia winked, looking to her son for a split second before he shrugged away Rey’s hand, mumbled his apologies, and strode away.

Rey gave his mother an apologetic look, murmuring a quiet *I'm sorry* before following after him with a swish of glittering, emerald green silk. She glimpsed the heels of his shiny, black dress shoe as he rounded the corner at the top of the handsome, wood carved staircase, following close behind with the soft thud of her favorite lemon meringue shoes on the carpet.

She charged down the corridor, sliding around the corner to their door - *The Fairytale Suite* - and sent the heavy door swinging on its hinges with a *bang*. Ben was inside, pacing back and forth with a quiet fury and a flash of his eyes and a twitch of his jaw when he met her gaze.

Rey slammed the door behind her, her brows creased as she stood against the door with her arms crossed over her chest.

“What in the bloody hell was that? You take me to meet your mother and then, what...storm off? I don't understand,” Rey motioned her hands in the direction of the still-ongoing party, “Did I say something? Did she say something?”

“It...it was the subject matter, Rey,” Ben slowed the frantic pace of his steps, planting his hands on his hips as he chewed on his bottom lip, “What she was insinuating.”

“What?” Rey went over the conversation in her mind, and finally let the realization that she'd met him - that they'd met each other long before that night in the movie theater - and everything after that time in their lives had been lived in a brilliant wash of color. He'd gotten upset as soon as Leia had inferred that perhaps they...but no. She would have known, wouldn't she? Wouldn't he?

Her eyes drifted to the golden hue of her shoes, toeing them anxiously against the ivory carpet as the thoughts rolled over and over in her mind and her heart hammered in her ears.

“It's really something I'd rather not fucking talk about right now, Rey! What part of that didn't you get? That's why I *walked away*. Can you just...for once in your fucking life...leave well enough alone? Not everything need a dash of fucking color,” Ben bellowed, throwing his arms out as the sound of his voice grew louder than she'd ever heard.

She sucked in a trembling breath as silvery beads of her tears began to pool on her lashes.

“What was it? Is...is the thought that maybe...maybe this thing between us,” she motioned between them with a point of her trembling hand, “That this thing between us is something more than what

we thought? Or...or is it because the thought that I might be your soulmate....your *Glimpse* ....is that the part that upsets you? I mean...here I was foolishly hoping all this time that it *was* you. I guess...I guess I was wrong.”

“That’s not it,” Ben sighed, keeping his burning gaze trained on her with another press of his lips, “That’s not it at all.”

“Then show me. I wanna see it. Just...get it over with and find out for sure. Nothing has to change, Ben,” Rey whispered with a quake of her chin, lifting her fingers to trace a slow circle over the infinity behind her ear.

“No.”

“Don’t be a coward. What are you so afraid of? Just show me,” Rey pressed, stepping forward, only to feel a jolt of hurt when he took a step back, casting her a fearful look with a shake of his head. Her lips parted in a soft *oh* as the silence stretched between them and Ben turned his eyes to the floor, unable and seemingly unwilling to meet her eye, and suddenly, her worst fear felt like it came true. *It was her.*

“I see,” she whispered, brushing her palms over the soft green fabric of her skirt with a quiet sniff before turning towards the bed, “I’m tired. Tomorrow is going to be a long day, so I’m going to bed. You do what you want.”

“Rey,” his voice called out to her, like a rumble of thunder echoing over the horizon with the whisper of a promise of a summer storm. She followed the sound and saw him - her best friend, and maybe her greatest love - standing like a broken man who was barely holding it together, with a hand on his hip, his dark brows creased, and his fingers pressed to his lips like they were forming the words he so desperately wanted to say. He sucked in a ragged breath and lifted his tortured gaze to meet hers, “That’s not it at all. I’m...I’m afraid that...if I show you...that you *won’t* be her. That you won’t be my *Glimpse*, and it fucking terrifies me.”

His confession hung like a weight between them, but all Rey could bring herself to feel was tired. She held his gaze for a moment before letting out a quiet sigh and murmuring a quiet, “Goodnight, Ben.”

Still in her cocktail dress, Rey toed off her shoe next to the bed and climbed up into the four-poster. She settled her head against the softness of the pillow, hugging her arm around it to hold it to her chest as her tears finally fell silent, but free.

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Rey blinked slowly against the cool glass of the window, watching the seemingly endless sea of grey pass her by. Stone buildings, fast cars, and quaint villages all went by in a blur, each shade from muted white to the darkest black, all blending together as the train rocketed through the quiet Connecticut countryside.

Her body slowly swayed back and forth with the steady side-to-side movements of the train. She settled back into her seat with a sigh, closing her eyes to center herself in the way it rocked her, imagining herself dancing in the past instead of where she was.

It wasn't the first time she'd taken the trip and, if she thought about it, maybe only a little easier than the first time she'd ventured across the Atlantic for him.

Wrapped up in the softness of the oversized black sweater, the one she'd never been quite able to go without, Rey felt at home - more so than she did anywhere else. It brought her a sweet kind of comfort, to feel it against her skin and the warmth it made her feel. With it, she felt brave and she felt ready to face what was ahead of her.

With a slow, quiet breath that gently fogged the window, Rey reached up and slowly traced her fingertip against the curve of her lip, smiling softly to herself as a flicker of green came into view. It happened in an instant, as so many things do, gone before she really had a chance to look - but it was there. It happened in the quiet moments when she needed it most, and when it did, Rey would always feel a rush of love in her heart that needed no explanation at all. It was something so familiar, something she'd experienced countless times before, and it was always the same.

# i love you

## Chapter Summary

Everyone lived their lives in shades of grey, waiting for the moment when they'd clap eyes on their soulmate, and their whole world would be abruptly painted in brilliant technicolor. Rey never remembered a moment without *The Glimpse*, but hoped to find them all the same. What if it didn't have to be that way? What if a soulmate meant something different, was it only the culmination of a single moment, or a collection of stories in the life you built that gave it color?

## Chapter Notes

I'm not a poet, or so I've never been told,  
Prose is my thing, cause I know the land.  
I prefer to paint a pretty picture, one nice and bold,  
Call me Bob Ross, cause happy little trees I find pretty rad.

You know me, I gotta have clues,  
But my list has so many, how can I choose?  
Playlists I love, filled with angst from their stem to their stern,  
But sometimes, an 'i love you' from Billie is what a girl yearns.

Her words are sad, they make me feel gloomy,  
Which is the perfect thing, when characters get spooning.  
Happiness is on the horizon, but it isn't to stay,  
We still have to find out why Rey is so grey.

xoxo

With a sigh, Rey rolled over and looked at the top of the four-poster bed, silently counting the stars the covered the printed fabric that was draped over the top. She was still in her emerald green cocktail dress, trudging through the unbearable silence that hung heavily between them.

She couldn't bear it and wished that he'd do something, make the first move, make a crack in the wall that had so abruptly gone up. But he hadn't, no matter how long she waited.

The stubborn ass stood there for she didn't know how long before flipping off the light and disappearing to she didn't know where...because her own hardheaded foolishness kept her from rolling over to look.

She twisted the hem of her skirt between her fingers as her mind ran through each moment of their fight - *their first* - wondering why it had gotten there in the first place...and why it mattered so much.

Everyone lived their lives in shades of grey, waiting for the moment when they'd clap eyes on their soulmate, and their whole world would be abruptly painted in brilliant technicolor. Rey never remembered a moment without *The Glimpse*, but hoped to find them all the same. What if it didn't have to be that way? What if a soulmate meant something different, was it only the culmination of a single moment, or a collection of stories in the life you built that gave it color?

Rey loved him, it was true. She had for the longest time, even though she couldn't quite put her finger on the moment when it went from friendship to something decidedly more, or if it was ever as simple as them being merely friends. The way his fear wound its way around his words when he confessed he was afraid that she wasn't his *Glimpse* made her wonder if he loved her too.

They were happy together. More than happy. They were *complete*. Her every single day was better the moment he was by her side...did she really need a world of color to show her how she knew she felt about him in her heart?

Rey sat up in the relative darkness of the suite and looked around at the different shapes of things in the room, letting her eyes adjust in the muted shards of silvery moonlight that streamed in through the milky glass. She let out a quiet laugh when her gaze landed on the huge, porcelain tub in the corner, and the hulking man who was asleep inside it.

His feet were propped up along the edge and were the only thing Rey could see from her perch on the bed as a bewildering mixture of guilt and amusement washed over her. She slid from the deep purple bedspread, wiggling her toes in the plush carpet as she quietly padded across the room.

The quiet of his breathing reached her ears, summoning that same aching bloom in her heart that happened every time she was near him. She let out a quiet sigh as she got close enough to see him, so positively boy-like with one arm draped over his torso and the other over his head, still dressed in his suit jacket from the party that night.

Rey sat down on the edge of the cool porcelain, chewing on the inside of her lip as she reached out and slowly traced the long line of his nose down to the rounded curve of his mouth with the tip of her finger, idly wondering what they'd feel like against her own.

Ben's brows instantly creased from her touch, drawing him from the quiet shores of sleep to slowly open his dark eyes with a few rapid blinks as he took in her face.

“Hi,” Rey murmured with a breathy sigh, leaning to balance her elbow on the edge of the tub to bring herself closer to him.

“Hey,” he mumbled in return with a gravelly whisper, pulling himself to sit with a groan and anxiously carding his long fingers through his hair, “What’s up?”

“I...I wanted to talk...if that’s okay,” Rey let her hand linger on his chest, centering herself in the steady beating of his heart and the warmth that seeped through his shirt.

“Sure...of course...I’m...I wanna say that I’m...”

“No, stop. I want to go first if that’s okay?” Rey stopped Ben before he could go any further, eager to ride the sudden wave of brazen confidence she was feeling. He firmly held his gaze for a moment, and when he nodded, she pressed on, “I...I’m not sure where to start, but...I need you to know that...I love you.”

“I love you too, kid,” Ben answered right away, his face serious as she continued.

“No... *I love you* , Ben. Like. The big kind of love. The deal with your brooding, make you soup when you’re sick, give you the bigger half of the cookie, let you win at Monopoly kind of love. The *forever* kind of love...the *soulmate*, *Glimpse* kind of love.”

Ben’s dark eyes, all swirls of caramel tucked into deep folds of dark chocolate, were filled with a flurry of emotion, watching her every move as she gathered her skirt in her hands and slipped one of her bare feet into the tub. It drew her in closer as she followed the first with another, kneeling between his knees as she walked her hands up his chest to bring her body flush with his.

Rey smiled softly with her face hovering so delightfully close to his, so close that she could count the constellation of beauty marks that speckled his fair skin and see the ghost of the day’s facial hair beginning to grow around his mouth.

With a tilt of her chin and a gentle reach of her hand, Rey cupped the curve of his jaw, blinking softly in the silver strands of moonlight as she skirted the pad of her thumb over his bottom lip.

“ *My point is* , it doesn’t matter. Not to me. I know it scares you, but does it really matter? Nothing changes between us, and the existence of a birthmark in the same place doesn’t affect the love I hold in my heart for you,” she uttered with an airy sigh as she drew her face closer to his, watching how his eyes shifted back and forth between hers, “And *now* , Ben Solo, I’m going to kiss you...just to prove it to you. Okay?”

He remained motionless save for a small nod and a thick swallow as Rey lifted her chin and slowly brought her lips to his. She lingered there, breathing him in with a small, satisfactory smile when Ben’s hands shifted and coiled around her waist. He pulled her closer, leaning into the kiss, like he was memorizing the feeling, and locking away the taste of her lips for the rest of his life.

With a chorus of quiet moans, Ben twined his fingers in her hair, deepening their kiss with a leisurely flicker of his tongue against the seam of her lips. The air buzzed deliciously as they explored the new, delectable sensations they found with each other. Unlike any kiss she’d ever felt before, even though *The Glimpse* didn’t matter to her, Rey could feel it in the way their bodies were so well-attuned, moving seamlessly as their hands wandered and they lost themselves to the enchantment that had blanketed them in the most unexpected, but most welcome way.

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The air was so much warmer than she thought it would be in early October and Rey found herself grateful for the way the oversized sweater slipped past the curve of her shoulder, letting it be free to be kissed by the fragrant Autumn wind.

She pulled the strap of her bag over her head and lifted her face to the golden warmth of the sunshine, letting it caress her face in a way that warmed her from the inside out as she strode down the narrow sidewalk.

The town was familiar to her. She’d seen it in pictures a thousand times and had visited it only once before. In her memory, the clapboard of the old colonial-style shops that lined each corner of the town square was painted every warm shade imaginable - from bright crimsons to butter yellows and vibrant cobalt. She let out a quiet sigh as she smiled at a passing local, wishing that she could have had the chance to see the splendor of it with her own eyes before *The Glimpse* was lost to her, but she was grateful to be there all the same.

