

Dreaming

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Dreaming

by Anonymous

Summary

Subz had his head resting on his arms on his open textbook, neck tilted just enough that as Vitalasy approached he could make out a single closed eye. He tried not to stare as he sat down in the other seat at the table. He failed miserably.

Or: falling in love during biology class

Notes

Title from Dreaming by Man Overboard

i learned about southern nevadan ecology for this

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

It was the first day of senior year and Vitalasy would like to say he was just as excited as he was every other year but he wasn't. Mostly he was tired. He'd stayed up way too late, last day of summer and all so people had pretty much forced him to go out. He had had a good time and everything but wow, not enough sleep. It didn't help that his very first class of the day was biology, the class he was dreading the most. For some reason he could just never wrap his head around all

the different concepts, but he needed one more science class to graduate and he refused to do chemistry. Maybe he could find someone good enough in the subject to take pity on him and help out.

He walked into the room and scanned the tables picking out different empty seats and which students were already chatting to one another, catching up after the summer. There were plenty of people he knew at least in passing and a few waved, called out greetings. He waved back while walking to a table with another person from student council towards the front of the room before he caught a glimpse of the back table. There was someone with his head down on top of his textbook. Curious, Vi slowed down to look a little closer and once he realized who it was changed his trajectory and beelined to the back.

All of a sudden Vitalasy couldn't wait for the year to start. Subz had his head resting on his arms on his open textbook, neck tilted just enough that as Vitalasy approached he could make out a single closed eye. He tried not to stare as he sat down in the other seat at the table. He failed miserably. Kinda hard for him not to, considering he was finally in a class with the guy that he had a maybe-kind-of-sorta crush on for three years now. He had most of his face covered by his arms on the table but Vi could still see plenty of his brown hair that was just getting long enough to curl at the ends. Gosh dang it, it was cute. Besides being cute Subz was also infamously antisocial and Vitalasy had been unlucky enough to not have a class with him since freshman year. But now he finally has a chance to get to know him, maybe become friends!

All too soon the last few students were filing in and their teacher was about to start calling out names. Vitalasy looked up sharply to the front as his name was called and glanced back over to seatmate who was still sleeping on his book. They were getting close to the end of the roster. *His last name must be far down the list*, he thought absentmindedly. Only few people were left and Vitalasy steeled his resolve, deciding he needed to wake Subz up. He reached over and was about to shake his shoulder as his name was called but stopped just short of touching him when Subz moved. One shockingly bright green eye slowly blinked open at him while he raised his other arm in acknowledgement of his presence to the teacher.

Subz sat up and blinked again slowly, still clearly getting his bearings. Vitalasy was struck with the image of a cat waking up from a nap and willed himself not to laugh. After staring for another moment at him, Subz turned to face the board and didn't acknowledge his presence again. Vi tried to do the same, facing the board and trying to not sneak glances to his left every few moments. He failed once again.

Eventually he started to listen up when the syllabus was passed out and saw there was going to be a project throughout the first half of the year.

"You'll be working in pairs so start thinking about who you want to be with, and don't just choose your friends." Vitalasy knew at that moment he had to do whatever he needed to do to get Subz to agree to be his partner.

Subz was basically out the door by the time the bell rang but Vitalasy couldn't find it in him to be that upset. After all, he had an entire year to win him over into being friends. The rest of the day went by in a haze of syllabuses and hallways and students greeting each other after a summer away. He hadn't seen Subz in any of his other classes but he had caught sight of him in the hallway a few times and noticed him slip out the door of the lunch room early. Vitalasy wanted to follow him out, see where he decided to spend his time, but even he knew that would be weird. Plus he did enjoy the company of his other friends and girlfriend, it wasn't like finding out more about him was Vi's *only* care of the day. So he cataloged each little interaction he could and went home excited for the next day.

