

MARIAH GOODWIN

NEED YOUR MIDNIGHTS

TAMPA THUNDER SERIES



Need Your Midnights

TAMPA THUNDER

BOOK TWO

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*To everyone who loves second chances,
found family, being called a good girl,
and getting a hand necklace
this one is for you!*

Note to Readers

Hi wonderful readers!

Thank you for taking time out of your day to read my words!

If you read book one before January 2024 please note that the book has been revised and resubmitted, with entirely new editing and formatting.

There are a few changes such as Penny being a Kindergarten teacher instead of High School. I also changed Stuntz's first name to Blake.

You are valued members of the book community and I love each of you for helping to support my dreams of being an author!

Love,

Mariah

Trigger Warnings: Triggers: Choking, off page patient/nurse physical abuse, and pregnancy (epilogue).

Make sure to take care of your mental health first when making reading choices.

Chapter One

LUCY

Fiona has lost her ever-loving mind! “And why would I agree to go with you?” I ask her struggling to not roll my eyes. I am still dressed in the scrubs I wore for my shift today, I set my badge on the counter. All I wanted to do after a day in the ER was come home, shower, have a glass of wine and go to bed.

“Lucy, Please it would mean a lot to have everyone together before the hockey season begins. Plus you were just complaining about needing a beach vacation,” she begs.

I know life is stressful for all of us when hockey begins. We barely see each other with Fiona’s husband and our brother playing for the NHL. She stares at me through Facetime with big puppy dog eyes.

“Those eyes may work for Zane but I am immune, good try though,” I tell her with a smirk.

“Please, I got a babysitter for Hadley already and we have a private plane! PLEASE! Is this about Stuntz?” she asks quietly knowing I don’t like to talk about him.

“No” is all I say. Anytime I say no to something everyone assumes he is why.

“You can talk to me about whatever happened between you two if you ever decide you’re ready. I hate that your friendship ended over who knows what and neither of you will talk about it” Fiona says, staring at me with a look that you can tell she is trying to understand.

“Let me sleep on it Fiona, I had a very long shift” I give her a pleading look.

“Ok. Let me know soon though, I love you” she says.

“I love you too, give hugs to Hadley ” I tell her softly before I hang up.

I immediately get in the shower, letting the billowing steam overtake the bathroom before I step into the water washing the day off my skin. I can't stop thinking of Fiona's vacation plans. As much as I would love a beach vacation to Costa Rica with my favorite people, I don't need to be stuck around Blake. We can barely handle seeing each other as it is. But it would be lots more manageable on a tropical island with lots of frozen drinks. I can feel the sadness creeping up that I get any time he crosses my mind. Turning off the water I try to clear my mind of anything related to the annoyingly handsome hockey player who broke my heart.

But then I stop to think about the people who would be on the trip with us. Fiona, Luke, and I are as close as siblings can be. Of course, Celisa, our cousin, who practically grew up in our house is just as tight-knit. Then you add in Charlie, she is amazing, when she took over Fiona's lease in our college apartment I wasn't prepared to make another practical sister. Zane will of course be there since he is Luke's teammate and Fiona's husband. Then there is Blake Stuntz. My best friend in college who is now someone I barely know and just see at our weekly family dinners.

I pour myself a glass of wine and settle onto the couch to watch *Schitts Creek*, my comfort show at the moment. Nothing helps me settle for the day more than watching David Rose and all his sass. I pull out my phone to text Emerson who is my best friend. We met on day one of orientation in the ER last year and have been close ever since. She is the only close friend I have who's not obsessed with the hockey players in my life.

Lucy: Em. You won't believe what Fiona wants me to do.

Emerson: Quit your job and work for her?

Lucy: Probably, honestly. But NO! She wants me to go to Costa Rica for a week. Apparently, they rented a private jet and everything. But I feel like she's trying to fix Blake and I's friendship.

Emerson: GO! Are you an idiot? WTF is the issue?

Lucy: Blake is going, that is the problem!

Emerson: It's a big island you will probably barely see each other. Work has been brutal for you lately. You deserve a free tropical vacation.

Emerson: and don't even act like you are going to pay, Zane will not allow that and you know it.

Lucy: I guess you are right. Okay, I am going to text Fi and let her know. XOXO love you

Emerson: You better. See you at work tomorrow!

I pulled up my text thread with Fiona, Celisa, and Charlie.

Lucy: What days do I need to request off?

Celisa: Told you she wouldn't say no to a tropical vacation with drinks galore.

Fiona: YAY THIS IS THE BEST NEWS EVER.

Charlie: I am really excited you can make it Lucy!

Celisa: Calm down caps lock queen you are going to scare her away.

Lucy: Send me the details so I can arrange for work. I am so excited to spend some time with you guys. I feel like I haven't seen you in forever with work being absolutely crazy.

Celisa: Family dinner this week?

Lucy: I will be there. I would love to see Hadley. Plus I want to introduce you to someone.

Fiona: Sounds good to me I will let Z know.

Celisa: Wow, it only took 4 months to get introduced to this new guy.

Lucy: Don't make me regret this. We are a lot as a group and you know how guys get around the hockey guys. I wanted to be sure he liked me before bringing him over.

Fiona: We understand, ignore Celisa, we are excited.



BEEP BEEP BEEP... I wake up to the loud annoying alarm on my phone going off. Stretching, I immediately regret allowing myself to fall asleep on the couch last night. I hop up, grab some Tylenol for my back pain, and proceed to get ready for another 12-hour shift. My blonde hair hangs down to my mid back and I decide to fix it up into two Dutch braids and quickly apply some mascara. I slip into my black scrubs. I grab my water and I run out the door.

My ADHD makes time management a bit of a struggle. But I arrive at work right on time, looking considerably more put together than I feel thanks to my birthday gifts from Zane and Fiona this year. I got a gorgeous light blue Stanley cup and a matching Littman stethoscope that coordinates great with my usual black scrubs and light blue and white sneakers I have.

