

Say You Won't Let Go

By Sadie West

Fandom: Shameless (Ian + Trevor)

Three hours late. *Three hours* without answering a call or a text.

Ian Gallagher checked his phone one more time as he jogged up the stairs to Trevor's apartment. Trevor would never stand him up and then go radio silent. He was too good a person for games like that.

Which made Ian think something was seriously wrong.

He pounded on the door. "Trevor?"

Ian knocked again, louder. The door opened, but the chain was on, and Trevor's roommate Scott poked his nose into the crack.

"Where's Trevor?" Ian demanded. "Is he in there?"

"Just go, man," Scott pleaded. "The neighbors'll call the cops if you don't."

"Trevor!" Ian shouted into the gap.

Scott put a hand on the door to steady it. A bloody hand.

"Whose blood is that?" Ian demanded, though deep down he already knew.

"Why is your hand bloody?"

"Please," Scott whined, glancing anxiously behind him. "Get out of here."

"Where's Trevor? Who's bleeding?" *Oh, fuck it.* Ian backed up, took a breath, and shouldered the door open. The chain snapped and Scott scurried away.

"Trevor," Ian called, heading for the man's closed bedroom door. He didn't wait

for permission to enter, but whipped it open. For a worried moment, he catalogued the scene. That's what his EMT training had done for him. A bloody victim meant a crime scene, and Trevor's bedroom certainly qualified.

There were droplets of blood on the glossy hardwood floor, smears of red on the sheets and pillows, and curled in a fetal position amongst the messy bedclothes lay Trevor, looking improbably small and fragile.

"Trev?" Ian called more softly as he crossed the room in three long strides, his EMT training taking over completely. "What happened? What's wrong?" He bent over the bed and checked for a pulse first and an airway second.

"Jesus," Ian swore.

Trevor's swollen and bloody face was almost unrecognizable.

It was one thing to see a stranger beat to hell and back while out on a call. It was something very different seeing the man he loved in such a state.

He needed to do something. *He needed to fix this.*

Trevor roused under Ian's touch, and he woke with a jolt. He came off the bed faster than Ian expected, knocking him back a step and then throwing a wild punch.

"Get your hands off me," Trevor screamed. "Don't touch me!" One haymaker caught Ian on the jaw, and he stumbled into the dresser.

Ian tried once to hold Trevor by the wrists simply to keep him from hurting himself, but the moment Ian locked hands around him, Trevor went ballistic, smacking him hard.

Ian recognized what he hadn't seen before. Angry red ligature marks circling both wrists and bruising around his throat. He'd been held down and with force.

Trevor hit Ian on every spot he could reach, but soon his pleas degenerated into desperate, “Don’t, don’t,” and his punches became little more than slaps.

“It’s me,” Ian said, blocking a half-hearted left hook. “Trevor, it’s Ian. Let me help you.”

Trevor dropped his arms like two dead weights at his sides, and then he hung his head and swayed dangerously to the right.

“Shit.” Ian caught him before he fell, capturing him against his chest.

Trevor’s head lolled over Ian’s arm, and Ian cupped the back of his skull. There was no way not to see everything they’d done to Trevor. His left side was the worst—swollen, pink, and still oozing blood—but a deep scratch bracketed his right eye as if his face had been ground into concrete. Gently, Ian lowered him to the floor.

Without even thinking about it, Ian went through his assessment protocol. He ran his hands through Trevor’s hair, sticky with blood, and then across his brow and cheekbones.

“No obvious fractures,” he murmured, briskly checking for a broken collarbone or serious injuries to the arms. He studied the bruises ringing Trevor’s wrists more closely. Definitely finger marks. Ian tilted Trevor’s chin gently one way and then the other. Finger-sized marks around his throat.

“You probably have a concussion,” Ian said, his voice husky as he attempted to remain clinical. Because if he started to think too emotionally about what Trevor had been through tonight, he’d lose it. Do something stupid. Something *crazy*.