Dried leaves skittered across her path, pulling her with a soft burst of wind that fluttered the hair around her face and drew her attention to a swinging wooden sign resembling a coffee cup hanging over a door on the corner of the block.



An amused smile bloomed across her face as the wind gave her another tug, flashing the briefest glimpse of the golden and vermillion leaves that coaxed her forward with every tumble, ending with a tight swirl on the stoop of the diner.

If all the signs pointed to her stepping inside, then who was she to say no?

Rey reached for the door, pulling it open with a quiet *jingle* of a bell hanging over the door and was suddenly awash with a series of memories that didn't belong to her as she looked over what she was sure were a mix of pastel tables and a counter lined with faded stools as the smell of burgers on a griddle and coffee brewing wafted around her. Amongst it all, Rey swore that she could imagine a little, black-haired boy sitting with his elbows balanced on the counter, legs swinging happily back and forth as he watched his dad bounce from customer to customer.

She strode forward and slid onto one of the stools, greeting an older gentleman with a friendly smile as she cracked the cover of a worn, plastic menu.

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Rey woke earlier than she expected but was happy to be greeted by the warm, yellow rays of sunlight that streamed in through the window, casting an ethereal glow across the spacious suite, illuminating it in the exact way that she was feeling in her heart.

With a long stretch of her arms over her head and a quiet yawn like a lazy cat in the sunshine, Rey couldn't help the smile from blooming across her face as she remembered what had transpired the night before.

Part of her wanted to be embarrassed that she had been so brazen to climb into a bathtub with her best friend and spend the next few hours snogging...but as she turned her gaze and saw him lying beside her, the warmth that spread from her heart and the subtle glow that flushed beneath the freckles on her face, she couldn't feel anything but the purest happiness.

She rolled to her side, still dressed in the emerald off-the-shoulder cocktail dress, and slid up beside him, coiling her arms around his waist as she pulled her body flush with his in the way she always wanted to do. Tucking her nose against his muscular shoulders, Rey breathed him in, sighing softly as the smell of him washed over her, all spices, smoke, and earth.

Wrapped in her arms, Ben let out a quiet groan, shifting his broad frame with a bounce of the mattress, still sleeping soundly as he burrowed himself in her arms.

Rey let out a quiet laugh, cradling his head against her chest as he coiled his thick arms around her waist, leisurely carding the soft ribbons of his raven hair between her fingers. With a sigh, she leaned her cheek against the crown of his head and laid happily that way for a while, watching the way the light shifted and subtly changed the view of their suite and illuminated a small, black marking on his alabaster skin.

She reached up and traced a fingertip over the raised edge of her own sign of infinity behind her ear, giving an anxious swallow as she reached out to brush his dark hair from his neck and reveal the soft flesh hiding behind it.

With a quiet gasp and a trembling hand, Rey carefully outlined the edge of the dark infinity sign behind Ben's ear, unable to keep the tears from springing forth when the realization that her soulmate was sleeping soundly in her arms washed over her.

How had they never realized it? Things were simple between them, filled with a natural ease that Rey had never found with anyone else and was simple to see that, for Ben, it was the same. Her company was preferred by him over nearly anyone else, with few special exceptions, but even those he'd trade for her in a second.

It hadn't been so obvious as being offered *The Glimpse*, knocking them over the head as the grey curtain was lifted, with your soulmate waiting for you at the center of a symphony of color. Yet, they'd found their way back to each other, their true heart unbeknownst to them at the time. Bound by Fate over space and time, determined to come together as the luminescent thread grew shorter and shorter until they finally found themselves together.

Rey idly wondered with a wistful smile, just how many lives they'd lived, and if they were lucky enough to find each other each time. How the bond - two twin souls born together in the heart of a fledgling star - translated from life to life was something Rey was always curious about. She wasn't sure if she could have believed the fairytales of those who said they could remember their soulmate from other lives, but at that moment, with her own wrapped in her arms, Rey wished that they were true. After all, with something so singular and unique, wouldn't it be a power like life itself - one that even death couldn't destroy?

No matter if they'd been together in another life, or if different versions were waiting for them in a distant galaxy, Rey only wanted to lose herself in the delectable feeling of the weight of him in her arms, and the warmth of his legs twined around hers - forever bound together...beyond just that morning.

A buzz rang out from beside her, drawing her attention away from the beautiful array of marks across his face and the way his lips subtly moved with each breath. Rey swore quietly

The wedding.

In her delirious and welcome daze, Rey had nearly forgotten the entire reason for their visit to Wales in the first place.

With a resigned sigh, like the wind had been swept from her sails, Rey leaned down and pressed a lingering kiss between his brows before she slowly, and laboriously wiggled out from beneath the hulking weight of Ben Solo, letting out a quiet huff of laughter when he groaned with a pout and curled up with the pillow she'd been laying on.

She didn't want to leave and it hurt her heart to slip away, but there was so much to do, and they had their whole lives ahead of them.

The morning went by quickly, aided by a mountain of croissants and a never-ending flow of mimosas and girl talk, but Rey found herself constantly distracted by the fleeting thought of Ben - her soulmate - that would pass through her mind...and if she should tell him what she'd found out that morning.

Rose was the first to notice that there was something different about her, giving her elbow a push when the petite woman stepped up beside her as Rey looked out over the lawn through the bubbled glass of the window.

“So...” Rose pressed with a playful grin playing on her freshly made-up lips, looking every bit of the blushing bride, even in her silken robe. They'd spend the better part of the day milling around, chatting away the morning as each girl had her turn with the hair and makeup team who'd been hired for the day. Rey looked down at her friend with a shy smile and a casual shrug.

“So, what? Why are you looking at me like that?”

“So...how'd last night go?”

“So - none of your business,” Rey retorted with a titter of laughter.

“It most definitely is my business,” Rose crossed her arms over her chest with a lift of her eyebrow and a frown.

“Enlighten me.”

“My wedding day. The bride gets what she wants. That’s me. I’m the bride,” Rose pointed a finger at her face with a brilliant smile, “This bride wants you to tell her how things went in your *Fairytale Suite* .”

“You *did* do it on purpose!” Rey’s hazel eyes narrowed in mock offense, “I knew it!”

“I...Armitage is the one who came up with the idea. He’s been desperate to get you two together for the longest time. And I mean *the longest time*. I have a feeling though...our plan worked. Getting you two alone.”

“Rose, we are flatmates. We are *literally* alone all the time,” Rey argued with a wry smile.

“Yeah, but *alone* alone. In a fucking castle. Tell me that it didn’t work. Go on, I’ll wait,” the bride planted her hands on her tiny waist, giving her maid-of-honor an expectant look and when Rey came up with mere silence, Rose’s face melted into a victorious smile, “I *knew it!* Oh gods, wait ‘til Tage hears! I think he might cry out of happiness...it...fuck, it could be the happiest day of his life.”

“It’s your wedding day, Rose. It’s supposed to be the happiest day of his life.”

“Yeah, but...I think this might take the cake over us getting married,” Rose laughed, practically beaming from the inside out as she reached out to hug her best friend, “I’m not mad about it. *Stars*, I am so happy! Oh! Speaking of which...”

Rey felt another surge of happiness as she was released from their embrace, watching with a glint in her eye as Rose wandered to her bag, rifling through the contents for a moment before pulling a small, gift-wrapped parcel from inside. She tossed it to Rey with a wink.

“Those are for Tage. Would you mind terribly finding a groomsman who’d give them to him? A... *Best Man*, perhaps?”

“Rose...I...I’m not exactly dressed,” Rey looked down at her bright pink satin robe and lifted to brush her fingers against the nest of curlers in her hair.

“You look just fine to me, Rey,” Rose winked, waving her away with her hands. Rey gave her a scathing look that melted into a grin with a shake of her head, tucking the edges of her robe closer to her body as she stepped out the door towards the back of the stone manor.

The early Springtime air kissed her skin, sending a frisson of goosebumps down her arms as she stepped from the shadow of the house and into the sunshine, lifting her face to the light as it warmed her from the inside out.

Like he had known she was coming, Ben was striding across the loose gravel of a pathway that cut through the garden from the carriage house where the men were spending the day. Dressed in a sharply tailored tuxedo, Rey loved the way his silk bow tie hung beneath his collar, still untied with the top two buttons undone and the rest straining against the width of his chest.

When his eyes met hers, he let out a playful gasp, covering his mouth with his hands to stifle his laughter.

“Oh fuck off, they’re horrible. Don’t make fun,” Rey hovered her hands over her curlers, trying to hide them from him in vain as he closed the space between them.

“Come on, they’re cute,” Ben reached out and tucked a stray strand of her hair behind her ear. The laughter died away as they held each other’s gaze and the memory of the night before hung between them, “So...how’s things? Is it like...Bridezilla or whatever it’s called?”

“Rose is a very gracious bride who’s probably had a little too much champagne and may or may not have let the power go to her head - forcing me to come out here and see you like this...but I got to see you, so that’s a bonus,” she shrugged with a playful grimace.

“I’m a bonus, huh?” he gave her a lopsided smile on his freshly, clean-shaven face, pressing his lips together with a sigh as he held her gaze. She blinked up at him a beat before thrusting the gift box into his hands, freeing her own to anxiously play with the seam of her sleeve. She couldn’t understand why she was suddenly so bashful, “These...these are for Tage. They’re cufflinks...from

Rose. Not from me...I mean...of course...but...you know.”

“Okay,” he answered with a nod, rolling the box over in his hands for a moment before pocketing them inside his suit jacket.

She was still her. He was still him. They were them.

Her gaze was locked on his as he stepped forward, close enough that Rey could feel the warmth of him through the thin fabric of her robe, and let out a quiet whimper when he reached out and cupped the curve of her jaw. His touch lingered there, and as he skimmed the pad of his thumb behind her ear - over her own soul mark - before leaning down to press a lingering kiss to her lips.

Rey hummed quietly as the breeze swept around them, bringing them closer together as Ben coiled his arm around her waist and pulled her body flush with his. It was quicker than she'd liked, the opposite of the way they'd languorously explored one another the night before - both in the tub and out of it - but Rey lost herself in it just the same.

Breathless and reeling, Rey traced her fingertips over the delightful burn upon her lips when he pulled away in a flash, offering the flash of a smile before striding away.

“I'll see you later, Color Girl.”

Rey returned to her duties as Maid of Honor, getting her own hair and makeup fixed and into her gown before helping Rose into her wedding gown and posing for pictures with all the other women. Then, as the light of day began to fade away, she joyously watched her best friend get married to the love of her life with her soulmate standing just steps away.

After a flurry of photographs, a busy cocktail hour, and dinner, the party finally started to get going, and it wasn't long before Rey felt the brush of a warm hand upon her bare shoulder. Peering up through her lashes, a brilliant smile bloomed across her face when she found Ben, with a single, proffered hand and a gleam in his eye that posed a silent question they both already knew the answer to.

She slid her hand into his palm, so much like that first night at the movie theater, letting out a quiet sigh as he pulled her from her seat. Ben kept his fingers twined with hers, looking down at her with a slow lick of his lips.

“You look...” he paused pressing his mouth together for a beat as he chewed on his words, creating a silence that Rey was nervously eager to fill.

“*I know... it’s so black . I hate it, it’s...it probably looks terrible,*” she motioned down to her feet at the svelte, curve-hugging black gown that framed the low contours of her shoulders, flaring out at the waist to the floor, “Rose let me style it up with some shoes, though, look!”

“That’s...not what I was going to say. Not at all,” Ben mused as he tugged her to the center of the dance floor with a glance at her shoes - a pair of sky-high heels, with a blend of glittering silver and blue across the softly pointed toes, a flash of bright pink suede across her heel, and a strap of silver studs over her ankle that looked like they belonged on a leather jacket, not a shoes. He lifted his eyes back to her, guiding her in a slow circle to capture her in his arms. Splaying his hands over the small of her back, he pulled her flush against his chest and leaned down to brush the tip of his nose along the curve of her ear as he slowly began to sway them from side-to-side, “What I was going to say was.... *you look incredible, Rey.*”

She leaned into him with a shiver as he placed a featherlight kiss against the tender flesh of her earlobe before nuzzling the space behind her ear. In an instant, Rey felt him stiffen, pulling away just a hair so he could look in her eyes. The music still played but their feet had still as Ben stared down at her, his plush lips parted with a soft huff of disbelief. With a trembling sigh, Rey lost herself in the soft swirls of amber, cupping his cheek as she tried to read his mind, desperate to know what he was thinking.

Before either of them could speak, a delicate chime of silver against crystal rang out. Ben captured her hand in his, pressing a lingering kiss to her palm with a low whisper, “Grab some champagne, kid. That’s my cue.”