Emerson jokes that I look like a boujee millennial nurse from Instagram, but we both know these things were gifts, not something I would buy myself. I am not big on spending money on this stuff, I prefer to drop all my money on books.

My eyes scan the assignment board and I can see that I am in the same hall as Em and Hunter. Hunter is a newer nurse, but he is a great team player. I love working with him.

“Good morning Lucy!” Hunter says with his coffee cup in one hand and a bag of blood tubes in the other.

“Morning! I am going to get bedside reports on my patients and check on my rooms then I will catch up with you” I tell him, walking to get my computer on wheels to start the day.

Three hours have passed before our trio have a moment to stop and have an uninterrupted conversation.

“My feet hurt, why is it so busy today?” Emerson whines while charting beside me.

“I haven’t had a room empty all day. They are filling as soon as the previous patient walks out the door,” Hunter says.

“Well, in other news, I am bringing Wyatt to family dinner on Sunday,” I say shyly. No one says anything so I look over and they are both staring at me mouths wide open.

“What?” I question.

“Um, nothing just I didn’t realize you were that serious with Wyatt to bring him to meet everyone. Is this about the trip? Are you doing this because you are nervous about the trip? I just don’t want you convincing yourself it’s more serious with him than it is over Blake. I know his proclamation a few months ago fucked with your head” Emerson gives me a small smile.

“Wyatt is great so don’t hurt him by rushing things when you aren’t ready. He really does like you” Hunter says without a smile. Hunter and Wyatt aren’t friends but they are good acquaintances.

“I am not forcing things, I want to introduce him to everyone,” I say abruptly.

“CODE BLUE INCOMING 2 MINS” rings out loudly through the hospital.

“Saved by the bell” is all Emerson has time to say before we take off sprinting to the trauma bays. It’s all hands on deck especially with the ER being short-staffed.

The few minutes of organized chaos, before a coding patient comes through the doors, is almost like an out-of-body experience. Everyone is getting their task from the charge nurse. Everyone is hustling to be sure the room is stocked and ready before it becomes just chaos. I am on compressions so I make sure I have a step stool in place. I take off my radio and throw my phone on the counter. We hear the sirens grow louder as pads are hooked to the AED, IV supplies are readied on the counter, gloves are being put on, and then you hear the doors of the ambulance bay open.

“Down approximately 7 minutes before we arrived on scene” “4 yrs old” “drowning” “Hold compressions” So many voices and sounds are running through my mind as I see the medics wheeling in the patient with another medic on the stretcher doing CPR. Then it all goes silent, I switch into hyperfocus mode. The next 10 mins feel like hours but we finally get a pulse. You can hear the sighs of relief as we begin to clear the room of everyone except the needed personnel. We blink back the tears in our eyes as we head back to our assignments and collect ourselves before getting back to work. Checking on my patients like nothing ever happened.

The next seven hours of the shift is so busy it seems to fly by, thankfully. I clock out after report grab my Stanley, and head to my car. I unlock my door and get inside, reaching into my pocket for my phone checking my phone for the first time in hours.

Wyatt: Hey I grabbed food, see you at your place after your shift.

Shit. I forgot I had plans with him. I hurry home so I can shower before he arrives. I drive home blasting my Taylor Swift playlist. Sometimes you just need to scream sing “Mr. Perfectly Fine (Taylors Version)” after a long shift. I disassociate the entire drive losing myself in my playlist. Not allowing myself to think about the child we almost lost today. I cannot afford to allow myself to go there.

I pull into my parking garage and rush to my apartment. I take a fast shower deciding against washing my hair again. I throw on a pair of the comfiest midnight blue pajama pants, they are my favorite, pairing it with my slouchy sweater and letting my hair fall in waves from the undone braids. Just as I am finished getting dressed and giving myself a once over in the mirror. I hear a knock on my door.

Opening the door I am greeted by Wyatt, who looks classically handsome as always, holding out a takeout bag from the local Chinese spot we love. My eyes roam over his black hair cut nicely with short sides and just enough on top to style it and his freshly shaven face that shows off his beautiful skin, his deep brown eyes, and his perfect smile. My eyes scan lower to his bootcut jeans that show off his toned butt and thick thighs, paired with a tight gray shirt you can tell this man never misses a workout. Being a paramedic helps him keep his figure as well.

We met when he was on shift. He was bringing in a patient and I was on my first week in the ER. I ran into him covered in lube. It was quite the scene. At the time I wasn't ready to date anyone. Still hurting and hung up on Blake. Then about four months ago I decided to move on but that is a story for a time Wyatt isn't standing on my doorstep.

I step aside welcoming him in.

“Hey cutie,” he says, dropping a kiss on my cheek as he heads to the kitchen. I cringe internally at the nickname as I follow him

“Hi, thanks for bringing dinner”. I told him.

“No problem. I heard about the day from Jake and figured you could just use a chill night at home” he says. Jake, Wyatt's

brother, was one of the medics who brought the code in. I can always rely on Wyatt to not pry because he understands what a career in emergency medical care is like. He sets the food on the table as I pour us both a glass of wine.

“Thank you for understanding. On another note, I was wondering if you would be interested in coming to a family dinner on Sunday?” I ask before quickly sipping my wine. A huge grin spreads across his face.

“Of course, I would love to meet the people who mean the most to you, you talk about them so much that I feel like I know some of them already,” he answers then he reaches out and grabs my hand then drops a kiss on it. The rest of dinner goes by quietly as we eat and briefly talk about Wyatt’s day off and his conversation with his brother. I stand up and bring my plate to the sink as Wyatt tells Alexa to play Justin Beiber.

Then turns to me saying “I know you love listening to music so I figured we would listen to JB since he is a favorite amongst the ladies.” My eye almost twitches but I just ignore it and accept it as Wyatt trying to be sweet.

“Thank you, that was thoughtful. I do love music” I give him a small smile.

Yawning I say “Today was exhausting. I think I am going to head to bed if you don’t mind.”