“That’s why you’re disoriented and losing consciousness,” Ian remarked, shifting to continue his assessment.

The front of Trevor's trousers had been torn open. One half of the broken zipper had been ripped free of most of its seam and the button at the top of the fly was missing. Ian brushed aside Trevor's shirt with the excuse of checking his abdomen for signs of trauma, but he really wanted to assess fresh bruises on Trevor's lower belly and the crest of one hipbone.

"You're okay," Ian panted, holding on by a thread. "Babe, you hear me?" He scowled into Trevor's battered face. "Let's get you back in bed."

Crouching, Ian slid an arm under Trevor's shoulders and knees, his boyfriend's limbs dangling lifelessly, and carried him to the bed. He removed the only shoe Trevor still wore and covered him with a blanket.

Someone had done this. Probably someone Trevor knew. Ian bit back the rage insisting he find the perpetrators and murder them. Violently.

That was a task for a later date. Right now, Trevor needed him present, calm, and thinking clearly.

But Ian tossed those good intentions out the window as he sent the open bedroom door a hateful scowl over his shoulder before storming out of it. He grabbed a startled Scott by the shirt and slammed him against the nearest wall.

"What the fuck happened to him?"

"I don't know!" Scott exclaimed.

"Bullshit. Tell me what happened."

"I swear. He came in a while ago, falling and crying. I thought he was drunk. He tried to punch me!"

"When he comes home like that, you call me," Ian ground out, driving Scott

harder against the wall. "I'm an EMT, dipshit. I can help. You always call me if Trevor's in trouble. If he has a runny nose. You call me first."

Scott squirmed. "He made me promise not to."

Ian tossed the mousy bastard aside and then gathered a bag of frozen veggies from the freezer and a washcloth before slipping back into Trevor's bedroom.

He hadn't moved an inch. Flat on his back, his face pulverized, he looked broken, and it made Ian sick inside.

Trevor was the best man Ian knew. He didn't deserve this.

"Babe," Ian said, bending over the bed. "I need you to wake up." In the case of a head injury, Ian had been trained to keep a patient awake and talking as long as possible. "Wake up." Using the moistened cloth, Ian gently rubbed dried and clotted blood from Trevor's left eye.

Trevor woke with a start, a full-body tremor. "No," he cried, striking out at Ian. Just as abruptly, though, Trevor curled in on himself, shielding his head with both arms and drawing his knees up until he was as small as he could make himself.

"Trevor," Ian breathed, leaning over him while simultaneously trying not to crowd him. "It's me. It's Ian. Please look at me."

After a moment, the muscles in Trevor's arms unclenched and he turned his face toward the sound of Ian's voice. "Ian?"

"Yeah, babe." He deflated with relief. "It's me. I'm right here."

"Ian."

Trevor reached for him, and Ian gathered him into his arms.

"They—they—" Trevor gasped, clinging to Ian's shirt, his fingers talons. "No,

they..."

"I know," Ian said, kissing the top of his head and shifting on the bed to hold him even closer. "You don't have to say it," Ian assured. "I know. Trevor, I know."

He cried then, deep, wracking sobs that shook them both. The kind of crying that scared Ian. The kind of crying that could break a person.

Ian held him through it, whispering soothing promises into his hair, massaging his back and shoulders. Slowly, Trevor's breathing evened out.

"Hey." Ian jostled him. "Stay awake."

Trevor wiggled his forehead deeper into the crook of Ian's neck. "Mmm head hurts."

Without releasing him, Ian grabbed the bag of vegetables from the bedside table and pressed it to the side of Trevor's face. He flinched.

"They're not exactly frozen anymore," Ian said, "but the cold will help with the pain and swelling."

"Ian?" Trevor queried, as if he wasn't sure.

"Right here, babe," Ian assured. "I'm right here."

Trevor relaxed into Ian's chest, resting his full weight against him. "Don't leave me."