Rey sat back down at one of the tables, balancing her chin on the heel of her hand as she traced slow circles along the rim of her crystal glass with a chuckle as she watched Ben flounder with a microphone and a slip of paper from inside his breast pocket.

With an awkward tap of his finger over the top and a groan-summoning squeal of feedback from the speakers around them, Ben lifted it to his mouth and began to speak.

“Hey....uh, hi...” he balked as the microphone squeaked again before swearing loudly enough to summon a chorus of chuckles from the crowd before dropping the microphone to the table with a *thud* , stuffing his hands in his pockets with a lift of his chin, projecting his booming voice like he’d done it his whole life, “My name is Ben Solo, I’m the Best Man and...I..and I am Tage’s long-suffering best friend from University. I say long-suffering because things are *never* boring where Armitage Hux is concerned.

Now, no one needs to be nervous about any stories I might tell...unless you married Tage today. I'm kidding, I'm kidding! But really, Rose...I couldn't be more grateful for you for being exactly the kind of woman my best friend needed, and exactly the kind he doesn't deserve.

Back to the obligatory character assassination about the groom.

I was just a small-town kid from Connecticut who had spent most of his time sitting in a diner learning life lessons from a racecar driver turned line cook while my mom was off doing...things of a political nature. I was pretty sheltered from that for a long time, thank goodness, with experiences here and there that shaped me along the way."

Ben's eyes shifted to meet hers for a split second, pausing to take a deep breath before turning back to the bride and groom with a smile.

"Tage can hold his drink to a *lethal* degree, and I mean lethal. Trust me, the fact that I can barely remember my twenty-first birthday, much to my mother's chagrin, is a testament to that. Let me just say that, if someone says that doing tequila slammers all night is a good idea...it's not...but I digress.

We're here to talk about you. About love. How lucky are we to be witnesses to something so wonderful?"

He sucked in a shaky breath, pausing to slowly chew his words, drawing his hand from his pocket to press his fingers to his mouth before lifting his eyes to find hers in the crowd.

"Choosing the person you want to share your life with is one of the most important decisions any of us make. Ever. I know that we all live our lives waiting for *The Glimpse*, but I believe that it is so much more than that. Because...when it's the wrong person, your world turns to grey. Sometimes, you can go your whole life and never realize the color you've been blessed with until one morning, you wake up and realize that years have gone by and an endless amount of missed opportunities. I know about that one. I know what it means to love someone who has brought the most glorious technicolor to my life in so many ways. It was shining through the darkest of times and will continue to do so long after we have gone on to live whatever life is next for us. I am, without a doubt... *the luckiest* man alive to have had that gift. And I pray to whatever God will listen that I didn't take it for granted. Cause if I did, then that would mean that I didn't see that the best thing that had ever happened to me had been sitting there...right under my nose.



I know now that...without a doubt...no matter who you are...what you're doing, or who you're with, I will always love you."

The audience was silent save for the quiet titter of voices, the clink of silver on china, and the thunderous beating of Rey's heart. He held her gaze for another beat, and she swore she saw him nod before reaching down to grasp his long fingers around the bell of a champagne flute, clearing his throat loudly before turning back towards Rose and Armitage with a smile.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please be upstanding. To the Bride and Groom. May they never take their love for granted. Not for a single second," Ben lifted his glass to their friends before turning his eyes back to her, lifting the crystal flute higher with a bow of his head before taking a slow sip.

As she lifted her glass to her lips, taking a drink of the effervescent liquid, letting it tickle her tongue for a moment before she swallowed it and welcomed the warmth that bloomed in her chest, Rey thought of him. Of them. Watching as he embraced his best friend and swept Rose into a bone-crushing hug with a broad smile on his face.

Her soulmate.

With a flutter of her heart, Rey wondered how long they'd loved each other. She supposed that the falling was the easy part. It was as effortlessly as breathing, falling as easily as the rain did from the sky, so subtly that they didn't even notice. But it was the stubborn arrival of those feelings and the subsequent acceptance of them that was the hardest thing to do.

In a world where everything hinged on the ability to see color, a gift she'd already been given, Rey had been stubbornly unaware that he'd been there beside her all along, dressing from head to toe in the most eye-catching combinations she could with the hopes that - when her soulmate *did* come along - they wouldn't be able to miss her. Except he had come along, and he didn't miss her. Not for a single second.

If she really thought about it, the connection was as clear as could be, way back on that night when they'd been dragged along on Tage and Rose's first date...when he'd hopped over theater seats to be beside her, and they'd ended up at what was possibly the most colorful place in all of London.

That night, she'd wondered if Ben was bound to illuminate her world and make it more colorful than it had already been, but with her fresh perspective and the surge of love in her heart, Rey knew that it was true. He really had.

# Over the Rainbow

## Chapter Summary

"*You...you and all your colors. It's something I've always loved about you. From then...to now,*" his eyes were glued to hers as his silver cufflinks dropped from his fingertips with a quiet clink on the floor, shifting to the long line of her throat for an instant before rising back up as he began to roll his sleeves to his elbows, "You're a masterpiece, Rey. A *symphony* of color. Do you have any idea how much color you bring to my life?"

## Chapter Notes

We are getting so close to the end...will poetry cut it?  
Why share a clue, when I have this bit of wit?



[View post on imgur.com](#)

A couple of hours later, after a few too many glasses of champagne and a dizzying amount of dancing, Rey and Ben slowly plodded up the stairs, long after they'd finally sent the bride and groom on their way, nestled in the backseat of a vintage Rolls Royce.

Rey slipped the keys from his long fingers as he pulled them from his pocket, leaning into his touch as he stepped up behind her and slowly peppered the curve of her shoulder with delicate kisses as she opened the door.

They wobbled into the suite, shifting from side to side to get through the door, both of them unwilling and unable to separate one from the other after a night of wayward glances and dancing that was so much more than what mere *friends* would do.

The door snapped shut with a *thud* and an assist from the heel of Ben's polished, black brogues, leaving them finally, delightfully alone.

She shivered with a breathy sigh as the tip of Ben's thumb ran the length of her spine to the base of her throat, sending an electrifying shiver down to her toes when he curled his long fingers over the curve of her shoulder and swept her hair over the opposite side.

With the tip of his nose, Ben leaned nose and traced the curve of her bare shoulder, around her ear, and stopped to kiss and gingerly nibble the tender flesh at the base. Her breath caught in her throat when he slowly pressed a heated kiss against her soul mark, again and again until he came back to whisper in her ear with a hungry growl.

“This is mine. As mine is yours. *Forever.*”

Rey turned in his arms, bending up on the tips of her rainbow-hued stilettos to brush her lips against his...then the edge of his jaw, delighting in the strangled groan that came from him as she tenderly sucked on the lobe of his ear, whispering a challenge before slowly pulling away to look into his eyes.

“Show me.”

A slow, coquettish smile curled up at the edges of her mouth, surely summoning the dimple that lived there as she reached behind her and unzipped her gown at an achingly slow pace. Her eyes were locked onto Ben's scorching gaze with a shiver, stepping further away with every gained inch of her exposed back.

Ben watched her every move, standing perfectly still like a hunter stalking his prey, with only the tiniest flickers of ravenous hunger and heat crossing his face as his eyes roved over her body. His scorching gaze only spurred her on to go slower, to elongate the moment of their coming together in the way that was, quite literally, meant to be.

Rey's body felt like a livewire, set to blow with the slightest of touches. Even her own fingertips on

her skin sent a tantalizing shiver down her arms as she reached up and slowly slipped the black fabric from her shoulders. She could feel his gaze burning into her as the gossamer material slid down the golden skin of her toned torso and past her hips to land in a heap at her feet.

Ben took a solid step forward, his plush mouth hanging open and his fingers twitched to reach out and touch her, but Rey held up a hand with a quiet click of her tongue.

“*Patience,*” she cooed, stepping from the center of her dress on the floor to move backward another step, slowly running her tongue over the seam of her mouth as she held his gaze, “We’ve waited this long, haven’t we? That proves that...”

“That proves what?” Ben rumbled, lowering his head as his eyes darkened with his desire with a slow tug on his bowtie.

“*Good things come to those who wait,*” she purred, hooking her thumbs into the band of her strapless bra, eager to move on, but unable to keep herself from elongating the moment...just a little longer.

She wanted to remember the look in his eye forever, to memorize the electrifying buzz in the air and carefully catalog every delectable second.

With a flick of her thumb, the elasticity of the band came free, and Rey let out a quiet whimper when she dipped her palms over the peak of her breasts, caught up in the way Ben looked at her as she slowly stripped away every layer.

Rey could feel the charge in the air, and Ben’s need to erase the distance between them, but couldn’t help but linger in the power she felt but holding him on a tether, reeling him in slowly, unwilling to rush a single moment.

She was oddly aware of the frantic beating of her heart and the way she held her breath as her soulmate took another step forward, making her fully cognizant of his impatience - and his *need* to be with her. To touch her. To taste her.

“I should have done this sooner,” Rey hummed, hooking her thumbs in the waistband of her panties, twining the fabric around them to force it to dip and offer a glimpse of what was waiting below.

“I wanted to do that,” Ben muttered with a pull of his fingers on the end of his sleeve, practically ripping away the luxurious, black wool before tossing it over his shoulder. Rey’s lips parted softly as he reached up and began to undo each button, taking his own turn to tease her, to make her want him more.

“What, this?” Rey slowly turned away from him and gingerly pushed the silkiness of her green thong over the curve of her ass, guiding them down the length of her legs to her feet. She chanced a peek of her would-be lover from behind her calves, smiling to herself with a quiet giggle at the wonton look upon Ben’s face. With a salacious bend of her body, Rey brought herself back to stand, turning slowly before bending to perch her bare ass on the curve of the clawfoot tub they’d been in the night before, “If I had known that it would have been as easy as kissing you *in here*, I would have interrupted a post-workout shower a *long* time ago.”

“*Woman*, I swear to God,” Ben growled, tugging his pleated tuxedo shirt open before reaching to undo the cufflinks at his wrist, “You’re testing my patience. Do you have *any* idea how badly I want to touch you right now? How badly I’ve *always* wanted to touch you?”

“H-how long?” Rey sighed with a shiver as Ben slowly stalked towards her with a single, sure-footed step at a time.

“From the first moment I saw you at that movie theater. *You...* you and all your colors. It’s something I’ve always loved about you. From then... *to now*,” his eyes were glued to hers as his silver cufflinks dropped from his fingertips with a quiet *clink* on the floor, shifting to the long line of her throat for an instant before rising back up as he began to roll his sleeves to his elbows, “You’re a masterpiece, Rey. A *symphony* of color. Do you have any idea how much color you bring to my life?”

“I...I tried to make sure my soulmate would notice,” she whispered as he continued to erase the space between them at a painstakingly slow pace, lifting her eyes as he drew closer and stopped just a breath away.

“*I noticed*, Rey. I always noticed. Gods...I wish...I wish so many things, but all I can think about is kissing you.”

“Then why don’t you?” Rey murmured, but was barely allowed a moment to let her words echo around the room before Ben took her face in his hands and pulled a moan from her lips with a salacious kiss.

Rey melted against him, her lips parting as she reached up to twine her fingers in his hair,

devouring the groan that fell from his mouth. His hands roved across the toned muscle of her back, pulling her flush against his chest as his mouth began to wander, mapping out the golden expanse of freckled flesh between her throat and her shoulder.

Every inch of her skin buzzed with the tantalizing feeling of his hands skimming across her flesh, pliable and wholly willing to bend to his every whim as he slowly turned her and continued to sketch every bit of her with his scorching kisses.

Across the back of her throat and between her shoulders, Ben was thorough and meticulous in his exploration, leaving no portion of her uncharted. The heat of his hands danced over her torso, causing the slow, unfurling heat in her core to grow more heated by the second. She leaned against his chest with an encouraging press of his palm against her stomach, his fingers splayed out so wide and his touch so enticing, Rey felt like she was wrapped up in a blanket made of Ben Solo.

She let out a quiet titter when his fingers delved further down her belly as his mouth and tongue delved over the tender flesh of her throat, dipping his long fingers between her soaked folds to tentatively circle the tiny bundle of nerves at the height of her sex.

“Fuck, you’re so wet for me already. *So ready*,” he uttered with a gravelly groan, holding her firmly in his arms as her body began to quake and squirm from his dexterous touch, “I’ve dreamed about this moment for so long.”

“I’ve...I’ve thought about it too,” Rey whimpered, her words slurring into an airy whine.

“Did you touch yourself like this?” Ben pressed his nose to her ear, dipping a single finger into her wet cunt, “Did you think of me?”

