

HARBORVIEW IMMORTALS EXTRA

# LAST SUMMER

A young man with short, light brown hair is seen from behind, standing on a sandy beach. He is wearing dark swim trunks. In the distance, another person is walking away from the viewer towards the ocean. The background is a soft-focus view of the ocean and a pale sky.

EMMA PETERSON

# **Last Summer**

## **A Harborview Immortals Story**

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This story contains mild adult content.

# July 2009

It never failed to amuse Xan when people referred to the public miles-long stretch of Harborview shore along the edge of Lake Erie as the beach. While he supposed that the word was technically correct, it was hardly what he had in mind when he thought about beaches. Beaches went hand in hand with oceans. Actual oceans, like the Pacific or Atlantic. Lake Erie, while vast in its own right, was not an ocean. It wasn't even the greatest of all the Great Lakes.

It was, however, the best he could hope for living in Northwest Pennsylvania short of trekking to the East Coast to see what he considered to be the real thing.

He spread an oversized towel on the sand and sat down, his long legs stretching out across the thick green material. The heat from the midday sun was slightly offset by a gentle breeze, and he closed his eyes and craned his neck toward the sky to savor both. He felt a stab of guilt for being able to enjoy the sunshine while his fathers were presently stuck in the house, confined to the basement until sundown. Although there were obvious advantages to being a vampire, like immortality, it was during moments like these when Xan

could fully appreciate being a mere human being who could bask in the rays without melting into a puddle of bloody goo.

After a few minutes of soaking up the sun—and hoping that he had applied enough sunblock to ward off any burning—he opened his eyes and stared out at the lake. Luca had once told him that you could see clear across to Canada if the conditions were just right, but all he could see right now was water, deep blue and seemingly endless. Four or five jet skis raced across his line of sight and there were a number of boats farther out that looked like little white specks against a blue backdrop. People frolicked in the water here and there,

scattered about, but the view that interested Xan the most was closer to land. And what a view it was.

“See something you like?” Ryan asked as he exited the lake.

Xan smiled as the teen shook the excess water off his muscular arms and legs before joining him. “Maybe,” he said, handing him a spare towel.

“It’s nothing you haven’t seen before.” Ryan blotted his face with the towel and placed it on the ground beside Xan. “Up close and personal,” he added with a smirk while taking a seat.

“Yeah, but it’s going to be a while before I see it again.”

“I’m only going to New York and it’s not like I’m never coming back. Besides,

absence makes the heart grow fonder and all that crap.”

That was all well and good, but it wasn't Xan's heart that was going to miss Ryan.

They met one year ago at the movies and quickly bonded over skee-ball and pizza. It was the first time that Xan ever had a friend close to his own age, human or otherwise. Shortly afterwards, they discovered that their mutual interests extended to each other. While neither teen was looking for a boyfriend for their own respective reasons—Ryan just wanted to focus on school and Xan just wanted to focus on getting off—they managed to find the perfect balance between friendship and physical



enjoyment. Now that Ryan was leaving for college in a few weeks, Xan was lamenting the inevitable end to a rather pleasurable aspect of their non-relationship.

“We’ll talk on the phone and online, just like we do now,” Ryan continued. “Nothing’s going to change... except for that one thing.”

“I like that one thing,” Xan said.

“Me too.”

Ryan reached across Xan and grabbed a bottle of water from the cooler lodged in the sand. Xan studied the light sprinkle of freckles across his well-tanned arm and shoulder and resisted the urge to trace them as he had done so many times before when they

were alone.

“Are we hanging out tonight?” Ryan asked after taking a drink.

“I thought you were going to the Summer Fuck Fling. It’s your last chance to go.”

Ryan shrugged. “I did enough partying the week of graduation. I’m partied out. Unless you want to go?”

Xan thought back to the year before, when his parents’ refusal to let him attend the upperclassmen party of the year resulted in some unfortunate behavior on his part. Now that he was seventeen, he had no reason to believe that they would deny him the opportunity, but the thought held little appeal if Ryan didn’t want to go.