The next morning he made it to school early, determined to get there before his seat partner. He walked in and was immediately dismayed to find Subz once again half asleep at their table. Vitalasy huffed out a sigh and walked back to his seat. There were already other students in class with them so Vi didn't want to exactly wake Subz up when other people were trying to talk to him. Class started and he was once again debating whether or not to poke Subz awake when the boy in question sat up, looked at him, and turned towards the board for the rest of class. This pattern continued each day that week until Friday when Vitalasy *finally* made it to class before everyone else. He rushed to their table trying not to bounce his legs too much in anticipation.

After an absurdly long time (it was less than five minutes) Subz finally walked in. He saw Vitalasy already there and paused. Vitalasy waved.

"Hi!" he said, trying to come off as relaxed and not about to vibrate out of his skin.

"Hi," Subz replied as he slung his bag to the floor and slid into his seat, glancing at the boy next to him.

"I never actually got to introduce myself yet, I'm Vitalasy," he said.

"Yeah I heard the teacher enough times," Subz replied. He turned in his seat to fully face Vi who moved to mirror him, still smiling.

"Why are you here?"

"Oh, um, this is my seat," Vitalasy said, caught off guard by Subz's question. He thought that was pretty obvious by now. Subz couldn't be that oblivious, right?

"Yeah, I know that," he said, rolling his eyes. "I mean why are you sitting *here*? Don't you have like friends in this class and shit?"

Vitalasy was taken aback, having not been prepared to be interrogated for his seating choice. He should just say the truth, that he wanted to get to know him, wanted to be friends.

"Oh uh, all those seats were taken on the first day and well, there's a seating chart now so..." Vitalasy was immediately kicking himself for making it seem like he hadn't actually wanted to sit here, but Subz actually seemed to relax a little. Apparently that was a good enough reason for him and he turned back in his seat. Vitalasy stayed facing him.

"Do you want to be partners for the project?" he blurted out, hoping there wasn't too much desperation in his voice. Subz didn't turn back to him or speak so Vi was ready to accept rejection until he shrugged.

"Yeah sure why not. Makes it easier on me, don't have to talk to anyone else." He promptly pulled his textbook, put his head down, and like every other morning closed his eyes. Vitalasy stayed smiling- probably a bit too much- throughout the period and he made sure to have his things ready to go before the bell rang so he could walk next to Subz who always seemed to want to sprint out the doors. He followed him out a few paces behind but used his height to his advantage, quickly catching up and walking in sync with Subz.

"Can I have your number?"

Vi hurried to clarify when Subz raised an eyebrow in his direction. "So we can plan out the project and stuff, never hurts to get started early!"

Subz stopped at what was presumably his locker and pulled out his phone.

"Here, you can add yourself." Vitalasy grabbed the phone to enter his contact info and paused when it came to put his name. Should it be his actual name? Maybe 'Vi' as like a nickname to seem more casual? He was fumbling with what to put by the time Subz had closed his locker and held his hand out for his phone. He scrambled to put something quick and handed it back. Subz took it back without looking and headed off to his next class leaving Vitalasy to stand by a locker that wasn't his in a hallway that certainly wasn't near his next class. Shoot he'd have to run.

The rest of the day passed in relative normalcy as the rest of his classes started to fall into the routine of the year. Vitalasy might have just had a little more pep in his step than usual but hey it was Friday, everyone was excited for the weekend! Surely it had nothing to do with a certain person he was constantly checking his phone between classes to see if he had gotten a text from. He had not.

As the day rounded to a close and he had not managed to find Subz and remind him to send a message so he could have his number too, Vitalasy went home. He had just made it to his room when his phone buzzed.

Unknown Number: seriously??

Unknown Number: why did you put a fucking cat face emoji in your name?

Vitalasy's heart may or may not have done a full flip in his chest when he saw that text.

You: haii subz :D

Subz: you haven't answered my question.

You: they're cute!