When Rey could only answer him with another moan, Ben only delved further and pressed harder, drawing another series of delectable sounds from her lips.

“You know what I want. Say it.” he demanded with a slow knead of her pebbled nipple between the fingers on his free hand, “*Say it.*”

“*Yes,*” Rey answered with a breathless sob, rolling her head against his shoulder as her pleasure began to crest from Ben’s tireless ministrations. With the utterance of a single word on her part, Ben’s motions instantly stilled, causing her to cry out and buck her hips against his palm.

“ *Oh no*, my love. You can finish when you’ve answered me properly,” he tutted with a slow shake of his head, “ *Yes what?*”

“Yes...yes I thought of you,” she cried out, her voice tinged with a delicious desperation.

“ *Good girl*, ” Ben grinned, rewarding her with a slow suck and a nibble of the tender flesh at the apex between her shoulder and her throat. He resumed his handiwork, slowly delving in a second finger to join the first, pulling moan after moan from her lips, timed perfectly with each curl of his fingers inside her, “I’m going to keep making you make those pretty little noises for me. I could hear you, you know....through those thin walls...I could hear you come apart, and every time, I’d hoped it would be for me.”

“It is...I always... *god ...*” Rey lost all sense of her words as Ben carried her to the edge all over again, pushing her to her orgasm with a quick series of thrusts with his hand. Her body bucked and trembled as he rolled his thumb over her clit, pulling each delectable keened from her lips as she tumbled back down to earth.

With a breathless lick of her lips, Rey turned her head, and with her fingers coiled tightly in his hair, pulled Ben to her lips, delving her tongue hungrily into his mouth to tangle with his. He answered her with a growl and bent down to hook his hands beneath the curve of her ass to hoist her into the air.

Rey reached between them, never straying from their heated kiss for a second, and frantically yanked open the buckle of his belt, scrambling for the button and the zipper as he blindly stumbled towards the sprawling four-poster bed that was the centerpiece of the room.

With a jingle of his belt buckle and a triumphant giggle from Rey, she shoved his trousers down. Ben, unwavering in the way he kissed her, a furious clash of tongues and teeth, stepped free of them, toeing off his shoes in the process, only to stumble from his stubborn persistence to keep kissing her.

They landed in a heap of laughter, bouncing softly on the mattress. Rey looked up at him, surrounded by an ethereal halo of moonlight that streamed in through the milky glass of the windows as his dark hair hung down around his beautiful face.

In an instant, with his staring down at her with the warm flecks of amber in his dark eyes, Rey was overwhelmed by her love for him, unable to comprehend just how thankful she was for him at that moment.

With the tips of her fingers and the gentlest touch, Rey reached up and brushed the dark hair from his face, offering a hint of a smile as she let her touch linger on his face before tilting her chin to meet him for a kiss. They lingered there, lost in the moment.

Before him, Rey had only ever thought she'd loved on the surface. But with Ben, things were different with him. He was some holy combination of everything that was right for her, unique in all the world - like a pair of puzzle pieces shaped from the same block of clay. The joy in her heart was overwhelming and terrifying at the same time. She'd gotten used to living without her soulmate, she'd never thought of finding him as anything truly tangible or real. Any form of eternity was like a far-off dream to her, but now, with him in her arms, Rey was terrified of letting him go.

Ben met her with a smile of his own, leaning down to lean his forehead against hers, aligning their noses as he let out a trembling breath.

*"I love you,"* he breathed, lifting himself onto his arms so he could better glimpse the face of his soulmate, "Forever. And in our next life, I know I'll love you just as much, if not more."

"You think that we will? I've heard stories..." Rey sighed with a crease in her brow, unable to remember a time before now. Surely, with a man like Ben Solo, she would?

"Rey Kestis," Ben looked down at her sternly with the hint of a smile hovering in the corner of his mouth, "I would know your face whether it was my second life or my hundredth. No matter where I am. Where we are. What we are doing. I'd know."

"Liar," Rey giggled playfully, tugging at her bottom lip, her smile melting away when Ben's face grew somber.

"I never lied to you."

"Okay," she whispered with a nod, letting her lashes flutter closed when he leaned down to press a soft kiss to her lips.

It was easy to get caught up where they had been before, a flurry of limbs and lips, as Ben continued his exploration of her body, leaving a trail of molten kisses and delicate nips and sucks over every freckle that dusted her body.



They bent around each other, twisting and rolling like elegant acrobats, twining themselves together as they found the brand new rhythm of *them*.

When Rey grew too impatient of Ben's careful and seductive study of her body - how her body moved beneath his hands, and under his mouth - she let him gather him up in his arms, and settle in for what they both so desperately craved.

Ben was so close, so warm, and *so right*, with her wrapped up in his arms, painted by shards of moonlight as she settled her knees on either side of him. He held her firmly, holding her gaze as he posed a silent question, one that she answered wholeheartedly with a searing kiss as she slowly lowered herself and took him inside her.

She let out a quiet gasp, fingertips trembling as she held onto his broad shoulders as her body adjusted to the feeling of being *so full*. Her lover - *her soulmate* - reached out and took her face in the palm of his hand, drawing her in for a deep kiss, skirting the tip of his tongue of the seam of her mouth with a low groan as she tentatively rolled her hips.

Ben tucked his forehead in the curve of her shoulder, holding firmly to her waist as she moved again...and again, increasing her pace until they settled into something between a passionate frenzy, and slow exploration. Rey wasn't alone in wanting to remember every moment, to linger in the feeling, even though she was sure they recreate it a hundred thousand times, and maybe more.

He met her thrust for delectable thrust, moving their bodies together in the way they were always meant to. Rousing a sense of pleasure that Rey wasn't ever sure ever existed. With every slow piston of his cock, Ben moved his mouth over every bit of her he could reach.

With his long fingers coiled in her chestnut hair, he gave her a gentle tug, summoning a breathless whimper from her lips as he gave himself access to the long column of her throat. Peppering it with kisses and delicate nips, basking in the taste of her as they chased the culmination of their pleasure - *together*.

Unable to resist touching him for long, Rey carded the ribbons of thick, ebony curls through her fingers, pulling his gaze to meet hers as her orgasm coiled up tightly in her belly, growing tighter and tighter with each salacious movement until - with her hazel eyes wrapped up in warm brandy - she fell apart at the seams with a mournful keen. Ben swiftly followed with a series of deep grunts and low groan, his shoulders trembling as he buried his face in her shoulder.

When they finally stilled, glistening and momentarily spent, they fell back onto the plush, purple bedspread. Rey smiled softly, twining a lock of his hair around her finger, only to have her hand

captured by his to press a lingering kiss to her palm.

He lifted his eyes to meet hers and Rey felt it again, that same swell of love and warm ache in her heart. Somehow, wrapped up in his love, Rey knew that her life would never be the same again.

They didn't stay that way for long.

After sneaking down in the middle of the night to the kitchens for a snack and a shared slice of wedding cake, they lost themselves to each other all over again...and again after that. They watched the moonlight fade away and the slow rise of the sun in golden hues of delicate golds and blues. There were moments during their endless night of shared happiness that Rey wondered if they felt more like newlyweds than the actual newlyweds themselves.

She wished that she could slow down the time and linger there in the Welsh stone manor, hiding in their suite, away from prying eyes where they could get to know each other on a whole new level, but eventually, their hours-long marathon had to come to an end, as London was calling, and there was no time left to waste before they had to get on the road.

His hand was so warm and *so right*, wrapped around hers as they drove down the dark, country road on the long drive back to London. Music played softly through the stereo, and Ben hummed quietly as he skimmed the pad of his thumb over her knuckles, keeping a vigilant eye on the road along the way.

Nestled into the camel-colored leather of the passenger seat, Rey watched as they rolled over each kilometer of the smooth, black river of asphalt. The Ranger Rover went along at a steady pace, and the darkness had an almost meditative quality to it, with the occasional stone wall and green pasture lit by the bright LEDs on their front, igniting the hues of the trees than lined the narrow country lane as they passed by.

"I have some leave coming up...we should do something. Go on holiday...just us," Rey looked to him with a smile, watching with that same flutter in her heart as the muted light from the dash lit the contours of his handsome face, and the creases around his mouth as the hint of a smile curled up from the corners.

"On holiday, huh? What shall we do?" Ben mused with a slow squeeze of her hand.

"I dunno...Paris, maybe? I don't care, as long as I am with you," Rey watched as Ben shifted his

gaze to meet hers for a split second before turning back to the road, pulling his hand from her grip to reach into his jeans pocket.

“I have an idea of what we could do,” he murmured, curling his hand around hers to turn her palm skyward and place a small object inside, “What we *should* do.”

Rey turned it over in her hand, squinting in the relative darkness of the cab as she ran her thumb over it in a circle. Pinching it between her fingers, she held it up to the light and let out a quiet gasp when a brilliant stone caught what little it could and sent it glittering across every inch of the car’s interior.

“ *Ben...* ”

“Marry me,” he turned his eyes away from the hold to hold her gaze, with an excited and expectant gleam in his dark eyes.

“But...we only just...” Rey stuttered, playfully slipping it on the third finger of her left hand and holding it aloft. *Of course* , it fit perfectly, “Where did you get this? Have you just...been carrying around an engagement ring?”

“So what if I have?” Ben retorted with a barking laugh at the surprised look on her face before he became deadly serious and anxiously carded his fingers through his hair, “My mom gave it to me a couple days ago...Gods, it was like she *knew* .”

“It would have been nice for her to fill us in,” Rey drawled before letting out a quiet sigh, tracing the edge of the emerald cut diamond at the center of the art deco beauty, “We can just get married at the drop of a hat. Isn’t there some sort of...dating requirement?”

“A dating requirement? Rey...we’ve lived together for years. Know each other better than anyone else on this earth. You’re my soulmate and *I love you*. I don’t want to spend another second without you...don’t you think we’ve wasted enough time?”

Rey opened her mouth to speak, awash with a sudden blanket of goosebumps that crawled up her arms. She wanted to argue. She wanted to tell him that it was too soon, but as Ben had said during his speech - when it came to choosing the person you want to spend the rest of your life with, the weight of the decision was something of great importance. And there was no one more important to her than Ben Solo. They’d gone their whole lives searching for the impossible and had found

each other...so what else was there to do but say yes? After all, the simplest choice was often the right one.

With a whisper so soft, Rey wasn't sure if even she could hear her answer, but with her eyes on Ben's face, he turned to meet her gaze with a bright gleam in his eye, gently chewing on his lip as he reached out to twine his fingers with hers.

Time slowed down in an instant as Rey slowly blinked in the darkness, her lips parting with a brilliant smile and her answer. Resolute and unwavering, until a sudden flash of light lit his beautiful face as his attention went back to the winding curves of the dark, country road. His mouth fell open and brows creased together as he jerked the wheel to avoid the oncoming car.

# Forever

## Chapter Summary

She held his gaze with her hands for a moment, softly brushing at the strands of raven hair that hung around his ears, looking upon him like he was something precious - something to be savored. Her eyes shifted to his lips for a moment, carrying the whisper of the promise of his name on her own as she leaned forward and pressed her lips to his.

## Chapter Notes



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

The world bent around her, moving in slow motion as her body floated from her seat, straining against her seatbelt as the Range Rover skid along its nose. Her arms sailed above her head, and she was surrounded by a glittering wave of broken glass that pierced the tender flesh on her cheeks. She searched for something to hold on to, blindly reaching for Ben as their car careened head over feet in a cacophony of shattering glasses and screeching metal against concrete, as easily as a stone skipping over the smooth surface of a lake.

Rey could feel every brutal movement as it happened, unfolding over a series of never-ending seconds. The taste of blood coated her mouth, coppery and metallic, as she gritted her teeth and

waited for it all to stop, wishing for a moment that she could just fall asleep and rid herself of the sound of mangled steel and wet pavement.

All at once, in flashes of light and a painful blow of her body against the side of her crumpled door, everything came to a sudden halt, and they were left with an eerie silence as pieces of her rainbow-hued clothing fluttered down around them. They floated gently on the wind, like leaves in autumn, with only the gentle *pitter-patter* of rain against mutilated steel to cut through the hushed quiet.

Rey let out a groan, squeezing her eyes shut and reaching for her seatbelt to free her from her seat. Each movement was agony and her entire body screamed as she shifted, her hands trembling as she opened her eyes, blinking past blood-soaked lashes to try and get her bearings.

They'd blessedly landed back on their wheels - or what was left of them - but the ceiling had collapsed from the force of each twist of their car across the narrow country road, making the interior far more cramped than it was before. Her heart raced, fighting against every movement.

With a series of rapid blinks in the darkness, her vision adjusted and suddenly, everything came into a sharp, devastating focus.