He pulls me into a hug murmuring into my hair “Of course I understand. I am on shift tomorrow so maybe I will see you there. If not, I will see you on Sunday.” I pop up on my tippy toes and give him a quick kiss on the cheek before walking towards the door. We say a quick goodbye before I shut the door and lock it up. Leaning against it, taking a deep breath of relaxation.

I take my wine glass to the couch thinking about the day. Something about what Emerson said earlier about Blake’s confession all those months ago is stuck in my head. That night was terrible for me. Our entire group was at our weekly family dinner when Blake decided to shatter my heart, again.

“So I think I am going to start focusing on settling down, starting a family, maybe buying a house,” Blake says.

Everyone is staring at him. He has never talked like this before. He has never mentioned wanting a family. He was always so focused on his career. Now he suddenly wants to start settling down. The thought that the first and only man I loved was ready to settle down and here I am still pining over him seems pathetic. I can't be the girl watching him move on while I am sitting here hoping he finally sees what he lost. I miss what he says next, lost in my own thoughts. But I notice Fiona is staring at me, sympathetically, like she can physically see my pain and heartbreak.

“Well that's good man,” Zane tells him.

“More women for me!” Luke laughs.

I don't remember much more of that night but I do know a week later I was telling myself I was ready, and basically talking myself into going on a date with Wyatt. I was determined to move on, and I almost didn't care who I did it with. Wyatt is so kind and caring, I could see myself really liking him one day, he is a good guy, I just wish I didn't have to keep convincing myself that I can like him. Shouldn't liking the person you're dating just come naturally? I drift off to sleep lost in tangled thoughts of Blake and Wyatt.

Chapter Two

BLAKE

“Hustle up, old man,” I say, almost out of breath myself. Zane gives me the finger as he runs up beside me.

“It’s the offseason, why are you acting like it’s playoff week with these workouts?” Zane huffs at me. I just smirk and grab a sip of water taking a seat at the table by the track. Zane eyes me suspiciously.

“Just spit it out already,” I tell him, rolling my eyes.

“Family dinner Sunday, Fiona said to tell you,” he says.

“Oookay? Why are you being weird about it? I have never missed a family dinner, I know when they are...” I question.

“Because Luc will be there,” he says, still looking strange.

“And... we have gone to things together before,” I tell him. I am not the one with the issue, she is the one who hates me but I don’t tell him that.

“Well, she is bringing her boyfriend this time. The firefighter. Apparently, she said she’s ready to take it to that level.” Zane wearily tells me.

“Oh, that’s cool. Good for her. I am glad that she is happy” I try to sound disinterested and take a sip of my water.

We sit in silence for a while before Zane says “I know you miss each other. You both were so close and whatever happened you are BOTH idiots for throwing all of that away over whatever happened years ago.” I just ignore him and pick up my phone and start scrolling.

“I think you guys should just talk it out. Let’s brainstorm a way to get your best friend back. Neither of you are truly happy. She throws herself into her work at the hospital and you do the same with hockey. And you can claim you’ve always been a workaholic, but this is extreme, you need to start living again. When we all hang out and you both actively ignore each other” he says but I am only half listening.

“When we go on vacation you should try and fix this shit or at least get to a place where you can be civil” he continues.

“Hold on! She’s coming on vacation? I thought she was busy working?” I say trying to control my facial expressions.

“Yeah apparently Emerson convinced her to go,” he says shrugging, before continuing “I am starving let’s grab food.” With that, he stands up and we head to the parking lot.

“Meet you at Slapshots” I yell out as I climb into my SUV.

I put my foot on the brake and press the ignition button, this thing is my pride and joy, my first purchase with my contract money when I got signed to the Thunder. It’s nothing super fancy but my Range Rover holds a special spot in my heart. It took me a while to find a vehicle that comfortably fits a 6’6 260-pound hockey player. My condo is only one block from Slapshots. So I pull into the parking garage and walk over to meet Zane.

Opening the door to this bar brings me back to when we were in college and all the nights we celebrated our wins or drowned our sorrows here. I spot Zane quickly in a booth in the back, trying to stay out of sight in case there are any fans around. We don’t usually mind taking pictures and signing autographs, but sometimes we just want to eat.

“Remembering the good old days?” Zane says as I take my seat.

Chuckling, I reply “Yeah, like remember when I won that dart competition or when we won trivia and karaoke back to back and people thought it was rigged.” My smile is wide as we both think back to those moments.

Zane has that weird smile on again, “What now?” I ask.

“Just wondering if you realized you only mentioned moments that included Luc. Even Fi wasn’t around for some of those memories” he says with a knowing smirk.

“Coincidence” is all I say before the waitress walks up and we order. Thankfully the rest of lunch goes by without mention of her.

After lunch, I walk back to my condo and shower. Zane really has me reflecting on the last two years. I have been busy but I have also been happy. At least I think I have been happy. I have been playing for the Tampa Thunder and last year we made it to the playoffs. I have been able to travel during the off-season. My childhood dreams are all coming true, next is the Stanley Cup! We almost made it last season but this year it’s going to be ours. The rest of the day passes quickly as I update my digital calendar with any appearances I need to make this month. When night finally comes I slip right into sleep without issue.

Morning comes too soon when I hear the alarm go off. Meeting the boys for a morning workout always sounds like a good idea before I go to bed. But when I wake up I immediately regret those plans. Arriving at the arena’s gym I can tell it is going to be a long day because I can see Luke flirting. Luke Campbell, Lucy, and Fiona’s brother, is already here talking to one of the girls on the media team.

“Campbell leave the poor girl alone it’s too early.” I holler at him down the hallway. The girl blushes and quickly scurries away.

“Stuntz you don’t have to be so serious all the time,” he says leaning on the wall.

“Where is Miller?” I ask entering the weight room.

Luke checks his phone and then says “Z says he is helping Fiona with Hadley then he will be here.” Hadley is my goddaughter, she’s almost 2, and the only excuse I will accept for being late.

