

“Smile”

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[30 Days of Writing](#) – One Word Prompts
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Day 3: “Smile”

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They needed this. The past few months had been a whirlwind of craziness. Casey's work schedule at the grocery store was all over the place—covering double-shifts, being called in on days when she was supposed to be off. Vinnie had been overwhelmed with classes and exams, not to mention her magical studies. She tried harder than anyone and to fall behind—it was unacceptable.

This Girls Night In was just the thing to help them both relax. They'd watch a few episodes of some shows, a movie or two, and pig out on their favorite snacks while they tuned out the rest of the world for the evening.

But Casey was still mopey and on edge. Vinnie didn't have strong empathic talents like her mom, or sister, and nowhere even close to what Neoma could do, so there was no way she could actually feel the blonde's morose mood, but she could see it in her listless behavior.

She pulled her legs up to her chest, staring at the TV, but without really seeing what was happening. Vinnie missed it too. She was too busy watching Casey. After a few beats passed and canned laughter filtered from the television at the second joke they both missed, Vinnie sighed. “Case, we're supposed to be having fun and I get this really distinct feeling you're not.”

Casey didn't answer right away. She brushed hair out of her face and blinked a few times, as if coming back to her senses. “What?” she asked, when she noticed Vinnie's stare.

“Where were you just now?”

“Oh, I don't know. Far away, I guess. This week's been real fucking long. Sorry,” she murmured and offered a shrug.

“Too far away to enjoy the show? I could turn it off and put on something else?” Vinnie reached for the remote anyway and hit pause. “Or turn it off completely and we can just try to sleep.” She would be the first to admit that sounded like a good idea too. It would be the Girls Night In she envisioned, but if it worked...

“No, no.” Casey was quick with her response. “Like, I'm tired, but not a sleepy kind of tired. You know?”

Vinnie did, unfortunately. It was the kind of tired that kept you worn down. “That's why we're having this night,” she said, and hated that her voice held a defensive tone. Almost whiny. “To recharge from the being tired stuff.” She sighed. “Or something.”

“I know. I know. And I think I'm too tired to relax or some shit.” A humorless laugh slipped out as Casey stretched out her legs.

That wasn't encouraging. Vinnie's hopes for a good night were quickly falling apart before her eyes. "Oh. Well." She didn't know what to say.

"But this is nice," she went on, directing her eyes back to the screen. "The company and the noise. I mean it. The sound of the TV and shit playing in the background is probably the soundtrack to my childhood. For the most part. Kind of... weirdly comforting." A hint of a smile started on her lips.

Vinnie caught the smile. It was small, barely there, but it was genuine. She hadn't seen anything of a real smile in what felt like forever. Seeing it put some of her anxiety to ease. That was all she truly wanted to see—Casey happy, in some way. It wasn't much, but it was something.

Maybe she could help make it something more.

"Okay, well, what about a new soundtrack? One for your young adulthood," Vinnie suggested.

Casey sat up more. "Okay, but none of that bullshit sitcom stuff. I've had enough of that."

"Okay, that's fair." Vinnie aimed the remote and began searching through Netflix. "Only reality TV shows about celebrities you don't care about."

"Oh, fuck that. No way!" A laugh broke through, joined by an even wider smile.

Mission accomplished, Vinnie thought. That's more like it. Her own smile moved over her face. "Reality TV shows and Wheel of Fortune. Maybe Jeopardy." It was hard to keep the laughter out of her voice. Once Casey started, it caught her too. Damn contagious.

"C'mon!" Though she tried hard to sound annoyed, she didn't look it one bit. "Don't do me like that. It's gotta be a good soundtrack. Good memories."

"Good memories," Vinnie agreed with a chuckle. "All right, all right." She handed over the remote. "Pick whatever you want. We do this right."

"Hell yeah," she said, taking the remote.

Warmth flooded through Vinnie, when Casey's fingers brushed lightly across hers. The smile was still there on her face, brighter than before.

Yeah. It really was something.