Ben was slumped back into his seat, deathly still with a collection of tiny cuts that marred the alabaster skin on his face. Rey fought against her body, pushing over the center console to reach out with two fingers and a gentle touch to press them against the base of his throat. Her breath came in sharp, painful bursts as she frantically waited for a sign that he was still there, letting out a choked sob when she felt the faint pulsing of his heartbeat against her fingers.

"*Ben,*" she sobbed, hovering her hands over his body, brushing them softly against the soft fabric of his black sweater, now ripped from the fury of flying glass, praying that the pulse she felt wasn't just her own, but so afraid to touch him - yet desperate to hear him speak. *Something* that would tell her that he was alright.

Palms pressed to his chest, Rey silently prayed to anyone who would listen as her tears slipped down her cheeks, stinging sharply in the series of tiny cuts whose presence she was sure would linger on her face as long as she lived.

A low moan pulled her from her reverent pleas, summoning a strangled sob from her throat when she looked up and saw the parting of dark lashes over amber-colored eyes.

“ Ow...”

“Oh gods... *Ben...* ” Rey cried out, clapping her hands over her mouth with a tremble of her chin as a relieved huff of laughter threatened to break free, “Stars, I was so scared. Are you...how do you feel?”

She hovered over him again, filled with a desperate need to cover him in kisses and whisk them back to the night before, where things had been so much simpler. His brows puckered with a grimace when he tried to move in his seat, lifting his head from the headrest to survey what was left of his car.

“Fuck...” he growled, reaching up to press his fingers to his temple, “That is not how I thought this day was gonna go...I’m fine...just bruised, I’ll be okay, kid. What...what about you?”

Ben reached for her, gently skimming his thumb over her cheek with a groan.

“I’m...I’m good. Shook up, but fine.”

“I’m so sorry, Rey. I didn’t mean...” Ben floundered, searching suddenly in the nooks and crannies of the broken remains of the vehicle, knocking bits of glass out of the way as he frantically dug, “The ring...where? My phone...Rey... we gotta call someone. Call for help.”

“Ben, stop,” Rey stilled him with her hands over his own, cupping the curve of his face between her palms to halt his frenetic behavior, “Calm down. It’s going to be okay...it’s best if you stay still.”

He slowed his erratic movements, shifting his focus to hers with a slow nod, curling his hands around hers to pull her left hand from his cheek, rolling it between his to look down upon the diamond on her third finger that had made it through the accident unscathed.

“Is this a yes?”

Rey moved forward, sliding onto the center console to get closer to him, grasping his hands between her to press a rushed kiss against the rough skin on his knuckles.

“Yes. Forever,” Rey nodded with a tearful smile, grateful that her own, broken body allowed her to close some of the distance between them. His dark eyes shone with tears as they darted back and forth between hers, exhaling softly as the corners of his mouth curved up into the tiniest smile.

She held his gaze with her hands for a moment, softly brushing at the strands of raven hair that hung around his ears, looking upon him like he was something precious - something to be savored. Her eyes shifted to his lips for a moment, carrying the whisper of the promise of his name on her own as she leaned forward and pressed her lips to his.

Lingering for a moment, Rey reluctantly pulled away, relishing in the feeling of his hands against her back as her fingertips lingered on the side of his face. Ben let out a quiet huff with a broad smile, blinking softly in the muted moonlight. It was almost romantic, with the quiet of their breathing and the gentle patter of rain on the roof - just the two of them, still basking in the revelation that they’d found each other after a lifetime of being apart.

Their smiles only grew when, on a distant rush of wind through the midnight rain shower, the sounds of sirens echoed through the night.

Ben’s faltered with a quiet sigh, blinking slower and slower until his dark eyes slipped closed and his head slumped back against the leather seat.

Rey’s breath caught in her chest with a sob, scrambling to bring him back to consciousness with a series of desperate whispers, pleading with him to come back as she tugged at his shirt.

“Ben... *Ben...* wake up. Help is coming. They’re so close, you hold on.... *please stay with me* . You have to stay awake,” her voice cracked with each despondent word that only grew more inconsolable when she pulled her hands away from his face.

Rey looked down in horror at the palms of her hands, scarlet and sticky from the blood that had been slowly seeping from his ears. She let out an anguished cry, suddenly awash with an exquisite rush of pain and fear of loss that she never would have been able to fathom before.

He wasn’t gone. She could still see. She frantically reached out and felt for his pulse at the base of his throat like she’d done before, but with the way her own heart screamed in her ears, she was less sure that the pulsating beneath was his and not her own.

Rey lifted her eyes, turning her body to peer through the shattered remains of the windshield and



felt a bright surge of hope when the sight of flashing red and blue lights crest the peak of a hill a kilometer away.

“Ben, they’re coming. Help is here...please just... *hold on ...*” she fisted the fabric of his sweater, pulling herself flush with him, clutching his face between her hands to press another distraught kiss to his lips, hoping that - if she held him tighter and filled him with her love - then he’d stay tethered to their world a little longer. Just a little longer.

The lights grew closer, filling the broken interior with bright beams of color until - in the blink of an eye - her world shifted to grey.

A cry tumbled from her lips, broken and despondent, more than mere tears. It was the kind of desolate sob that came from a woman deprived of all hope, tearing at his body while paramedics swarmed the car, pulling her away from his side - where she belonged. They murmured to her, saying things she couldn’t hear beyond the blinding, searing pain she felt in her soul.

Even as she fought tooth and nail to get back to him, desperate not to lose sight of him and convince herself that there was still color in her world - that he was still in her world - the paramedics managed to wrap her neck in a stiff brace and pull her from the wreckage onto a backboard.

Her gasping wails rang out into the deadly quiet of the night air, and her tears stung against her flesh as they mixed in with the gentle patter of the rain. She was so despondent, that not even a kind-hearted paramedic could quiet the grief in her heart and the void he’d left there.

Hovering over the top of her as her body gently swayed from side to side with the ambulance as they drove in a whirlwind to the nearest hospital, the paramedic gave her a tempered smile as he peered in both of her eyes with a flashlight he’d pulled from his breast pocket. His hands moved in a flurry, taking her vitals and piecing together a gash in her arm with a few butterfly bandages and a firmly wrapped piece of gauze.

Soon after, with his dark eyes hovering close to hers and a calming gaze, he murmured softly, “It’s okay. Take a breath... *calm down*, or I’ll have to sedate you, and I really don’t want to do that,” Rey slowed her frantic attempts to be free from the gurney, worried that he’d act on the kindest threat she’d ever heard in her life. When she listened, his eyes crinkled at the edges as he reached out with his gloved hands and turned on the flow on the green oxygen tank beside her, “My name is Poe, we’re gonna get you taken care of, okay?”

Rey, her body hurting in more ways than one, looked to the proffered oxygen masked in his hand,

blinked slowly as he lowered it to her face. He gently tucked the strap behind her head, watching her with an encouraging nod as she sucked in a trembling breath.

Her grief settled for a moment, giving way to the numb that followed soon after. It was a funny thing, something she'd never really experienced before, but it went so surprisingly well with *The Grey*.

It didn't stop her from wishing for *The Glimpse* to return to her, to wash her in a blinding array of colors, cleanse her of what happened, and restore her life to the way it had been that very morning.

She was rushed through a pair of sliding doors and saw another flurry of faces around her and a chattering of medical talk - *Lacerations to the face, neck, and arms. Possible contusion to the frontal lobe. Blunt force trauma to the chest.*

Rey resigned herself to the hustle and bustle, too exhausted to fight any longer, not with grey being the only thing she could see. She moved from room to room, was transferred from the backboard she'd been strapped to upon her extrication from the mangled remains of a Range Rover, and cut out of her clothes.

A series of rectangular lights went by in a blur over her head, passing by one by one as she was moved from place to place, each place offering restrained smiles as they fixed her up in stages. All of it was a blur, softened by the morphine they'd dosed her with once they'd reached the hospital. She was grateful to them all, truly, but part of her wished she was still in that car, wasting away so that she might be able to go with him.

Hours went by, and Rey finally found herself in the quiet of her own room, and with the help of the medication that dulled all her senses and washed away all of her pain - the physical kind, anyway - she finally drifted to sleep.

She found him there, in the most vivid color she remembered to be. Dream Ben didn't speak, but Rey could feel his love reverberating through her with every movement of his hands against her skin and press of his lips against hers.

They danced together like they'd done the night before, swaying from side-to-side until the sun came up, when they'd retire to their bedroom and dance all over again.

Things would shift, and she'd find herself in their flat, sitting on the kitchen counter with him by

her side, sipping a hot cup of tea from her hands as he drank from a strong cup of coffee - something they'd done a thousands times before. It was so real and the smell of the coffee so fragrant, Rey swore it could have been - until things shifted again.

Only, her mind didn't show her the past. Instead, it gave her a glimpse of what could have been. A family painted in the most glorious technicolor. She sat in long, green grasses, gently skimming the palm of her hand over the swell of her belly as she looked on to see Ben with a black-haired little boy who reached up with tiny, wriggling hands to be held by his father.

Ben looked to her, every inch of the man she knew, only, he was just a hair different than how she'd remembered him. His hair was longer, somehow, floating on the gentle wind as the three of them walked hand-in-hand towards the shore of an emerald green lake, and he bore a jagged scar down the length of his cheek that Rey couldn't place if he'd ever had or not.

Rey looked to him - to dream Ben - with a smile, feeling that all-too-familiar surge of love in her heart as he took her hand in his and whispered her name.

*"Rey..."*

The steady, digital beep seeped into her dreams, announcing the slow, steady beat of her heart. She let out a quiet sigh, scrunching her brows with a quiet groan when her ears focused in on the distant sound of quiet conversations happening in the hall and the occasional alarm blaring out from two rooms down.

A gentle squeeze of her hand, so welcoming and warm, stirred her heart in a way that she could hear on the monitor, and she thought - just for a moment, with the colors of her dreams fresh in her mind - that things had happened differently than she remembered.

She let out a quiet sigh, turning her head against the softness of the pillow towards the hand that held hers so firmly, slowly opening her eyes to take in the figure who sat beside her bed.

*"Hey kiddo."*

Looking worn and worried beyond belief at her bedside, with his reading glasses perched on the end of his nose, was her father, Cal Kestis. His blue eyes, now grey to her, looked like he'd been awake half the night. He reached up and scrubbed his long fingers through what she knew to be a ginger beard, peppered with more white than red as he grew older, letting out a long sigh as he took

in the bruised and battered vision of his daughter in the hospital bed.

“*Dad...*” Rey croaked as a single tear slipped past her lashes. Cal gently gripped her IV-wrapped hand between his own, lifting it to press it to his cheek.

“They called me as soon as you got here, Starlight. You’re...thank god you’re okay. Your mom...she tried so hard to be here, my love,” he murmured, speaking of Merrin - Rey’s mother and his wife - while his own tears of relief began to fall.

“W-where am I?”

“Cardiff,” Cal sighed, his eyes searching her face, knowing she wanted, no, *needed* to know more, “The accident happened outside of Hensol. They thought it was best to bring you here.”

“And...what about Ben? Where’d they take him?” Rey pressed, sitting up with a quiet groan as the sound of her rapidly rising heartbeat beeped incessantly on the monitor. They increased as Cal looked at her, but stayed silent for a beat too long.

“They brought him here too.”

Rey’s heart lurched in her chest, reaching up to tear the oxygen from beneath her nose as she fought to rise from the bed.

“If Ben’s here, I have to see him. *I have to, Dad.*”

Cal grasped her by the shoulders, collecting her in his arms to gently shush her, stroking her hair softly, in the way only a father could for his daughter as he delivered the news she didn’t want to hear.

“You can’t see him, darling. None of us can. Not in this life, anyway.”

Her father’s words sunk in and Rey found herself eternally grateful for his arms around her as her knees went weak and crumpled out from beneath her.

A fresh course of grief pummeled her, crashing over her with wave after brutal wave like water on the rocky shore in a hurricane.

He held her as she cried, keeping her close with comforting whispers in her ear, like the times she'd fallen from her bicycle and skinned her knee as a kid. Only, she wasn't a kid, and the hurt was so much more than a scrape or a cut. She felt broken down to her soul, a piece of it torn away to leave a gaping hole behind that would never heal.

The tears did stop...for a time, at least.

Rey felt like a wet rag that had been rung out dry, with their last moments haunting her over and over, replaying in her mind like a distant echo on the wind. The promise of a life that would never come.

*I know now that...without a doubt...no matter who you are...what you're doing, or who you're with, I will always love you.*

Eventually, even though her heart still ached with a piercing pain that throbbed in her chest, the doctors decided that she was well enough to go home. With a trembling hand and a cheap ink pen, Rey signed her name on the line, looking to the doorway of her room, half-expecting him to stride through and cheekily apologize for being late with that same, lopsided smile she loved so dearly.

