



Time

They stood outside, clinging to each other like they wouldn't survive otherwise. Crude shadows danced across their faces, taunting, challenging. The glorious light practically blinded them. It was as if all of their past sins were coalescing in an inferno worse than Hell itself. They should have been more sad, more angry. Now was not the time.

Before that, he had stumbled, alone, out of the collapsing doorframe, choking from the smoke. Her hair was sticking to her tearstained face, arms crossed at her chest. She was not happy to see him. He was visibly shaking, slowly making his way over to her. He lifted a trembling hand to push the hair out of her face. They both had things they wanted to say, needed to say. Now was not the time.

Before that, she left the engine running. She was sitting in the car in the driveway of their house, banging her hand hard against the steering wheel. He was in there with the other woman, and the boy was probably asleep. She eyed the matches in the passenger seat, the gas can recently emptied around their house. She was staring at the house through hazy eyes. There was a metallic taste in her mouth, but she took another swig of whiskey anyway. She thought she could handle it, but she couldn't take it anymore. She felt smothered by the idea of family life. She wanted it all to end, wanted them all gone. Now was not the time.

Before that, he was in bed with the other woman. This was his house, but the other woman wanted to believe that it would be hers one day. She was smiling against his lips, her clothes strewn sloppily across the floor. Their limbs were entwined, too caught up in the moment to worry about anything else. He should have felt guilty, but he couldn't stop himself. He was going to tell her that he wanted to end it. The other woman was not his wife. Now was not the time.

Before that, he tucked the boy in bed. He didn't know where his wife was, and the boy was upset to go to bed without saying goodnight to his mom. The boy looked up at his dad with shining eyes, excited to play catch the next day. The boy loved playing catch, but it was too dark to go outside. Now was not the time.

Before that, they sat at the table with the boy. She was cooking food in the kitchen, laughing to herself so she wouldn't cry. She was remembering all the good times they used to have. Things just weren't the same anymore. He was watching the boy, smiling to himself. He loved the boy more than he thought he could love anything. He heard her laughing and knew that wasn't a good sign. He was worried about her, but he wouldn't say anything. Now was not the time.

Before that, the sun shone through the window, the glorious light practically blinding them. They smiled at each other. They were ready to try to make this work. They were ready to try to face their problems. They should have talked about it, but neither said a word. Now was not the time.