“Fine only because of Hadley” I roll my eyes. Luke chuckles knowing that Hadley is 100% my weak spot. Not having siblings I am extremely close to my friends “my chosen family” as Fiona calls us.

“So Stuntz are you ready for Sunday?” Luke asks. These people are pissing me off, there is nothing to be ready for.

“Why is everyone so worried?” I ask, annoyed.

“Well, it’s a big deal because this is the first dude Luc is bringing home since high school. I don’t want whatever beef you two have going on ruining this for her. He is the first guy I have even heard her mention since you and her flirted in college all the time” he says looking right into my eyes. I can feel his brotherly love for Lucy radiating off him.

“We flirted in college but that was just for fun, it never meant anything” I respond before turning back to the weight rack.

“I am not an idiot you went from being best friends flirting all the time to barely being able to look each other in the eye. I was at the wedding too, you know. I noticed when people started to disappear off the dance floor.” he says but I interrupt

“Wait”. He waves me off finishing his thought.

“You are both adults but whatever that was or wasn’t that night ruined everything and I don’t want that mess tainting her new relationship.” We both go back to our workouts without much conversation after that until Zane arrives.

“Sorry I am late Hadley was giving Fiona a hard time,” Zane says as he walks up to the weight rack to join us.

“No worries we were just actually working on them gains,” Luke says. Zane and I both roll our eyes and chuckle.

“So everything is booked for the trip?” I ask.

“Yes, we are ready. The plane, hotels, everything is set. A few more weeks and we will be laying in the tropical sun getting wasted” Zane says.

“I looked up the resort. It looks so nice and it’s private so it won’t be too crazy busy” I inform them.

“Good then we can party without worrying about people taking pics,” Luke says.

“I just want to chill on the beach and have some drinks with my wife and family,” Zane tells us with his stupid googly eyes he gets when he talks about his wife.

The rest of the workout consists of Zane telling Luke he better not get in trouble on the trip and me laughing because he will without a doubt get in some sort of trouble. It’s inevitable that we will all most likely be dragged into his shenanigans too. Heading to our cars Luke invites us to the bar tonight since it’s a game night for our alma mater. We agree to meet there later and all go our separate ways.

Back at my apartment, I shower then sit down and touch base with my agent about what I have going on media-wise over the next few weeks, making sure I didn’t miss adding anything to my calendar earlier. Fiona’s company does most of my personal social media content but I have sponsorships and things I have to do for the team that I also need to keep track of. So checking in often helps me make sure I don’t miss anything. After a few hours in my home office, I take a nap until it’s time to get ready.



Walking into Slapshots on a busy game night is overwhelming but the energy for our college team is electric. We are all hoping to see the Penguins take the win tonight. I settle into a booth in the corner and wait for the guys to arrive. Less than 5 minutes after I order a beer I look up to see a hot blonde walking my way. Her short blonde hair is in curls and she’s wearing a Penguins shirt cut to just below her bra and tight short shorts that cup her in all the right places.

“Hey handsome waiting on someone” she whispers in a soft voice.

“Friends. You?” I ask before sipping my beer.

“My friends are here but I was hoping to find myself with hotter company,” she says and leans over a little giving me a better view of her boobs.

“Unfortunately it is guys’ night, sorry hun,” I tell her. “Too bad, let me know if you change your mind” she teases before walking away with a swing in her step that makes the view of her walking away so worth it.

“You never can take a blonde home can you?” Luke says coming out of nowhere and scaring me. Zane laughs at his side and before they both sit down and look over at the blonde, who is now looking at all of us and she winks.

“This has nothing to do with hair color. What the fuck.” I defend myself.

“You haven’t taken home a blonde since college. It’s a fact. Check your name on Google the girls are never blonde” Zane interjects.

“That is a weird fact to know, maybe the blondes just aren’t as hot as the brunettes the nights I am out” I shrug.

“Sure, whatever you say” Luke taunts. I finish the rest of my beer and roll my eyes at how ridiculous they both are.

When I got home that night I remember the last time I tried to take home a blonde. It was at the bar my sophomore year and I saw a hot blonde throw her drink on some guy and tell everyone he had a small dick. I was intrigued so I followed her outside even though it was almost midnight. I was determined to meet this girl. So I asked her for a midnight moment, looking back that it was corny as shit, but she stopped. Turns out it was my teammate Luke’s sister, Lucy, whom I had met before. Her haircut threw me off, in my defense.

That is the last time I can truly remember hitting on a blonde. I honestly don’t know why. Throughout college, we continued to share midnight moments. Sometimes it was a midnight truth or a wish. It was our free pass to say whatever was on our minds without judgment. We wished for successful careers, or help for Fiona with issues with her ex. Sometimes they were funny like that I smelled or that Lucy’s doom piles

were going to consume her room. Back then she openly talked to me about her ADHD and how it impacted her daily life, and she was never offended by me poking a little fun. Those spontaneous moments of honesty were something special and just ours.

Chapter Three

LUCY

My alarm blares at 11am. It was nice to sleep in some after working three twelve-hour shifts in a row. I immediately pull out my phone and order coffee on my app because it's Sunday and I have a feeling today is going to be a long day. I put on my 'Bad Bitch' playlist and get to work cleaning my house and doing the laundry. Laundry is by far my least favorite chore, I don't know if it's because of my ADHD. I struggle with executive dysfunction. but I loathe it. I have found listening to music helps, four hours later my house is spotless, laundry is done, and candles are lit.

I take a quick shower, throw on my cozy robe, and blow dry my hair. I decided to put some effort into my appearance today since it is the first time I am bringing someone around, not just anyone, but a guy. I grab my curling wand and style my hair in loose curls flowing down my back with the front pieces twisted and pinned out of my face. My skin is naturally tan so I don't really need any foundation. I just throw on some pretty light shimmery pink eyeshadow and mascara paired with a darker pink lip stain. I decided on a blue summer dress that is flowy yet still form-fitting and accentuates my curves perfectly. I open my closet door, I dig for my white wedges because they are going to look perfect with this outfit.