Wrapped up in an oversized pair of pajamas that Cal had brought her and a loose-fitting coat, Rey sat forlornly on the edge of her hospital bed, finding a momentary comfort in her newly acquired freedom from the tubes and wires she'd been wrapped up and trapped in for the last few days.

She absentmindedly picked at the black square on her hand, evidence of the medical tape that held her iv in place, when a soft knock rang out from the door.

Rey lifted her eyes, and with a series of slow blinks, she vaguely recalled the kind man smiling at her from the doorway. With a crease of her aching brow, she tried to remember him from the faces that flashed above her head, viewed through blood and tear-stained lashes.

"Hey," he murmured softly with a crinkle around the corners of his eyes with a tempered smile, waiting until Rey gave him a nod to welcome him into her space. When she met him with a

tentative lift of her mouth, unable to bring herself to smile the way she had before - not yet, anyway - he bent down and lifted a parcel into his arms.

Rey could recall the deep green of his uniform, all crisp lines, and square corners, with crimson epaulets with a blue Caduceus at the center. So many colors she'd seen so many times before on the paramedics across the country, but to her, it was merely grey.

However, she'd always remember the comforting hand in hers and the kind smile he gave her in her most desperate hour, no matter how badly she wished that it had turned out *any* other way.

"How are you feeling?" he inquired, holding the package firmly beneath his arm as he stepped towards her, motioning to the chair beside the bed, "Do you mind if I sit?"

"I'm...I would say I'm fine, but that's a lie," Rey whispered with a croak, her voice still raw from her tears.

"It's okay if you aren't. Part of you never will be," his smile faded away as he held her gaze for a beat before looking down to a shining wedding band on his left hand, "I've been where you are. I know how unfair it is...to have something so wonderful to have it be out of reach...it's...I don't wish it on anyone."

"You...you lost someone too?" Rey whispered, blinking back fresh tears that brimmed on the edges of her lashes.

"Three years ago. Plane crash...I was the pilot," he looked down again, anxiously tracing the inside of his lip with the tip of his tongue, and Rey knew in a split second that he was dealing with his own pain, "It changes you, there's no preventing it...losing *The Glimpse*."

"*Oh*," Rey breathed, chewing her lip to hold firmly to the trembling of her chin, "I'm sorry."

"It gets better. It will, anyway," Poe continued on with a sigh, "Sometimes it'll feel like you want to join them...but if you push through to find what's on the other side of your grief...I...sometimes I still feel him...and when I do... *I see it*."

"You do?" Rey's eyes came up in a flash to look upon the wistful smile beneath the shadow of a beard on his square jaw.

“*Yeah,*” he nodded, “Just a little bit, like a gift. And...I know that he’s not gone. Your soulmate can’t just disappear. You might move on in other ways, but...when it comes down to it, I know that he’ll be there waiting for me. I can feel it.”

The thought overwhelmed her, sending silvery beads of hot tears trickling down her cheeks to land in soft *pitter-patters* on her hand. It was paralyzing to think of even going back to their apartment. Being amongst his things, his smell, *his bed* ...it was too much to fathom while still sitting in a hospital, still broken and bruised from the accident that had taken him from her. But, as she reached out and slowly traced the edges of the diamond on her left hand, Rey wondered what kind of life was next for them.

“I brought you something,” Poe’s hand on hers stilled her movements, bringing her attention to the parcel he’d brought in with him. Her breath caught in her throat, watching while he pulled a bundle of dark fabric from the bag. He gingerly placing it in her hands, summoning a quiet sob from her lips as she brushed her hands over the gossamer fabric of the black weave.

Rey clapped her fingers over her mouth to stifle a cry, tasting the salt of her tears on her dry, cracked lips as she traced a jagged line of fine stitches and the way the dark fabric puckered down the center.

Slowly dragging the tips of her fingers away, Rey sucked in a trembling breath, slowly lifting the fabric of Ben’s sweater to her face with a muffled cry.

“I thought for sure they would have thrown it away,” she whispered, pulling the garment to her chest as she looked to Poe.

“They usually do, but I...I thought you’d want to have it. Not as a reminder of what happened...but of what was,” Poe gave her hand a squeeze, “They only had red thread and I’m shit at sewing...but...”

“It’s beautiful,” Rey sniffed, fisting the fabric to feel it between her fingers. Poe had said that the thread he’d used was red, and as she brushed her hands over the top of the scar that ran down the center of the sweater, she wished for a fleeting moment that she could see the striking difference between the two - the deep ebony and bright crimson, but she couldn’t, so it didn’t matter. Not anymore. But she was grateful for it all the same.

Poe didn’t linger for much longer, quickly disappearing with a warm shake of her hand when her

dad returned to drive her home to London.

Rey sat in the passenger seat, twining a cord on the end of her jacket round and round her finger, uncoiling to do it all over again with a shaky sigh. She had been anxious to get back into a car after what had happened, but, once the initial fear had faded away, she was left with the same, painful ache she was convinced would never fade away.

“Do you want me to come with you, Starlight?” Cal pressed when he pulled up to the edge of the curb, reaching out to take her hand as she looked up at the windows of their flat on the second floor.

“No,” Rey breathed, watching as the glass fogged from the uttering of such a simple word, “I think it’s best if I do this on my own.”

“Okay,” her father leaned over the center console and took his daughter in his arms, holding her in the the loving, lingering embrace before letting her free to step out onto the sidewalk, “Call me if you need me.”

“I will,” Rey nodded, holding the bundle of the black fabric to her chest, lifting her hand to wave farewell as what once appeared as a bright, cobalt blue car, drove down the block.

As he turned the corner, she stepped up to the stoop, stepped into the lobby, and made her way upstairs. The closer she came to their door, the heavier her feet became, trudging from one stair to the other like they weighed a thousand pounds each.

Turning the corner, her heart lurched when the door - their door - came into view, and Rey found herself suddenly regretful that she hadn’t asked Cal to stay. She reached into her bag that they’d recovered from the scene, and fished out her keys from the bottom. With a deep breath to steady her shaking hand, Rey turned the key with a *click* and opened the door.

Shutting the door behind her with a perfunctory *thud*, that felt like she was closing the door on the chapter of her life - the one with Ben in it. Rey choked back a sob as she looked over the once-colorful rooms of their shared flat. Her bag fell to the floor and she did the only thing she could think of.

Rey toed off her shoes, a plain pair of Keds handed to her by a nurse, leaving them in a heap by the door as she she stripped herself of the ill-fitting pajamas that hung loosely from her hips and still



smelled like a fucking hospital - all bleach and iodine, more sterile than she could stand. And if the sight of the colors she once loved so much was taken from her in her own home, there was no way she was going to go another second wrapped up in something that reminded her of how it had been robbed from her in the first place.

Clothes strewn to the floor, Rey stumbled over her heavy feet and unwrapped the warm knit from her arms and pulled it over her head. Her legs threatened to give out with each weighted step, dragging her toes along the floor as she struggled to catch her breath until she finally collapsed under the weight of her grief.

The tears came, trailing hot, silvery streaks over the scratches and cuts that marred her skin. Rey knew that they were Ben, but they were for her too. She cried for the time they'd wasted. She cried for the time they'd lost. And she cried for the life she'd never get to have with him by her side.

Rey didn't know how long she laid there, curling her knees to her chest to hold herself so firmly that, perhaps, maybe she wouldn't fall to pieces, but nothing could stop the torrent that threatened to drown her from the inside out.

The tears came in waves. First those for him and the uncontrollable grief that poured from the gaping wound in her soul. Something she was sure would fester over time if she wasn't careful, but as she sat with his sweater draped over her broken body, her grief was all she had.

Before she'd left the hospital, they'd handed her a paper bag of his worldly goods, as if she was a lucky girl to have so much leftover. Even though they were merely a handful of little things, they weighed her down and she couldn't bring herself to open it and see what was inside.

She'd managed to pick herself up from the floor as the well of her tears ran dry, surely to be replenished again before the day was through, and resigned herself to slowly pacing back and forth through the kitchen, desperate for something to ease her pain.

It wasn't as simple as taking pain medication to dull it away or taking a hit of something stronger to blur the edges of her reality. What were you supposed to take for something that had no cure?

After a time and a handful of sleepless nights and unanswered texts and phone calls from Rose, Tage...and eventually Leia asking her to attend his funeral in the States, Rey dragged herself from his bed where she'd stayed wrapped up in his smell and managed to turn on the kettle and look at her phone long enough to read a text from her dad.

<Checking in. We're worried about you. Spoke to Leia and we think it's a good idea if you go. Mum or I can go with you if you'd like, so you're not alone...but I think you'd regret it if you don't.>

Her chin trembled as she shakily typed out a reply, worried that if she didn't, eventually her mother would show up on her doorstep.

While she waited for the kettle to come to a boil, Rey eyes the parcel with Ben's things inside and, with an anxious swallow, she reached out and gingerly opened the seam at the top.

First, she pulled free his watch. Dark and elegant, like him, with a black, leather band, a black face with a gleaming crystal crown with a golden pair of wings on either side of an elegant, scrolling B at the top below the twelve.

Without a second thought, she wrapped it around her wrist, reveling in the weight of it and the way the face took up all the space on her narrow wrist. With her free hand, she slowly circled the rim of the crown, smiling softly as she remembered how often he wore it...and the first time he had.

She fished around in the bag again, finding the shattered remains of his cellphone and his car keys - ones that were obsolete now - before pulling out his thin, leather wallet. Slowly opening it, she let out a quiet sigh when she looked over his face on his driver's license - as cross as could be - and his name printed on every plastic card. In her hands, she literally held his identity. She wore his clothes and slept in his bed...and his shoes were still by the door...with so much of him left behind, how could it be that he was really, truly gone?

The idea was unfathomable to her and the reminder of it came in the sharpest waves, just when she thought for sure she was feeling better.

Rey cocked her head to the side as she opened the long edge of the billfold, puckering her brow when she pulled out a small photograph from inside. It had a worn crease down the middle, like it had been folded and unfolded five hundred times. The edges were soft to the touch as she slowly unfolded it, letting out a soft gasp when she saw her own face.

It had been the stupidest thing, something so silly and trivial that she thought for sure that Ben never would have kept it. Not in a million years. But the evidence in front of her suggested that, not only did he keep it...but he *treasured* it and looked upon it often.

The photograph tumbled from her hand as she let out a stuttering sob, fluttering the the floor at her feet. Her balance wavered for a moment until she stilled herself by laying her palms on the cool stone of the countertop.

With a few, deep breaths, Rey centered herself in the steady sound of her breathing. It was something in her control when the rest of her world felt like it was falling to pieces, drifting away like sand in the desert. With her eyes closed, she slowly counted each one, carrying herself on the calming wave it brought - until she opened her eyes and saw the glittering, emerald cut diamond on her left hand.

Part of her had almost forgotten it was there - and now she despised the damn thing. It was beautiful, it was true - and fit perfectly to boot - but it only served as a reminder of what was. What was stolen from them. What could have been...and the reason for his demise.

She thought back to their last conversation with a sob, remembering the look of thrilling hope on his face in the instant before their entire world turned upside down - changing everything forever.

*He wanted to marry her.*

It would be a lie to say she didn't want the same thing and didn't dream of the most heartbreaking moments, with her in a white dress and Ben waiting for her at the end of an aisle...but the more she thought about it, the more the guilt consumed her for what had happened.

Others would tell her it wasn't her fault...and maybe it wasn't. But the ring. *The fucking ring.* If he had just left it in his pocket and waited until they got home...what would be different? Would he be standing next to her, sipping his coffee as she steeped her tea, or would he be walking through the door, loosening his tie after an exhaustive long day, ready to relax on the couch with his best friend. *His soulmate.*

With a yell, Rey tore the delicate piece of jewelry from her finger and hurled it across the room with quiet *thunk* as it connected with the plaster wall on the other side of the sofa.

As soon as it had left her hand, Rey was filled with regret, crying out as she lunged into the other room, sinking to her knees to gather the jewelry up off the floor, slipping it back onto her finger as she shakily rose to stand.

Rey reached out with a trembling hand and slowly traced the brand-new, ring-sized scar on the

wall...the one she'd just put there with such a precious piece of them.

She sank down onto the couch, crossing her legs with a sniff, looking at the damage she'd done, even though it was small and surely insignificant to anyone else, the mark on the wall was more like the mark on her heart...the permanent one he'd put there. One she was sure would linger for as long as she lived, and so much longer after that.

With the back of her hand, Rey wiped away her tears, stopping to linger on the face of Ben's watch all over again, losing herself in an instant to the memory of the day she'd given it to him.

