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Emily with Reflection

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isn't funny man."

"I know how to deal with freaks like this," the other guy says. "Give me those stupid things." He forces his hand to Nolan's face and takes his glasses.

I stand up and scream out what I think is "Hey!"

Then the action all around me slows, like everyone and everything is sinking in molasses. I can't make out much sound, and I know everyone's eyes turn to me, I know my face is heating up. But this is something med school doesn't teach you: how to walk away in moments of conflict.

Above Nolan, where one of the workers is replacing a light fixture, I sense a commotion. I can barely make it out but when I look up one of the workers is fumbling with a larger piece. My outburst must have shocked him, must have been louder than I imagined, because right now he is straining to hold on to it. He almost loses his balance on the lift, has to adjust his weight to keep himself from falling and in doing so has to let the fixture go. His mouth moves and what I make out is, "Oh, shit!"

I see the light fixture come out of his hands and make its descent. I look down at Nolan and he is looking right at me. It takes me a minute to adjust, but when I do I am all alone with him. The redness and worry in my face fades. The notebook, the guys, all the people sinking and swirling around me, they have merged into a blur. And all I can do in this moment is tilt my head to the side and think, this is the first time our eyes have met. I wonder if he can actually see me.
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