“It doesn’t matter to me,” he answered. “Whatever you want to do.”

“My parents and sister are home so we can’t do what I *really* want to do. But I finally got the new *Resident Evil* game so at least there’s that.”

“That sounds like a lot more fun than getting drunk and possibly laid,” Xan replied sarcastically. ““Yay.””

He didn’t bother trying to dodge the playful punch that landed on his upper arm, and was glad that he didn’t when Ryan’s hand lingered, then opened, then cupped his bicep. A thumb started stroking his skin, sending a jolt down his arm.

“People can see us,” he warned.

“Do you care?”

“No, but maybe you should. You’re Harborview’s golden boy, after all.”

“Don’t remind me,” Ryan muttered, pulling away from him and taking another drink of water. “That’s the biggest reason I can’t wait to get the hell out of here. I’m tired of people expecting greatness from me.”

“Can you blame them? You’re an honor student and varsity letterman in pretty much every sport ever. You’re like the poster child for overachievement.” Xan shifted to the right and nudged the teen in the side. “There are way worse things in life than being good at everything you do, Ryan.”

“I know, but it’s still annoying.” Ryan finished off his water and let out a

respectable belch. He leaned back on his hands and stretched his legs alongside Xan's. "Anyway, you don't want to lose your virginity at some party with a bunch of drunk assholes in the next room, do you?"

Had Xan been asked that question a year ago, his answer would have been a resounding yes. He had wanted it so badly that he lashed out and insulted his fathers, an act that still made him feel awful twelve months later. But now?

"I guess not," he replied. "I mean, I don't need candlelight and love songs and shit, but no, I don't want some idiots who can't handle their liquor puking their guts out one room over, either."

"And I imagine you don't want to do

it on my poor excuse for a bed.”

“Why not? We’ve done just about everything else on it.”

“True,” Ryan responded, chuckling. “But do you honestly want your first time to be a race against the clock in case someone comes home? I don’t.” He turned toward Xan and leaned forward. “I’m going to need a whole night for all the things I want to do to you.”

Xan shuddered as a tongue ran along the five platinum hoops in his ear. If Ryan insisted on teasing him like this, the question of when and where they were going to do it wasn’t going to be an issue because he was going to jump on him right then and there, onlookers be damned.

“Come on,” Ryan said suddenly, slapping him on the back. “Let’s swim.”

“I’m going to need a minute.”

The older teen laughed. “It’ll go down once you’re in the water,” he said as he stood up and held out his hand. “Let’s go.”

Xan reluctantly took Ryan’s hand and allowed the young man to pull him to his feet. With a kind smile and a knowing look in his dark brown eyes, Ryan squeezed Xan’s hand briefly before letting go, a silent gesture that perfectly summed up the friendship that was and the relationship that would never be.

They raced each other into the water—Ryan won easily—and spent the next half hour swimming and splashing about.

Somewhere along the way, Xan realized that he was wrong in his earlier assessment. Quite wrong.

He was going to miss this, too.

\* \* \*

An hour later, after rinsing off in the beach's pitiful excuse for a shower and getting dressed, the boys stopped at the nearest Dairy King for a late lunch. They hurriedly worked their way through cheeseburgers and fries before digging into two large sundaes that were more hot fudge than ice cream. Two young women from Ryan's high school attempted to join them but Ryan immediately, though politely, denied



their efforts.

“Heartbreaker,” Xan accused while chomping on a maraschino cherry.

“Better heartbreaker than cockblocker,” Ryan shot back. Xan couldn’t disagree.

After that, they went to the theater and watched *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Xan didn’t remember much about the movie, but he distinctly remembered the way that Ryan’s hand felt on his thigh for two and a half hours.

When the movie ended, they entertained themselves by heading for the gaming area and revisiting their skee-ball rivalry. Xan bested Ryan more often than not, and he blew all of his hard-earned tickets on a variety of small

stuffed animals that he planned to give to Ryan's little sister in the hopes that she would keep her distance later that evening.