The doorbell rings and I take a deep breath. Showtime. Wyatt is wearing a nice pair of khaki slacks paired with a white short-sleeved button-up and loafers. The shirt accentuates his muscles perfectly and I know Celisa is going

to be impressed with him even though she has seen pictures of him.

“You look beautiful, Lucy,” he says as he leans in and gives me a quick kiss.

“Thank you. You don’t look too bad yourself” I say with a light chuckle. I grab my purse and lead the way out the door.

The drive to Zane and Fiona’s house is basically just me warning Wyatt about everyone that will be at dinner. I let him know about the macho-man protective crap they are going to try to pull. I warn him the girls will be giddy and probably have a million questions to ask him. I also briefly mention that Blake is a dick and to just ignore anything that he says.

“Take a breath, Lucy, I might be a hockey fan, but I am your biggest fan first,” he says, lifting my hand to his mouth and dropping a kiss on it.

“Sorry, I just haven’t really brought anyone around before because I am afraid they are just using me to meet the hockey players in my circle,” I say, shocked that I let that thought that has been in my head all car ride just slip out like word vomit.

“I know you have had issues in the past with dates and friends using you. I have never and would never pressure you to introduce me to anyone, regardless of their status. These are your people and I want you to do things on your own terms when you think it’s right. I like you a lot and I am proud to be by your side tonight.” he says. The way he says he likes me a lot, makes me wary, but I don’t have the energy to overthink things right now, so I nod and turn up the radio.

Pulling into the Miller’s driveway I can see Wyatt’s eyes get big.

“This house is beautiful,” he says.

“Yeah, it’s not huge, but it’s gorgeous. They definitely put time into updating it inside and out” I tell him. I let my mind wander thinking back to the summer they bought this house. When we park and get out Wyatt grabs my hand, which feels both comforting and intimate at the same time. I give him a small sheepish smile before knocking and opening the door.

The knock is more of a habit, they have always told me that I can just walk right in, which I love about them.

“Hey, we are here” I yell out, stepping inside and closing the door behind us. You can hear all the different voices stop as we head down the hallway to the open-concept kitchen living room area.

All eyes are on us as we enter the kitchen.

“AUNT LUCY ” Hadley yells, breaking the silence and jumping from Blake’s arms to run to me.

“Hi, baby girl. You look beautiful” I tell her, kissing her cheek.

“Everyone, this is Wyatt, my boyfriend. Wyatt this is everyone” I say before I begin naming everyone as people walk up to shake his hand. I don’t know why but I wrap my arm around Wyatt cuddling up close when Blake walks up.

“This is Blake. Blake this is Wyatt” I say and it is almost a whisper.

“Nice to meet you, Wyatt. Luc, it’s nice to see you” Blake says but when our eyes meet I just look away and just nod.

The tension in the room is noticeable, but Luke attempts to break it by asking Wyatt about his job as a paramedic and all that it entails. Everyone relaxes a bit more and takes turns asking Wyatt questions and making him feel included in their conversations. It is going so much better than I thought it would. I start to relax but make sure to avoid eye contact with Blake at all costs.

We all sit down to eat, and I have Wyatt to my left and Luke to my right. Fiona and Zane are at the head of the table. I must have been a shit person in a past life because Blake ends up sitting directly in front of me with Celisa in front of Wyatt. Why would he sit there? He could have sat one chair down and sat in front of Luke. I give Blake a hard glare before turning back to Wyatt and kissing him on his cheek. Take that, jerk.

“How did you guys meet and start dating?” It catches me off guard that I hear his voice asking that question. I mean, it

makes sense that people would ask us this, but why does Blake care? He's just trying to get a ride out of me and I refuse to give him the satisfaction.

"We met in the ER during her second week of work. It's actually a funny story" Wyatt says before I interrupt.

"It's not that funny," I say looking at him pleadingly.

"Let us decide that," Fiona says with a smile.

"I had just finished dropping off my patient at the ER. When I saw someone running down the hall and before I even had time to react she slid right into me, knocking us both to the ground. The best part was she was holding a bunch of opened lube for a procedure. So we were on the floor covered in hospital lube and she said "No need to wait to slide into my DMs, looks like I slid into yours first."

"You knocked this man down, covered him in lube, made a corny joke, and he still wants to date you. He's a keeper" Celisa laughs.

I can feel Blake's eyes on me but I refuse to look over. "So how did you start dating?" Zane asks.

"Well after that we talked all the time in passing when I brought patients in. We flirted a lot but she always said she was still getting over someone from college. It wasn't until about 4 months ago that she finally came up and said "I'm ready" and the rest is history. She has been a light in my life the past few months" Wyatt looks over at me with a beaming smile that reaches his eyes.

"Wow that is romantic," Luke says. I catch the look exchanged between him and Blake before I down the rest of my wine.

"I am going to refill my glass. Anyone need anything?" I say before hopping up and bolting to the kitchen purposefully before anyone can even answer.

I start to refill my wine glass and hear the patter of familiar footsteps but they stop right behind me.

“Four months ago.. four months ago. Would that happen to be before or after Blake mentioned being ready to settle down and start a family?” Fiona whispers but I can hear the emotion.

“Let it go, they aren’t related Fi” I defend.

“Oh sure, I believe that as much as I believe you two didn’t ruin your friendship over something I assume is just a stupid miscommunication. That man out there is in love with you. Don’t drag him around like a show pony to get back at Blake. Wyatt deserves better than that and you know it.” She turns around and storms out before I can even respond.

Thankfully the rest of the dinner passes without any awkward moments. Wyatt is none the wiser about my conversation with Fiona but the rest of the group seems to have put together that something went down in the kitchen because we haven’t spoken to each other since. When everyone eventually says their goodbyes, which takes forever, we head towards the door. I let out a huge sigh of relief as I open the door and step out into the fresh air.

“That went great! Everyone was so welcoming and nice. Blake was a little standoffish, but you had already prepared me for that” Wyatt tells me.