Subz: alright furry

Vitalasy would have liked to say he was offended but mostly he was just excited that he finally had Subz's number. He hadn't even needed to remind him to text!

You: how was your first week?

Subz: fine, ok so this project

The conversation stayed on the topic of their project but he couldn't find himself to be disappointed. After all, now he could get in touch whenever he wanted! After-school wasn't going to work for a while since Vitalasy already had club meetings most of the week so they settled to do some planning during lunch. Subz hadn't texted him after that first night so Vi didn't push his luck the rest of the weekend. Monday rolled around and soon enough he was walking out of the lunch room next to Subz. He was expecting to head to the library but instead they found a secluded stairwell at the far corner of the school.

"So um, any particular reason you wanted to meet here?" Vi was trying very hard not to let his imagination and hopes get the better of him but wow was it difficult.

"This is where I always eat, lunch room is way too damn loud." Vi was now trying very hard not to show any disappointment. Instead he focused on the fact that the mystery of where Subz sneaks off to every day was solved, which felt like a win in his book.

Subz sat down with his back to the wall and stretched out his legs along the length of a step. Vi paused, calculating his next move. He could sit on the same step but that would put him a full leg's length away. He could also sit on the step above or below him and stretch his own legs out to mirror him, putting his body quite a bit closer. Apparently he was taking too long to decide because Subz was looking down at him with a mostly blank expression. Vi bit the bullet and settled against the wall opposite, a leg's length away.

They sat in relative silence while they ate and Vi was racking his brain for what to talk about. He was usually pretty comfortable in situations like this, even with strangers! Something about this guy just made him clam up. Ok it was probably the semi-sorta-kinda crush he had, but still. He had been more comfortable talking to his girlfriend before they started dating, it's not like he was a stranger to liking someone!

Thankfully Subz broke the silence by pulling out his notes and the rubric for the project.

"Alright so we have a few options, I don't really have a preference for any of them so I'll leave that up to you." Vi leaned over to grab the paper and scanned over the prompts without actually reading them, focused more on the spot where their hands had touched.

"How about the one on local wildlife? Should be kinda easy right, since it's all right here." *Easier to find a reason to spend time together collecting data nearby*, Vi didn't say out loud.

"Sure, works for me." They fell into silence again.

"Are you doing anything this weekend?" Vi asked before he could think better of it. Subz tilted his head for a second and thought.

"Nah, don't think so. Wanna work on the outline then?"

"Yeah that's what I was thinking!" It was not what he had been thinking.

"Alright that should work, you can come over on Saturday," Subz nodded.

"Great!" Vitalasy didn't bother to try to hide his excitement this time around.

They spent the next two days at lunch together going over notes from class and planning out the basis for the project. By Thursday there was nothing left to do but wait till the weekend and Vi couldn't come up with an excuse to spend lunch on the stairwell. On Friday he decided he didn't care and went to Subz halfway through the period anyways. Subz didn't look up until Vitalasy had seated himself on the step below, shoulder just barely brushing Subz's arm.

"Hi," he said, glancing up to find Subz looking down already.

"Hi," Subz replied. "Was there something you wanted to go over?" Vi shook his head.

"Nope! Just got a little loud is all, I hadn't realized how noisy it could get in there till I started coming over here with you." Subz nodded in agreement. They spent the rest of the period talking about nothing important but Vitalasy felt happier than he had in a while.

Saturday morning came around and then suddenly it was the afternoon. Vi had expected the day to drag on while he waited to go over to Subz's house but now he was rushing. He took the stairs two at a time downstairs and jangled his keys enough to drown out whatever remark his mom had made.