Next, they went to Booksen More, one of the last locally owned bookstores in the city. (Xan had no idea that the owner was the son of the man who once owned an adult store named Coxen Things, which was where his parents were headed the night they found him.) They did their part to ensure the economic survival of the store by dropping a massive amount of money on comic books and manga. From there, they swung by the mall but left soon after when it became apparent that their presence would not go unnoticed by

other teens.

By the time evening rolled around, they were hungry again, so they picked up a pizza and went back to Ryan's house. The stuffed animal bribe was a success, although Xan had to sweeten the deal with a slice of pizza as well. They ate and read comics and debated topics of vital importance such as whether or not Iron Man was better than Batman. Ryan was a staunch supporter of Bruce Wayne while Xan was firmly Team Tony Stark, though they both agreed that Superman was the best of all... until Xan boldly announced that Goku could beat Superman and prompted a new argument about hypothetical fights between manga and comic book

characters.

After they finished eating, they settled on the floor of Ryan's bedroom for some *Resident Evil 5*. They played well into the night, stopping only for bathroom breaks and so that Xan could text Jacob to let him know he was still alive and behaving himself. Ryan had shut off his own phone an hour earlier to silence the texts and calls requesting his presence at the Summer Fuck Fling.

"What time am I taking you home?" he asked when they resumed gaming.

Xan waited until they destroyed a particularly difficult zombie before replying. "Whenever you want. Oh yeah, remind me to give you gas money."

"Keep it. You can put it toward

buying your own car.”

“I have my own car. Dominic just hasn’t given it to me yet.”

“You seem pretty sure that he will.”

“He’s had the damn thing for thirty years. It’s time for an upgrade.” Xan cursed when an attack nearly drained his character’s health. “I think he’s going to make me wait until I’m eighteen.”

Ryan cringed, though it was hard to say if it was because of Xan’s comment or nearly having his ass handed to him by a zombie. “That sucks.” (This also applied to both instances.)

When they had their fill of fighting the undead, they switched off the game. While Ryan crept into the kitchen to grab a couple of Cokes, Xan wandered

around the room and marveled at the many displays of his friend's achievements. It was nothing he hadn't seen before, but he also knew that he wouldn't have many more chances to do this again after Ryan moved out.

Trophies and medals and certificates were everywhere he turned, all of them highlighting Ryan's success in sports and education. Xan paused at a dresser to study framed pictures of the teen posing in football, baseball, and track attire, plus another one from the senior prom of him and three friends looking mighty fine in their tuxedos. The newest photo in the collection was of Ryan in his black cap and gown, smiling cheerfully as a blue and black tassel dangled in his face, the

very same tassel that now hung from the rearview mirror in his car as a constant reminder of his graduation. Xan thought he looked especially handsome in this picture and he was so busy staring at it that he didn't notice when Ryan entered the room and came up behind him.

“Here you go.” He handed Xan a cold can of Coke and peered over his shoulder. “Do you ever regret being homeschooled?”

Although there were a few occasions over the years when Xan had wondered what it was like to sit in an actual classroom while being taught by an actual teacher as opposed to sitting at home and being taught by Luca, he never felt that he was lacking socially so much

that he needed to attend one of Harborview's many high schools. There was also the matter of privacy. He was the unofficial adoptee of two centuries-old vampires. Going to a public school would have undoubtedly invited questions about his identity that were best left unanswered. He already had enough difficulty keeping that side of his life from Ryan. Thankfully, the young man was smart enough to sense that there were certain truths that Xan was never going to divulge about his family and never pressed the subject.

“No. It's one thing to see other kids whenever I'm out. I don't know how I'd like being stuck in a classroom with them every day.”



“It’s not always fun.” Ryan cracked open his soda and took a long drink.

“Have you decided what you’re going to do after you’re done?”

“College, I guess. I’ll probably do most of it online, or take a few classes at Mercymore or Penn State. I’m not exactly sure yet.”

