

THE ACT OF GIVING UP

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Never, never, never, never, never give up was what she said. That was before she killed herself of course. It was easier said than blah blah blah, but it's true. Life is a ballet performed on thin ice, this I know.

‘Alex, please listen!’

Words are words until they are actions. I should have remembered this before she misstepped, before the ice broke and she crashed through. Now, the show is over, but the unsatisfied audience never left, they simply turned their collective gaze on me.

‘You're worth so much more than this.’

Which pill was the one that killed her? At which point did she realise she had gone too far? Or was she only ever doing exactly what she wanted to?

‘Stop this. Please.’

Maybe she was sick of dying slowly and wanted to speed up the process. Maybe she was tired of addiction, impecuniousness and trying to look happy. Maybe she was done with being a disappointment.

‘Alex, please, you can't solve anything with this.’

The simple fact is I could love her until the end of this universe and it would still not make up for the pain she felt, for the shit she was living through. All her life she was a falling star just waiting to burn up.

‘This is insane. Oh God, please, put the gun down.’

I never could have saved something that burned so fiercely. She was a black hole and a million suns all rolled into one, I was

nothing but a spark in her fiery void. I was not enough.

‘Alex, don’t turn one tragedy into another.’

The audience gasps, all goes quiet, they know that the conclusion is imminent. If you want a show, I’ll give it to you.

‘I’m not going to,’ I say, pulling the trigger –