You: headed over :)

Subz: alright

The drive didn't take too long, granted any drive in this town didn't take too long. Sooner than he was ready for he was parking on the side of the street and double checking his hair in the rearview mirror. This was honestly the most nervous he'd been in a while but he wasn't going to let that get to him, they had a project to do after all! He knocked twice and fidgeted with his hands on his backpack straps while he waited. The person who opened the door was distinctly not Subz but

definitely similar, a younger brother most likely, with a scar fading into his hair. Before he could introduce himself the kid yelled up the stairs,

“Subz, your person’s here!” before heading back inside. Vitalasy stepped over the threshold and shut the door behind him, not knowing where to stand or what to do. The relief he felt as he saw Subz coming down the stairs was probably evident by the way Subz let out a silent laugh.

“Leave your shoes down here, we can work up in my room,” he said before walking into what Vi assumed was the dining room and coming back with some notebooks and pens. As Vi followed him up stairs he gripped the straps of his backpack even tighter. The thought that they might be working in Subz’s room hadn’t occurred to him and suddenly he was even more nervous than before. He had assumed they’d be somewhere around other people, like a living room or dining room but nope, they were going upstairs. He knew his nervousness was silly and tried to convince himself as much but then Subz shut the door after he walked in and wow Vi really hoped his face was at least semi-composed at the moment. Trying to distract himself from his whole internal ordeal he scanned the room. Unfortunately this did not actually help him relax and the grip he had on his backpack was starting to hurt.

“There’s not a lot of room on the desk so we can just sit on the floor,” Subz said, already dropping his pile of things in the middle of the room and sitting down. Vitalasy slid off his backpack and sat up against the bed, pulling out his own materials.

“Alright so first things first is to pick out what we actually want to focus on. Could do some broader ecosystem stuff, energy cycle, plants native to the desert and how they adapted,” Subz said looking over the project guide.

“How about we focus on animals that live nearby? We could do some trips outside town and get pictures,” Vi suggested. This was absolutely not just an excuse to go on drives together, nope. Subz considered his words for a moment before shrugging his shoulders.

“Yeah sure, sounds more interesting than plant evolution.”

Vitalasy smiled and picked through the list of native species they had printed off a few days earlier and skimmed till he found something that sounded interesting. *Vulpes vulpes nicator*. Vulpes, huh, that sounded familiar, he should look up what the normal name was for this. Vi’s face lit up.

“Wait, there are foxes around here?”

“There’s a native population over in the Sierra Nevada mountains,” Subz said without looking up from his own paper. Normally Vi would be thinking just how cool it was that he knew stuff like that right off the top of his head but he was a little too excited about this new found knowledge of foxes nearby.

“Whaaat, that’s so cool, I had no idea! I love foxes!”

“Yeah that tracks,” Subz said with a grin that was mostly for himself. Vi’s eyebrows shot up.

“Excuse me, what the heck is that supposed to mean?”

“Hey man, there’s a reason your contact name in my phone is ‘Furry’ alright.”

“You changed my contact name?” Vi said, specifically ignoring what it had been changed to.

“Duh, the one you put was way too long. Two exclamation marks *and* a cat face? Come on.” At the beginning of the year this would have probably put Vitalasy into a spiral state of worrying if Subz

hated him but after just a week he was able to pick up the ways he joked. Something in him went warm thinking about it, and the other still continued to ignore what the new name was. He was sure he could convince Subz to change it soon anyways. Still, Vi put on as dramatic of a pout he dared and flopped down on the floor onto the notebook Subz had just been writing in.

“I can’t believe this, you’ve wounded me so.”

“Dude get up.”

“No I’m mortally wounded, didn't you hear?”

“Oh my fucking god, *Vitalasy*.” Vi’s heart didn’t skip a beat when Subz said his name. Not even a little. He smiled and sat back up.

“And until you prove me otherwise it’s staying that,” Subz said, readjusting his paper. “Foxes are cool and everything but I’m not really looking to drive that far away to look for them. Besides, do you know how to find them? You got a secret high definition camera and camouflage tent to stay in for a week to *maybe* get a single picture?” Vitalasy was trying to not to get distracted by the idea of being in a tent together for a week.

“Ok well fine then, crush my hopes and dreams why don’t you!” he said instead.