“What do you want to study?”

Xan shrugged as he returned the picture to its rightful place and opened his drink. “I have no idea.”

He neglected to add that he didn’t care because his ultimate goal was bartending in his fathers’ vampires-only nightclub, the Rising Sun. Like the tattoos that had fascinated him since he was thirteen, it was something Xan had

wanted for a long time. While a degree was hardly necessary for the job, he also knew that Dominic and Jacob would have had a combined fit if he had announced that he was skipping college entirely. It was going to be hard enough to talk them into letting him work at the club; if nothing else, at least this way he would have four years to convince them.

“You’ll figure it out,” Ryan assured him. “And definitely take some classes in person if you can. The scenery will be a lot nicer.”

“That is a good reason,” Xan acknowledged. He downed a bit of the fizzy beverage and pressed the back of his hand to his mouth to stifle a burp. “You’re going to be hooking up with so

many hot guys. I'm jealous."

"Of them?"

"Of *you*."

Ryan grinned and placed his free hand on Xan's waist. "I'll be sure to give you all the dirty details," he promised.

"Damn right, you will."

Xan spun around and blinked at his friend, pleasantly aware of how close he was standing. He grabbed onto Ryan's shirt and pulled him even closer, reducing the space between them until their lips collided and tongues intertwined. The older teen pushed Xan back and trapped him between the dresser and his body, and Xan moaned into a mouth that tasted like soda and

pepperoni and a hint of mint, one hand clinging to Ryan's shirt and the other crushing his Coke can.

Eventually he broke the kiss, while he still possessed the ability to do so. "Shit," he whispered, his chest heaving and his limbs shaking. "You should probably take me home now."

"Yeah," Ryan agreed breathlessly. He glanced down at his shirt. "I will as soon as you let go of me."

Xan pried his fingers loose and handed him the dented can. He collected his things and followed Ryan through the dark house and out to his car.

Conversation reverted to their usual geekish discussions as Ryan drove him home, like the upcoming *G.I. Joe* movie

and whether or not there was any truth to the rumors they had read online about a television adaptation of *The Walking Dead* comic book. By the time Ryan turned onto Shore Harbor Drive, Xan had more or less recovered from their moment against the dresser, although he had a feeling that the experience spawned an itch that would need to be scratched before he went to sleep.

“What are you doing next weekend?” Ryan asked after pulling into the driveway of Xan’s house.

“I assumed I was hanging out with you, unless you have other plans.”

“Do you want to spend the night?”

Of course Xan wanted to spend the night. There was only one small

problem, the same problem that had prevented him from staying over tonight. “Aren’t your parents going to be home?”

“Yeah, but...” Ryan’s eyes darted toward the house, perhaps to make sure that no one was spying on them (which was not a far-fetched fear when it came to the fiercely overprotective Jacob). “I was thinking that we could get a room. A hotel room. So... you know... you would still be spending the night with me. Just not at my house.”

“Yeah, let’s... let’s do that.” Xan nodded emphatically. “We *really* need to do that.”

Ryan chortled at his eagerness. “We do. I’ll talk to you later.”

“See you.”

Xan got out and waved as Ryan backed out of the driveway. He stayed put until he couldn't see the car's taillights anymore and remained a little while longer to wallow in the excitement of what was to come before having to put on a straight face for Dominic and Jacob (one that they would surely see right through because parents were psychic like that). After twelve months of wanting and waiting, it was finally going to happen. Finally! Out of the many memories of his time with Ryan, ones already made and yet to come, Xan knew that he would cherish their first time together most of all. Despite whatever happened afterwards and wherever their lives led them, they

would always be bound by that.

He turned and stepped inside with a newfound anticipation that would only grow stronger throughout the upcoming week. His last summer with Ryan was going to be the best summer ever.





Thank you so much for reading *Last Summer*. For more information about the *Harborview Immortals* series, future projects, and random geekery, please follow me at [www.emmapetersonwrites.com](http://www.emmapetersonwrites.com).

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Last Summer

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