“They all loved you. And you fit in perfectly with the rest of the group.” I say and he reaches for my hand as we walk towards his car.

Wyatt stops and gently pulls on my hand, bringing me closer to him, until we are facing each other. He tilts my chin up with his other hand into a deep kiss, the kind you imagine in high school that’s supposed to make your foot pop. There was no foot pop. I don’t want to overthink it though, so I just try to enjoy the moment. We are both startled when we hear the door open and close behind us and someone clearing their throat. I spin around and my heart stops as I come face to face with a pissed off-looking Blake. I put my hand on Wyatt’s arm and urge him towards his car.

“Luc, can I talk to you for a second?” Blake asks.

“No sorry we have to get home” I yell back without turning around.

“Lucy it’s fine go talk to him for a second. I will just start the car and wait for you.” Wyatt tells me sweetly.

“Lucy, just come here please” Blake sounds very annoyed now.

“He sounds mad, just go see what he wants,” Wyatt says.

“Fine, I will be right back. Ugh, sorry.” I say pulling myself up on my tiptoes to give him a kiss.

I stomp my way over to Blake mumbling. If only Wyatt knew our real history he would definitely not be okay with me coming over here to talk to him.

“What? I am tired and Wyatt and I want to get back to my place” I say with a smirk.

“We have barely talked in almost two years. Then you come here with some guy to introduce to everyone like he’s the end game. Then you practically fuck him outside” Blake says disgusted.

“First of all, fuck you. I can do whatever and we were just kissing, so chill out, you’re not my keeper. He’s not some random guy either. He is nice and thoughtful and treats me very well. We have been together for a while now, what is it to you” I practically yell at him angry.

“Wow, he’s nice what a generic review you have for him like he is some kind of ‘rent a boyfriend’ or something. Also, I wouldn’t call four months a while. It’s a good thing I am not your brother right Luc? Or are you only going by Lucy now?” The smirk he has on enrages me.

“Don’t worry about me, asshole. Go screw some perfect little brunette that you seem to not be able to get enough of.” I say.

“Following my relationships there Luc?” he winks.

“I hate you” I spin on my heel and head back to the car before he can respond.

I take a second to collect myself before I open the door. Wyatt picks up on my mood change and walks me to my door but doesn't ask to come in. I am grateful for that because the minute the door closes tears are falling and I can't seem to stop them.

Wyatt was so nice tonight and got along with everyone. He understood that I was upset and respected my feelings enough to just let me be alone tonight. Blake, on the other hand, seems like he went out of his way to upset me. He was so hurtful and has no right to say any of the things he said. This is why I want to be with Wyatt. He is simple and sweet.

Chapter Four

BLAKE

“Smooth.” I hear from behind me. I turn around to find Fiona leaning up against the doorway to the front of the house. I don’t need to ask her what she is talking about because the smug look on her face says it all. I wonder how long she was standing there eavesdropping. I take a second to collect my thoughts.

“Not now, Fi” I pleaded to her.

“If not now then when Blake? Neither of you will talk about what happened but the tension is thick when you’re both in a room together and we can all feel it too. You’re not hiding anything. You haven’t dated another blonde since college, probably out of fear she would remind you of Luc. It took her forever to finally give a guy a chance at dating her, and she landed here tonight with Wyatt. You both sneak looks at each other all the time. You were jealous as hell tonight and don’t even try to deny it. Either you don’t realize you still have feelings for her or you are deep in denial. you need to figure it out and so does she. This conversation is not over, but it’s getting late and I have to go back inside, drive safe. I love you” she says then turns to go back inside.

I head to my car truly confused by tonight. I don’t have feelings for Lucy. I just think it was rude of her to maul her boyfriend on the porch where all of us could see. Everyone is on my back about what happened two years ago. I start the engine and turn up the radio to drown out my wandering thoughts of Lucy and Wyatt, their make out session, and the

fact that they probably went back to one of their places to do a whole hell of a lot more than just kissing.

Once I get home I immediately pour myself a whiskey on ice, crash on the couch, and put on Sports Center. I usually love watching the preseason coverage, but tonight it's just not keeping me as distracted as I'd hoped. My thoughts keep drifting back to Lucy and the night that ruined everything. The night one of my closest friendships was destroyed shortly after the most mind blowing sex of my life.



Zane and Fiona's wedding was amazing. Everyone was dancing and drinking, just having a great time. Lucy and I were partnered to walk together because we were both members of the bridal party, which was great. Neither of us had to deal with awkwardly being partnered up with someone we didn't know and trying to make small talk, being best friends we were so comfortable together. She looked stunning that night. I had noticed she was beautiful before but never gave it a second thought because why would I want a hookup that could potentially ruin our friendship?

Lucy flirted with me more than normal that night, but I assumed it was the open bar getting to her. Towards the end of the night, some hip hop song came on, and the next thing I knew Lucy was grinding on me. She turned around wrapping her arms around my neck and asked if I wanted to go somewhere more private. I am not sure what was in my whiskey that night, but I nodded and she grabbed my hand and we headed towards the elevator. The entire bridal party had rooms on the same hotel floor so once we stepped into the elevator and hit the button to go up to the rooms. I grabbed Lucy's hips pulling her up against me and leaning in to kiss her.

The passion in that kiss was something that I had never experienced before. I have been turned on by a hot and heavy makeout session but what happened in that elevator was something else. When the elevator came to a stop, on our floor, I picked her up, letting her wrap her legs around my waist, and headed to my room. I could feel the heat radiating

off of her core and as she started grinding against me trying to create the friction she so desperately wanted, I fumbled for my hotel room key card in my back pocket. Once I had it, I swiped and the door finally opened, I carried her in and leaned her back against the wall, and kissed her like I needed her to breathe life back into me.

I slid my hand through the high slit in her dress and her skin felt soft as velvet. She let out a small moan and tilted her head up slightly and I began to kiss down her now exposed neck. I stop at the sensitive spot behind her ear. There is another moan as she rolls her hips into me harder, with her hands tangled in my hair. I move us over to the bed, carefully laying Lucy down, and I almost want to pinch myself. I cannot believe this is actually happening right now. Luc and I are really about to do this.