It had been Christmas morning, two years prior, their first after nearly two years as flatmates. The two were inseparable, practically joined at the hip, and there was probably no one else in the world who Rey loved more than Ben Solo.

Snow fell in soft, dreamy flakes outside their window, and Rey and spent most of the morning curled up in a bright crimson blanket made of the warmest wool. She had emerged from her cocoon to snag a small gift box from her underwear drawer before bounding back to the living room to slide in beside Ben who'd had his long nose stuck in a book.

"Here," she tossed the gift into his lap, grinning broadly when he snapped the novel shut and began to investigate the multicolored wrapping.

"What's this?"

"Bribery," Rey giggled, chewing on the inside of her lip, watching on bated breath as he slowly pulled on the end of the yellow ribbon.

"Bribery, huh? Bribery for what? Got a bad picture you don't want me to show anyone?" Ben mused with a playful lift of his brow and that same, lopsided smile she loved so much.

"This is me begging you not to make me watch Die Hard on Christmas ever again," Rey laughed with a nervous grimace.

"*Ouch.* You bite your tongue. John McClane is a national treasure," his mouth hung open in mock-hurt, pressing his fingers to his chest to make it more convincing, but all Rey could do was smile and wave him on.

“Not in this nation, Hotshot. Open it, already.”

“Did you drag the paper through a crayon factory? This is pushing it...even for you,” he teased, hooking his finger into the seam to rip it open. His smile faded away as he swiped his thumb over the gold B on top of the leather case, sighing softly when he cast her sidelong gaze, “Breitling...Rey...this is too much.”

“I really, *really* don’t want to watch Die Hard,” Rey leaned closer, anchoring her elbow against his shoulder as he opened the box with a creak.

Inside, with a black face, a luxurious leather band, and a glimmering crystal crown, was the watch he’d always talked about owning, but never was quite able to convince himself to buy. And tucked beneath it, was a folded up photograph of her. He pulled it out with a tug, letting out a quiet huff of laughter at the ridiculous face she was making in it.

“Okay, the picture is a joke, you *definitely* don’t have to keep that...but...I hope you like the watch,” Rey murmured with an anxious twirl of her chestnut hair around her finger.

“Oh, *I’m keeping it*, and I’ll put it in my wallet too. That was I always have you with me...and the watch too,” Ben reached out and wrapped his arm around her to pull her into a hug, murmuring in her hair, “I don’t know how I can ever thank you. It’s beautiful, kid.”

“Maybe you can get me a diamond ring if I don’t find my soulmate before I’m eighty,” Rey joked, leaning into him ever so softly to feel the warmth of his chest against her cheek.

“Yeah...maybe I will...you can count on it,” Ben whispered with a slow trail of his fingertips across her arm. He pressed a lingering kiss on her hair with a sigh, eager to hold her a little longer, “I like the sound of that, but I don’t think you need to worry.”

“Why’s that?”

“It’s gonna happen...I can’t explain it, but I can feel it. There’s something coming. Be it in this life or the next...I dunno about soulmates, kid. But I do know that I hope that we get to do this again.”

“Me too, Ben. In all the lives, I want to be right here...right by your side.”

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There was a strange tranquility to the cemetery as she passed through the north gate, losing herself to the steady rhythm of her boots against the gravel road. It had been over a year since it happened, and Rey was thankful for the peaceful quiet around her.

The sun shone down in bright shards, ones she knew to be vividly golden, but Rey didn't allow herself to be suffocated by the lack of color. She'd learned to do without as the time passed by, but with the memory of him, she'd learned to find it in other places.

It was the smell of autumn leaves on the wind and the way it kissed her face and ruffled her hair. It was in the subtle silence as the breeze rushed through the trees, a musical rustling of leaves across the ground, and the distant call of a flock of geese, riding that southern wind to a warmer place to roost for the coming winter.

And amongst it all, he was there.

She could feel him when the rain fell from the sky and caressed the freckles on her face. He was there in the brilliant, diamond glint on the snow. His embrace came with the wind, swirling softly around her to make her feel his love, and he was amongst the sweet, uplifting rush of birds circled in quiet flight.

At night, those nights when she was desperate to sleep, she'd imagine an ocean of stars twinkling above her - and he was there too.

She wasn't alone.

An overwhelming sense of clarity washed over her as she stepped over the grass, winding her way through each tombstone inscribed with loving words about the people who had been laid to rest all around her.

The last time she'd been there, with somber heads bowed over a grey floral arrangement over a casket as six strong men carried it from the back of a hearse, Rey had been wholly overwhelmed

and equally numb all at once. It was something that felt impossible, something of such magnitude that she couldn't bear to look at what was coming.

She'd closed her eyes as she squeezed her mother's hand, dwelling in the sound of rain against a sea of black umbrellas and the smattering of sniffles from those who'd come to bid him farewell.

Returning there had been a strange idea to her at first, but in the deepest part of her heart, it felt right to be there. To revisit the day and wash it from her soul and look towards the future was something she knew he'd want for her, and if he'd known how she'd dwelled in her grief in the months following his death, Rey knew that Ben Solo would have been the first one to pick her up and tell her to dust herself off and lift her eyes to the sky.

He'd tell her no one's ever really gone, and he would be right.

Rey shifted her bag on her shoulder, anxiously swallowing as she turned a corner and saw the word *Solo* come into view. A heavy weight settled on her shoulders, stirring a twinge in her heart as she stepped up in front of the headstone with a sigh. With one foot crossed over the other, she settled down on the grass, reaching into her pocket to fiddle with something between her fingers as she tried to summon the words.

Even after a year, even though Rey felt like she was finally feeling human again, her mourning still hadn't run its course, and being so close to what was left of him on Earth pulled a heaviness to her limbs that she didn't quite expect. Still, she'd come to see him, to tell him what was in her heart and seal up the story of *them*, turn the page, and create something new with his name permanently inscribed on her heart.

"Hey," she breathed, pulling her knees to her chest as her hands began to tremble, "I...I don't know where to start. I know...I know that I didn't need to come here for you to hear me, but there's just *something* about being here where you grew up that just, I don't know...makes me feel so much closer to you.

I'm...I wanted to let you know that I'm doing okay. There are...there are times when it's so hard to be without you, that I can barely breathe, but then...there's other times when I can *feel you*, and I don't feel so alone. That's been the hardest part. Being without you wasn't something I never wanted to do once we found each other again, and I never imagined that I'd be here doing this, but..."

Rey paused, fiddling with his watch on her wrist with a quiet sob as the tears began to well up in her eyes. She let them fall free as she rolled a smooth stone over and over in her hand, sucking in a

trembling breath as she pressed on.

“...I miss you so much. I miss you more than I could possibly begin to describe, and - *Ben* - I was so angry for so long. I was angry with everyone. I was angry with the car for crashing...I was angry at God for taking you away from me...I was angry with you for leaving behind and not taking you with me, but most of all...I was angry with myself for not seeing that it was you sooner. For not trying harder to find you before it was too late.

There's nothing more I think about as often as what we could have had. Of the time we wasted. Of how much I love you...and if there's anything waiting for us in the next life.

Sometimes it is so hard to believe that there is...that I would be given this gift all over again, but I swear, if I did...I wouldn't waste a second. Not one. Because every moment without you has been excruciating.

Gods, *I miss you*. I miss you so fucking much...but I promise that I am trying my best. I'm trying my best to be okay, because I know that, if you saw how I've been some of these times, you'd kick my ass right back to where I needed to be...that you wouldn't want that kind of life for me. So I'm trying.

Tage and Rose are doing okay. Better than okay. They have a baby girl...our goddaughter, *Ben. Clara*. She's more beautiful than I could possibly describe. Black hair with the brightest green eyes. She's so much like them in all the best ways. I know you'd love her. And Poe...you never had the chance to meet him, but he's been such a good friend to me. He...he really understands in a way that no one else does, and I am so grateful to him.”

Rey stopped and chewed the inside of her lip, blinking softly in the fading daylight as she reached out and placed the polished, red crystal on his headstone, letting her fingers linger over the letters of his name.

“Before I go...I wanted to promise you something. I promise to keep looking ahead and not lose myself to the darkness. I promise to keep living my life like I always did when you were still here...like I still have a glimpse of you. I promise to bring the color you gave to me and live every single moment like you are still by my side because...even though it sounds crazy...I know that you are.”

As she said the words, Rey felt a rush of warmth, like a hand on her shoulder or a pair of strong arms wrapped around her. She let out a quiet sigh and closed her eyes, lifting her face to the sky as the wind fluttered the hair around her face and she felt that all-too-familiar surge of love in her



heart. The one she'd always felt when she'd see Ben.

With a soft parting of her eyelashes, Rey looked to the sky, smiling softly when she looked upon the miles of a perfect, fairytale blue, whispering his name to let the wind carry it away to wherever he was waiting for her.