“Happy to.”

Vi leaned back on his elbows and looked at the ceiling. Foxes were too far away but there had to be interesting things close by, he was sure of it.

“Aren’t there coyotes around here sometimes?” Subz stiffened a fraction and he wouldn’t have even noticed had he not been already looking towards him out of the corner of his eye. “I’ve heard them a couple times before, those could still be interesting.” Subz shrugged his shoulders in what looked like an attempt to be indifferent.

“Yeah they come around sometimes. We can look into their environment around here, sure. That shouldn’t be too hard to find info on.”

“We don’t have to if you don’t want,” he replied, sitting about a little straighter

“No, it’s a good idea.” Vitalasy could feel something was off but didn’t know when was the right time to push these kinds of things yet so he let it slide for now.

“Well great, cuz that’s about what I’m capable of doing for this project, you got everything else right?” Subz sighed and threw his notebook at Vitalasy without looking up.

They don’t go out looking for anything until three weeks later. Their professor had approved their project idea, even told them they’d get extra credit if they recorded their own findings near town. They spent lunches and the occasional weekend days researching and planning, noting down typical behaviors, territories, food sources. Vitalasy liked to say “they”, Subz usually said “he”. It wasn’t like it was Vitalasy’s *fault* that he was garbage at biology, and he still did his share of the work! He just might need Subz to double check it before turning anything in.

And he did, Subz helped him not just with the project and group work but with individual assignments too. It was clear he liked helping. He’d grumble about it sure, and call Vi a dumbass but he still helped, still smiled when Vi told him how he got a B+ on his first exam during lunch.

The weeks moved on and Vitalasy found himself spending more and more lunches on the stairs,

more and more nights staying up texting, more and more weekends at Subz's house. His friends started asking where he always ran off to and his girlfriend gave the occasional side eye but she didn't say anything outright. He told them how he really needed to focus on school and they understood. It wasn't a lie.

Soon enough it was the weekend and Subz's car was in his driveway as the sun started to get lower in the sky. They'd found out coyotes were crepuscular animals which Vitalasy had to look up to find out what the heck that even meant. Turns out they were most active at dawn and dusk and they agreed they didn't want to be out in the desert at 4 in the morning, so dusk it was! They wouldn't have to go out too far either, the population out here came pretty close to town, sometimes padding through the streets and getting into people's trash.

Vi slid into the passenger's seat and realized this was the first time he'd been in Subz's car. He tried not to focus on that or he'd get so flustered he'd lose focus on what they were *actually* here to do.

"Hey!" he said as he shut the door.

"Sup," Subz replied, shifting gears and heading out onto the road. Vitalasy really hadn't been expecting Subz to drive a stick shift if he was being honest but he tucked this little discovery into the folder labeled "Cool Things About Subz" that sat at the back of his mind. Ok it was maybe a little further up than the back.

They lapsed into a mostly comfortable silence, the kind Vitalasy had learned to appreciate even when he wanted to talk all the time, to find out what Subz was thinking constantly. But he stayed quiet and looked out the window and the buildings passed by turning into shrubs and sand. The mountains got a little bit larger in the distance even though he knew they were plenty far off. Maybe they could go visit them this year.

I've been dreaming of something that right now is still nothing, but it could become my world once the day is through.

The lyrics coming through the speaker floated through the air barely audible over the AC.

It's something about the way she falls back asleep, it's 8:30 and in her textbook she's waist deep.

He smiled thinking back to the beginning of the year when Subz was passed out in class every morning.

And it could be a sign when she wakes up she's looking at me, right me.

He glanced over at Subz, one hand on the steering wheel the other on the stick shift. Subz caught him staring and he quickly looked straight ahead to the road.

And I don't know how many times that I would have to ask her if I'm dreaming. The way her hair falls on top of her shoulders makes me feel like screaming.