I look down at her as I start to unbutton my shirt and she stands up then quickly slides out of her dress. My breath catches in my throat when her dress hits the floor. She has nothing underneath. My eyes rake over her slowly taking in every inch of her body. Her perfect perky breasts are just begging to be touched. She crawls back on the bed smiling from ear to ear, and I cannot get the rest of my clothes off fast enough.

I drop to my knees at the edge of the bed, grabbing her by the ankle. I gently pull her down closer to where I am at the edge of the bed. "Are you sure about this?" I ask.

"Yes. Please, Blake" she says.

"Luc, how long have you been desperate for my mouth and cock. I wonder if you taste as good as you look" I say.

Putting her legs over my shoulders and I move my tongue right to her pussy, her desire for me making it glisten in the dim hotel room light. I lick her nice and slow as she wriggles from the sensation, her body begging for more. Sliding in one finger, I notice how tight she is as I slowly thrust it in and out, being sure to curl just a little. Before I add another finger, I take my time sucking her clit slowly rolling the tip of my tongue around it until I think she is ready for more, then I add

another finger. I pump them in and out of her as she moans my name, eyes squeezed shut.

“Blake please, don’t stop, I am so close,” she says.

“If you want to come you need to be a good girl and open those beautiful brown eyes as I eat your delicious pussy.” I tell her before continuing to suck her clit while I finger her.

She looks at me as she arches her back and I can feel her pussy tightening and know she’s close, so I blow on her clit slowly before bringing my lips back to suck as my fingers curl inside her. With a hand wrapped in my hair, she orgasms as she moans my name. I don’t move my mouth until I have licked her clean.

While she catches her breath, I get up and go to my suitcase to grab a condom, thank God I packed one, just in case. I walk back over and Lucy sits up smiling, removing the condom from my hand.

“My turn,” she says and guides me to sit on the bed while she drops to her knees.

I never imagined she would ever be on her knees in front of me, but I don’t think this is a memory I will ever forget. She tries to wrap a hand around me, eyes wide when she realizes that it won’t wrap fully around me. I chuckle laying back on my elbows as she licks her lips, lowering her head to my cock. She licks my entire shaft then uses one hand to lightly squeeze my balls. Then putting just the tip in her mouth she swirls her tongue and gives it a quick fast suck, before starting to bob her head on my cock, going up and down, taking a little more each time. The feel of her mouth on me almost makes me come immediately. I need to get ahold of myself, I’ve waited far too long for this to blow my load in two seconds. She alternates between sucking and working me with her hand. She tries to take all of me in her mouth but is unsuccessful.

“Open your mouth a little wider for me princess” I groan with my hand on her head guiding her farther down my cock. She chokes a little but doesn’t stop. I can see some tears in her eyes but she keeps going, determined to fit all of me.

“Good girl, just like that,” I say.

Someone has a praise kink, I notice as she seems to go even harder every time I compliment her.

I am so close that when she cups my balls and starts to play with them I barely have time to warn her I’m coming. But she doesn’t stop sucking and takes every drop down her throat.

She reaches over and opens the condom, sliding it slowly over my sensitive tip with a smile before climbing on top of me. With one hand on my chest to steady herself she uses the other to guide my cock into her. Slowly she lowers herself onto me inch by inch, letting out a little gasp when she is finally fully seated on top of me. She is so fucking tight around my cock.

I reach up grabbing one tit with one hand and putting the other hand on her hip. I thrust my hips upward causing her to lean forward giving me perfect access to run my tongue over her other nipple giving it a little suck before it hardens in my mouth. I take the hand that’s on her breast and start rolling that nipple between my fingers, feeling it pebble almost instantly.

I begin thrusting into her, and she leans forward holding the headboard for stability. I sink myself in her deep making sure she feels every inch.

“Blake. Right there, Yes. It feels so deep, fuck.” She moans.

I can feel her pussy tighten around me and I know she is close. I move my hand to her clit, rubbing careful circles around it with my thumb while I thrust faster and deeper into her.

“Be a good fucking girl and come for me” I tell her.

A few moments later my name leaves her lips in a moan as she collapses against my chest. Tilting her chin up I kiss her deeply then pull back flipping us over. She giggles as I adjust myself between her legs. I slide into her, lifting one of her legs, putting it on my shoulder giving me more access to bury myself deeper in her pussy.

“Yes Blake, fuck me harder,” she says.

Hearing dirty words come out of her mouth sends me over the edge. I thrust a few more times before I come. I take a second to catch my breath.

“Tonight’s midnight truth is that was incredible,” I tell her then place a kiss on her forehead. I proceed to get up and get a washcloth and clean her up.

She looks cozy as she pulls the covers over herself and rolls towards the window. I am so definitely not ready for bed, so I decide to get dressed and head back to the party. The night is still young. I will talk to Lucy in the morning when we see the happy couple off.

“Hey I am heading back down, see you later Luc” I yell as I head out the door.

It’s three in the morning when I’m riding the elevator back to my hotel room. I scan my room key, open the door, and realize Lucy is gone. She must have headed back to her room to pack her bags since we are all heading out of here early tomorrow. I take off my suit and slip into bed in just my boxers. At the last minute, I decide to grab my phone and shoot her a text.

Blake: Tonight was fun

When my alarm goes off at seven I see that Lucy hasn’t texted back yet but I figure I will just talk to her at the complimentary breakfast downstairs in the lobby. Instead, I am met with death glares and silence.

“Morning, Luc.” I greet her. She says nothing, looking upset.

“What’s wrong? When I got back up to the room you were gone. You should have come back down and joined us. It was fun as fuck.” I tell her. Still no response, she just gets up and walks away.

I don’t know what her issue is. Last night, before we hooked up, I asked if she was sure and she said yes. So, why is

she mad only a few hours later? Girls are confusing as hell.

