

Tony?

What's gnawing at you.

Does there *always* have to be something biting away at me?

Can't I just want to talk for the sake of making late night small talk?

Pretend we're around the water cooler, on those dreaded summer days that I have to make an appearance at the office for presentation's sake?

There invariably is, when you message me this late. I know you. You're an early riser, despite how inhuman that seems.

I can't deny that, and you know it.

(Mornings are lovely. You should see the quality of light sliding in through the lace inner curtains.

Enough for privacy, not enough to drown out all that natural sunlight.)

(I sleep with a mask on and earplugs because I'd rather be dead to the natural world. To each their own.)

(Fair enough.)

(You always were more of a night owl. Maxwell still talks fondly about late college nights and crackling static on phone lines. How far technology has come since then, huh?)

(Now we get to see your bedhead in HD.)

(It's magnificent. You're welcome.)

But yes, there was something that I wanted to talk to you about. Consult with you over, perhaps- that might be the correct turn of phrase.

And now we get to the heart of the matter. How surely you cut to the quick.

I just wanted to know. Man to man.

Do you think that we're doing the right thing?

No. I don't, quite frankly. I wouldn't delude myself into believing it, either. You're better than that. We're both better than that. I think that you are doing a stupid, feckless, Cavello-esque thing, for the same self martyring motions that that cop can't help but wring himself through the ringer over.

I think that you are both equally self destructive and looking for a venue and means by which to justify it.

I think you're being stupid. I think that you are doing the wrong thing.

But God damn it De Augustine, I am not your fiance's best friend, or your friend, for nothing.

If you're committed to fucking up your life, I vow to be there alongside you the whole damn way.

I'm not going to let you do the wrong thing all on your own. You don't get that sort of glory.

Ride or die, baby.

Thank you, Tony.

I can always trust you to be honest with me.

Ugh, you're almost as bad as Cavello.

I'll take that as a compliment.

You know that it's half of one. Go get some sleep. You've got breakfast to make for your girl tomorrow.

Those heart shaped pancakes aren't going to form themselves.

No more cats though, thank goodness. Pancake art is more difficult than you'd imagine. Even just mixing up a colour that's true after you've browned it on the griddle...

I'd imagine so. Makes your life simpler, busting out the cookie cutters to use as moulds. Seeing as she bawled last time and insisted that she couldn't possibly hurt Taffy's feelings by eating one of his friends.

She's always been a sensitive little girl.

She's always been a sweet little girl.

That too.

Goodnight, Tony.

Catch some winks, Tony.