While it wasn't what she expected, Rey was happy to have what she could of him...even if it was just a glimpse because, in her heart of hearts, she knew they weren't finished yet.

~~~~~

## Chapter End Notes

Okay, *let me explain.*

Like everyone else, I was brokenhearted by what happened in TROS. I wanted things to be different, but...all in all, I was the most disappointed that Rey was never allowed a moment to grieve for her soulmate.

I tried to write a canonverse "fix-it" to give it to her, but when it came to the pivotal moment, I just couldn't continue.

So, in a way, this has been my "fix-it"...make things right in a way that would make the loss of Ben Solo feel a little less heavy in my heart for the two of them.

Plus...way back in September, I heard this amazing song by the band Exes called "Cain." Listen to it. It's beautiful. And you'll hear where I found my inspiration.

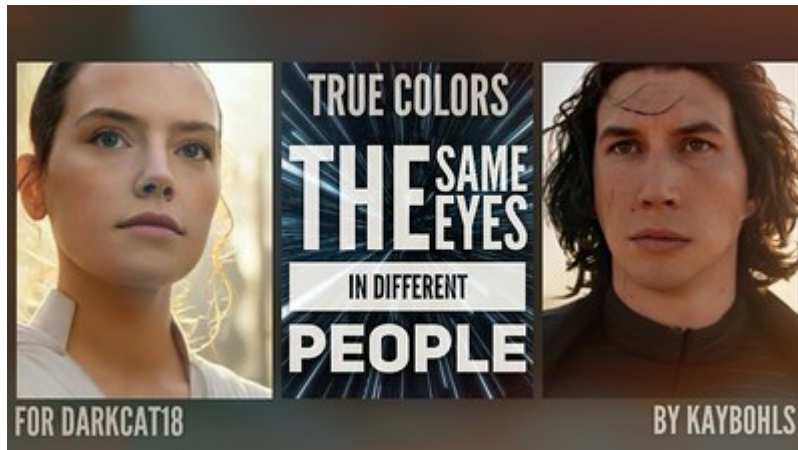
xoxo kb

# The Same Eyes in Different People

## Chapter Summary

"If you live long enough, you see the same eyes in different people."

## Chapter Notes



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

It was colder than she expected.

Arriving under the cover of night, Rey Kestis had touched down outside of a remote village on an already remote world, tucked right in the center of the Western Reaches, far enough away that it was often overlooked.

They'd been searching for so long, combing through old archives and talking to anyone who'd stay still long enough to listen without the First Order getting too close.

She'd been preparing for that day, filled with a breathless sense of excitement that she was on the edge of *something incredible*, on the cusp of something that would change her life and illuminate her world with a figurative type of color, since ever discovering *The Glimpse* for herself was slim to none.

The Galaxy was a big place, and Rey had more important things to do than to search for a soulmate she was pretty sure didn't exist.

In the pitch black of the barren desert, she'd been cast a wary eye from the villagers - faces from all walks of life that looked at her all the same way.

She was a stranger from a strange world and representative of a cause they'd rather stay far, far away from and be left alone to worship the complex mysteries of the Force in the way they wished to.

None of them could wield it, but believed in it all the same. Rey had never been quite sure about it, but admired their ability to believe in something so deeply, they based their entire life around it.

Rey had ignored their looks, keeping her focus instead on the mission as she gently traced the worn Rebellion Starbird over her heart on her tunic. She strode towards the hut on the edge of the village, paused, and gave a long look over her shoulder at the dark horizon, listening as the wind tugged at the banners planted in the sand and the cape on her back. Looking at the blue and white BB unit who wobbled on the sand at her side, she gave her a wry smile.

“Don't worry BB-LE, it's going to be fine. Keep an eye okay, okay?”

The little droid answered her in a few, enthusiastic whoops and whistles before rolling off to keep watch on the peak of a dune on the outskirts of the small community.

Rey ducked inside the hut and shook the hand of her contact, happy to put a face to the person who'd been feeding the Resistance secret information. She knew they didn't have much time, and got right down to business with the man who'd collected rare finds and obscure information his entire, long life.

“I wanted to say thank you, you've been an invaluable help to us,” she murmured, watching him rifle through a series of drawers in the humble dwelling. He gave a quiet, victorious hoot, turned around, and sat in the seat across from her.

“This will begin to make things right,” the old man murmured, reaching out to place the small, leather pouch in the palm of her hand.

Rey gave a self-assured smile as she rolled the parcel over in her hand before tucking it into a small pocket on her waist.

“The General has been after this a long time,” she said, relishing in the incredible feeling the small advantage they’d gained over the First Order.

“Ah, *The General*,” Lor San Tekka mused, leaning back in his chair was a slow scrub of his white beard, “To me, she’ll always be royalty.”

Rey moved to answer him, always eager to speak of her mentor, but a ruckus from the doorway drew her attention away. BB-LE rolled through the hanging slats with a clatter, letting out a series of shrill whistles to alert her master to the coming storm.

The Resistance pilot stood in a flash and turned an alarmed gaze towards the old man beside her.

“The First Order is coming. *You need to hide.*”

“You need to run, now go!” he gave her a push, “Go, find him - learn everything you can.”

Rey didn’t understand it, but didn’t linger to find out what he meant, bursting into the dark night at a full run. The sand slid out from beneath her feet as she barreled towards her starfighter, lifting her eyes with a soft gasp as the thunderous roar of troop carriers came up over the horizon to land in a clatter around the peaceful village.

“Get in and get it started,” she hollered at Ellie, sliding across the sand, down a small dune, towards the waiting X-Wing on the other side.

She practically vaulted herself up the boarding ladder, landing with a huff into the cockpit and pulling on her flight helmet without a second thought.

The sound of blaster fire already echoed out into the night, peppered with the cries of the villagers. Ellie whistled to her from behind, drawing her attention to a handful of troops behind the fighter.

“I see them,” she answered, pulling on controls to give them a warm, Rebellion welcome with a few short bursts from a turbocannon, letting out a victorious yell that was quickly cut short by a bright flash and a shudder of the durasteel hull, “Yeah, I see it. We’re dead in the water, Ellie.”

She swore under her breath, jumping from the cockpit to land easily on her feet in the sand, frantically motioning to BB-LE. Fishing the leather pouch that Lor San Tekka had given her, Rey pulled out a compact disc and held it out to the little droid.

BB-LE's homed head wobbled in confusion and Rey could feel the question in the dark photoreceptor, but she couldn't ignore the cacophony of screams and blaster fire coming from the village. Things were only bound to get worse, and Rey had to find a way out. Most of all, the First Order *couldn't* find the map.

"Take this, it'll be safer with you," she whispered urgently, tucking it into a compartment that Ellie held out for her, sensing the droid's reluctance to leave her master behind, "Take it and go. It'll be alright, Now, *go*. Get as far away from here as you can. I'll come back for you, I promise!"

The pilot gave the droid a little push, watching with a lurch in her heart as the faithful little thing rolled away at a blinding pace as she hoisted her heavy blaster onto her shoulder.

Her attention was quickly drawn away from BB-LE when the low squall of dual-ion engines echoed over the sound of the skirmish in the village, pulling Rey's eyes to the darkened sky to see a menacing Upsilon-class command shuttle circle around and land on perimeter.

Its towering fins cast an eerie shadow over the flames that burned brightly, even in the grey of her vision. Rey knew right away that this wasn't any ordinary ship sent by the First Order...this was something special, if that was the word. It had to be about the map. They had to have known, otherwise, why send someone so important?

Rey slid across the sand, hiding behind a sand dune, just out of sight in time to see the stormtroopers gather the villagers in the heart of the village - including the wise old Lor San Tekka. Her heart thudded wildly in her chest as she watched everything unfold, unable to shake the feeling that something else - something bigger - was coming.

With a low hiss and a billow of steam, a towering figure, dressed in long, black robes, strode down the ramp of the ship, surveying what was left of the burning village as he made his way to where old San Tekka was being held by a pair of stormtroopers.

Rey held her breath, listening carefully to their voices over the crackling of the fire.

“Look how old you’ve become.”

“Something far worse has happened to you.”

“You know what I’ve come for.”

“I know where you come from, before you called yourself Kylo Ren.”

Rey could almost *feel* Kylo Ren’s impatience at the old man’s unwillingness to answer his questions the way he wanted, tinging the sound of his voice through the deep modulator in his mask. Part of it almost seemed familiar, but Rey just couldn’t place it.

“The map to Skywalker. We know you found it...and now you’ll give it to the First Order,” he snapped.

“The First Order rose from the dark side...you did not,” Lor San Tekka answered plainly, only infuriating Kylo Ren further.

“*I’ll show you the dark side,*” the dark knight spat, looming over the old man who remained unafraid.

“You may try...but you can’t escape the truth...that is your family...or your destiny.”

Something in the back of her mind she couldn’t explain flared up unexpectedly, and Rey just *knew* that something terrible was about to befall the entire village. With a deep breath, she ran along the edge of the dune in time to come into full view of the horrifying scene unfolding in front of her.

“You’re so right,” Kylo Ren drawled, offering only a split second before igniting the spitting blade of a lightsaber and bringing it down into Lor San Tekka with a brutal swing.

Rey didn’t waste a moment firing off a single shot, but her breath caught in her throat when the gaze of the dark knight centered on her in an instant, throwing his hand up to freeze the blaster bolt in midair.

Her eyes grew wide as he held her gaze and a frisson of goosebumps ricocheted down her arms. He wasn't just looking at her...but *through* her in a way she had never felt before.

A pair of stormtroopers ran towards her, reaching to pull at her arms, but Rey was faster than them, landing a swift kick to the center of one's chest and a punch to the other before falling to her knees when one of their armored fists connected with her cheek and sent her to her knees in the sand.

Rey tried to yank herself free from their grasp as they pulled her to her feet, towing her past the still-frozen crackling blaster bolt she'd fired at Kylo Ren moments before. She couldn't keep her eyes off of it as they dragged her past it before throwing her at the feet of the First Order's enforcer.

Her chest heaved with each anxious breath, lifting her eyes to the silver-framed mask as he crouched down in front of her. He stared silently with a cock of his head. That same familiarity hung between them, only spurring her heart to beat all the faster as she watched the grey reflection of the flames flicker in the silver on his mask.

"So..." Rey gave him a sly smile, unable to summon the fear she was sure his menacing mask was supposed to bring her, but she couldn't stop fighting...not for a second, "Who talks first? Do you talk first, or do I talk first? Cause....I'm thinking it will be hard to understand you with everything you've got going on there."

He held up a gloved hand to silence her.

"The old man gave it to you, didn't he?" When Rey didn't answer, he barked out an order to the stormtroopers hovering behind her, "Search her."

With a few rough and unwelcome pats across her body, Rey rolled her eyes when they shrugged at their leader in reply.

"It's not here, sir."

"No matter. Put her on board. I'll get what I need from her there."

Rey fought against the binders as soon as they were slapped upon her wrist, craning her head towards the village - or what was left of it - as they pushed her into the belly of the ship, full of guilt and bitter disappointment when she thought of when she'd be able to come back for her droid - and the map - praying that it wouldn't end up in the wrong hands.

She let out a desperate cry when she heard a distant "kill them all" be barked out to the troops, straining to pull herself away to try and help the villagers who, as it turned out, were all right to be weary of her. Now they were all dead because of her.

"No!" Rey managed before a sharp pain bloomed from the butt of a blaster to the side of her head and her whole world went from grey to black.

When she woke again, her whole body jolted like she'd been electrified with a live wire. It took a moment for her eyes to adjust to the muted light in the room, but Rey knew right away that she was not on Jakku anymore, and she was certainly far, far away from the Resistance.

With a grimace, she looked across from her and found the same menacing figure of Kylo Ren standing there. He was silent again, eyeing her from a few steps away, like he had been waiting the whole time for her to wake.

"Where am I?" Rey demanded, giving the restraints on the interrogation chair a sharp tug as she glared at him.

"I had no idea we had the best pilot in the Resistance on board. Naturally, because of such a status, you're my guest. Comfortable?" Kylo Ren drawled casually in a way that both infuriated and intrigued her.

"Not really," she lifted a brow with a silent challenge.

"The map to Luke Skywalker," he stepped towards her, looming over every inch of the dark room, "Tell me where it is."

"Maybe you better rethink your technique. I'm a girl of simple pleasures. Dinner. A landspeeder ride. Maybe a sunset or two. You'd be surprised what asking nicely will get you, Your Highnessness," Rey answered dryly, secretly enjoying the way he visibly bristled at her words. Her gaze followed him as he drew closer.



“I know you had it...and now you’ll give it to me, or I’ll take it from you.”

“Take it from me?” Rey barked out an incredulous laugh, “What makes you think it would be that easy? Don’t you think there’s a reason he hid in the first place? He doesn’t need to be hunted by another creature in a mask.”

“You know I can take whatever I want.”

Rey could swear he was being... *gentle* with her, surely something unbecoming of a senior member of the First Order. Stuck with a sudden surge of fear, she watched him as he strode up beside her with a gloved hand held out towards her.

A flash of pain washed over her for a split second as Kylo Ren rifled through her mind. She tried to keep him out...to force him out...and for a second, she swore it worked.

He jerked his hand away with a flash, stepping away to circle the room around her with a slow clench and unclenching of his fists.

“I thought you said that you could take whatever you want,” Rey pressed, warily watching him as he waved his hand towards her and the binders on her wrists and ankles came free. Unable to believe her luck just yet, she lingered in the chair, anxiously aware of the rapid rise and fall of her chest with each labored breath, “What, did you see something in there you weren’t expecting?”

“You could say that,” he murmured with his back towards her, broad shoulders heaving with great gasps that felt intertwined with her own.

Her breath caught in her throat when she saw his gloved hands reach up and grasp the curve of his dark helmet and a subtle hiss of a broken seal before pulling it from his head.

She wasn’t sure what to expect, perhaps something hideous that would be a reason for him to wear a mask, but when Rey was faced with impossibly luxurious dark hair that fell to his collar, the list of questions in her mind only grew.

“Who are you?” Rey whispered, gingerly stepping out of the interrogation chair, following an invisible instinct that urged her to be closer to him. She held out a trembling hand, just far enough for the tips of her fingers to brush against the delicate weave of the cowl that covered his

shoulders.

He flinched beneath her touch, rolling her hands away as he let out a low growl that was unmistakably familiar to her - like a voice she'd heard in a dream.

“You know.”

“I...I don't understand,” Rey took a step back, watching his every movement as, with painstakingly slow steps, he turned around to face her.

As soon as their eyes met, Rey's world shifted on its axis, and she was left reeling as her world was suddenly awash with a brilliant array of color.

Acutely aware of the sound of her breathing and the beating of her heart in her ears, Rey stepped forward with a questioning gaze, looking into the face of someone she knew by heart...someone she never thought existed before, but at that moment...she couldn't be more sure.

Eyes like warmed Corellian whiskey looked back at her, so sure, so warm, and *so right*, flickering back and forth between hers as she reached up with a shaking hand to trail a ribbon of inky black hair between her fingers.

He curled his hand around her wrist, holding her firmly as he murmured again.

“ *You know.* ”

His voice. His face. It was all so familiar to her, but she couldn't quite place it...not until an echo of a memory flickered through her mind.

*“I would know your face whether it was my second life or my hundredth. No matter where I am. Where we are. What we are doing. I'd know.”*

Rey let out a shuddering sob as the realization washed over her, somewhere between an unrealized grief and pure, unadulterated relief as she pressed her palm to his cheek. He leaned into her touch with a soft crinkle around his dark eyes and the smallest of smiles tug at the corner of his plush

mouth as she whispered.

“ *Ben.* ”

## Chapter End Notes

RAE.

It has been an absolute honor writing for you....my first soulmates fic! Thank you, THANK YOU for giving such a great prompt. I will forever be grateful that we share a deep, twisted love of angst. I hope that you love this piece as much as I do.

xoxo kb

## !!!! BIG ANNOUNCEMENT !!!!

Hi friends! Thank you ALL who have read and loved on this fic over the last year and a half.

What started as a way to cope with the loss of Ben Solo in TROS turned into something so much more--a story that stands on its own two feet with colorful characters that are larger than life . . . and all my own.

I am THRILLED to say I've signed with Lake Country Press, and the full-length novel adaption of True Colors will be released early Summer 2022.

As such, this fic will come down on August 13th.

All hope is not lost! Follow me [on Twitter](#) and [Lake Country Press](#) for all the hype and fun (including teases and cover reveals!!) leading up to the release!!!

REYLOS KEEP WINNING!!!!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!