"I won't," Ian swore.

Trevor's breathing deepened as his hands relaxed.

"Hey," Ian said, pulling Trevor further into his lap. "Stay awake a little longer."

"Tired," Trevor groaned.

"I should call my crew," Ian lamented. "You need to be in a hospital. You could

have serious head trauma.”

“No.” Trevor sat ramrod straight, his hands grabbing at Ian’s collar. “You can’t.”

“Can’t what?” Ian asked, massaging his biceps and then his hands. He frowned into Trevor’s swollen eyes, particularly his left, and sensed Trevor wasn’t looking back. “Can you see me?” he asked.

As gently as he could, Ian opened the left eye, despite Trevor’s protests, to assess the damage. He knew what a detached cornea looked like. Or a blown pupil.

Trevor’s left eye was bloodshot, but appeared intact.

“I can see you,” Trevor exclaimed, fighting back. “It’s blurry, but I can see, you fucker.”

Trevor swatted him away and lay down again, drawing his face into his knees.

“Keep the veggie bag on your left side,” Ian told him. “It’ll help.”

Ian stood from the bed trying to figure out what to do next, how to help Trevor, how to support him. If he called the cops, they’d take Trevor to the hospital and examine him, exposing him as transgender. They’d want to complete a rape kit. They’d mis-gender him. They’d make him feel about as low and helpless as he’d ever felt as a troubled teen.

As an EMT, Ian’s first instinct was to call for help. As a boyfriend, though, his only instinct was to protect. Boyfriend Ian won out.

He kicked off his shoes and crawled into bed beside Trevor, purposefully leaving an empty gulf of ruffled sheets between them.

Trevor slid one hand away from his face, and Ian clasped it. He wouldn’t look at him, though.

“You know that DJ we like?” Ian asked softly. “She’s going to be at a club on Western in a couple weeks. I also heard she writes and performs her own stuff, too. Old-school country western songs. Can you believe that?”

Trevor’s voice emerged from under his arm small and muffled. “I thought the boots she wore were ironic.”

Ian chuckled. “Exactly. Me, too. But apparently, she’s a big fan. Though she’s the first country singer I’ve ever seen with gauges and a face tattoo.”

“I’m gonna need a tattoo,” Trevor said, “to cover up my new ground beef face.”

“Your face is gonna be fine,” Ian assured. “My brother Lip gets beat to shit at least once a month. Cold compresses and a combo of acetaminophen and ibuprofen work like a charm. You’ve seen Lip. Girls still dig him.”

“Ian, they…” Trevor’s voice wobbled.

Ian squeezed his hand. “Do you know who it was?”

“Yeah, I know.”

“Good.” Ian would find them. “I’ll take care of it.”

“Lucky I’m dating an EMT, huh?”

No. Trevor had brought light and purpose into Ian’s life. Trevor made Ian want to be better. “*I’m the lucky one.*”

Trevor scooted across the mattress and snuggled into Ian’s arms. “You’re full of shit.”

Ian pulled him in close. “I may be full of shit, but my love for you *is not.*”

Exhaling and settling his cheek on Ian’s chest, he whispered, “Stay? Even if I fall asleep.”

“I’m not going anywhere, tough guy,” Ian promised. “Not now. Not ever.”

Anna Abner lived in a haunted house for three years and grew up talking to imaginary friends. She married a tall, dark, and handsome United States Marine—her real life romance hero.

Currently, she writes edge-of-your-seat paranormal romances and blogs about ghosts and magic from her desert hideaway in sunny southern California. Her series include the Red Plague, Dark Casters, and Beasts of Vegas.

Anna also writes short, sexy LGBTQ stories set in high school under the pen name Sadie West.

Sign up for Anna Abner’s monthly newsletter and receive a free ebook as well as news on new releases and a chance to be a VIP reader. Sign up at www.AnnaAbner.com.