Vi put his elbow on the window and firmly looked out his window facing away from Subz. He should find out the name of this song.

The sun was getting lower and lower when they finally pulled over to the side of the road. Subz made sure the car was always in sight as they watched and looked for signs of life to record. The stars started to peak above the horizon and Vitalasy noticed the moon was nowhere in sight. Something about the sky unfiltered with light pollution made Vi's heart feel fluttery, romantic thoughts of stargazing floated through his mind and he did very little to stop them. He turned to look for Subz, about to ask him what he thought of stargazing before his impulse control caught up

to him only to find he was mumbling under his breath with his eyebrows furrowed.

"This shit makes no damn sense what the fuck." Vi thought about teasing him about language but decided to let it go for now. He walked up behind him and peered over his shoulder.

"What's wrong?"

"This isn't following any of the normal patterns for this area, there should be at least *some* sign of them by now but all I've found is fucking dead rabbits that looked like they got mauled. Not even eaten, just torn up."

As soon as he finished talking they heard a distinctive yipping off in the direction of the town. It was still quite a bit away but still Subz tensed up immediately. He gripped the notebook in his hands hard enough to bend it. There was another howl and Subz flinched so hard he nearly dropped the book.

"Let's head back, it's too dark to get anything useful here anyways," Vitalasy said, hoping that Subz even heard him. Subz's shoulders relaxed a fraction and he nodded not looking at Vi. They got into the car and Vitalasy wished that he knew how to drive Subz's car so he could just breathe but he didn't. He was resolved to learn now.

Subz stared straight ahead as they drove back and Vi didn't comment on the speed. His knuckles were white where he gripped the gear shift and before he could think better of it Vi reached his hand out. Subz flinched away at first but slowly put his hand back even though Vitalasy hadn't taken back his own hand. Not all of their fingers interlocked but a few did and Vi was now incredibly thankful he wasn't driving because he probably would have swerved off the road by now.

"I've always wanted to learn how to drive stick," Vi said, trying to make conversation to distract himself at least partially from the situation at hand. Subz grinned in that way that meant trouble and said, "Oh yeah?"

Subz untangled his fingers and Vi hoped the disappointment didn't show on his face.

"Why don't you start now." Vitalasy couldn't help but jump when the car sped up and the engine began to whirl.

"What the- I don't- *Subz!*" Subz glanced over but did nothing to help, just kept that stupid smile on his face.

"You'll probably want to shift up now."

He looked down and fumbled with the movement before he finally got the right gear in place. Before he could sigh in relief Subz was pressing on the breaks.

"And now back down." He kept this up until Vitalasy was shifting in time without needing to be told. At some point Subz's smile had gone from teasing to soft and relaxed, even though Vi had even more tension in his arms than Subz had earlier. He sighed in relief when they pulled up to the front of his house.

Subz laughed and patted Vitalasy's hand that was still gripping the shift like a lifeline. He tried to glare at him but all it did was make Subz laugh, the kind where he scrunched up his eyes and his hair fell over his eyes as his head leaned over. Suddenly it was worth it, it was all worth it if he got to see him smile and laugh like that.

Oh wow, Vitalasy's sorta-maybe-kinda crush was definitely a full on crush now. It made him laugh in return.

"Alright, get the hell outta my car." Subz said with a smile still on his lips. Vi tried not to stare and found it incredibly difficult. With more willpower than he knew he had, he got out of the car. Subz rolled down his window and leaned out.

"Hey, do you wanna get food tomorrow? We can go over stuff from today and figure out how to incorporate it into the paper." Vi smiled and nodded, not trusting his voice to stay steady. He waved and watched until Subz's car rounded the corner and out of sight. Vitalasy turned and went inside, his heart lighter than he'd felt it in a long time.

End Notes

before anyone says "oh thats a horrible way to teach someone how to drive stick shift no one would do that" that literally happened to me it was awful

anyways yeahhhh vi been pining for a hot second

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