The next week I was out with some friends and ended up leaving with a girl and it ended up online in the tabloids because everyone loves it when an athlete is seen out with a new woman. The stories are wild sometimes and so far from the truth. Recently signed with the Tampa Thunder, I was attracting attention and the paparazzi were always competing for who could get a photo out first. Not long after that article came out, Lucy stopped coming to Sunday dinners and started avoiding me as much as possible. I really wish she would have just talked to me and told me how to fix things. I was confused and I missed the hell out of her.



I pick up my phone and find myself looking at Lucy's Instagram. I notice she hasn't posted about Wyatt at all, like nothing. That brings me joy for some reason like he isn't that important to her. I click on over to her tagged posts feeling like a weirdo but I am invested in this new, budding romance she is supposedly in. I see that Wyatt has tagged her in multiple posts; she never comments on them but she does like them, interesting. Emerson is constantly posting pictures of them out at brunch and their other outings. Those are almost all pictures that I have seen on Lucy's page before though.

I see some pictures of Lucy nursing which is interesting. It's like getting a behind the scenes look into her life. I see her laughing in her scrubs with some good looking guy, he is also in scrubs. The tag pulls up her friend Hunter's page, I haven't met him at any dinners but she has mentioned him. There is even a post of her jumping in the air and he's holding her hand jumping too. They were posted about a month ago. Her smile doesn't really reach her eyes in any of these though. Those big carefree smiles seemed to have disappeared shortly after the wedding.

Deciding this is enough social media stalking for one night. I plug my phone into the charger before heading to the bathroom to take a shower. It's almost impossible to keep myself from thinking of that night again as I step into the

warm water. I feel so exhausted emotionally after tonight, regretting the way I spoke to Lucy.

I step out of the shower, brush my teeth, and then put some boxers on before I get into bed. I lie there knowing I am going to pay for that conversation one way or another.

Chapter Five

LUCY

After Wyatt said goodbye at the door I shut it behind him, leaning my back against the door, I let the tears fall that I had been holding back the whole ride home. I send a text to Emerson '911. Brunch tomorrow?'. She immediately responds with a champagne glass emoji. With that, I get up pouring myself a glass of white wine. I keep replaying the conversation with Blake over and over again in my mind. I don't understand what he was trying to prove. Tonight of all nights and in front of Wyatt. Hasn't he ruined enough things for me?

We barely even acknowledge each other since the wedding night but all of a sudden he needs to give me his two cents on my life choices? How dare he have any opinion on my relationship. I don't know why I let him get under my skin so easily. I settle onto my couch and drink my wine. My thoughts drift to flashbacks of the night everything changed.



We were drinking and having an amazing time celebrating Zane and Fiona. I had the biggest crush on Blake and this was the night I was going to convince him to give us a chance. I was in a gorgeous blue form fitting dress with a high slit that revealed a lot of leg. I convinced him to dance with me and I made sure to grind slowly against him before turning around and wrapping my arms around his neck inviting him to go somewhere more private. When he agreed, we headed to the elevator and the minute we were inside our lips were on each other like moths to a flame. We didn't come up for air until the

elevator dinged. Blake picked me up and I wrapped my legs around him as he carried me to the room.

When we got inside he pinned me to the wall and kissed me like he has been waiting forever for this moment. All I could think about was finally, I finally got his attention. His hand slid up the slit of the dress caressing my leg and he kissed the sensitive spot behind my ear. All bets were off and my hips rolled into him. I could feel how hard he was beneath me, he wanted this too. Blake carefully set me on the bed and I stood up sliding my dress off.

His eyes roamed my body appreciatively and slowly. The dress pooled at my feet. Blake took his time looking at every inch of me while he unbuttoned his shirt. When I laid back on the bed he dropped to his knees grabbing my ankles and pulling me to the edge of the bed.

“Are you sure about this?” he asked.

“Yes, Please, Blake” I begged.

I was so turned on I almost came the minute he slung my legs over his shoulders. He ate my pussy like it was his last meal and he told me to look him in the eyes like a good girl as I came. His mouth on my pussy, our eyes locked, as my back arched and I hit my climax.

I made sure to return the favor, he had by far the biggest cock I had ever seen, it wasn't only long but it was thick. I choked on him, trying to get all of it in my mouth. Then he called me princess and that was when I discovered I definitely have a praise kink. Because when he called me a good girl I had never been more turned on. When he had finished I made sure I swallowed every drop before putting the condom on.

I took my time lowering myself onto him. He was big so I bounced up and down as I sank onto him, taking a little bit more each time. Once he was fully in it felt incredible. I came two times while we were fucking. I was convinced that I had just had sex with the man I would spend the rest of my life with. What could be better than being best friends and having an insane sexual chemistry? I mean that's endgame right?

When he told me his midnight truth and then kissed my forehead I felt almost on top of the world. Then he came back to clean me up and it just sealed the deal on what a gentleman he was. I rolled over and got comfy, making sure there was plenty of room for him, expecting him to climb into bed and snuggle with me. I was excited to wake up next to him and figure out what this new dynamic between us would become.

Then he put on his clothes, said he would talk to me tomorrow, and left. Here I am thinking he is finally seeing me as more than a best friend, more than his best friend's sister. NOPE. I was a fun, tipsy wedding hookup. I went back to my room feeling cheap and used, and cried myself to sleep.

I was devastated and embarrassed.

The next day I avoided him. I ignored his text, did not make eye contact, and didn't want to talk. I was hurt.

The next week I got dressed in a gorgeous tight blue dress, my hair and makeup done perfectly and I head to the club that I know Blake is at. Thanks to one of his teammates, who is also my friend, for letting me know. I haven't seen him since the wedding and I want to try and talk to him before he heads out to training camp in August.

When I arrived Mateo, one of our close friends, said he had already left so I headed home, sad and defeated. I decided I'd reach out tomorrow and see if he wants to get lunch together. In the morning though I woke up to his picture plastered all over Sportscenter's social media. He left the club with some brunette chick all cuddled up against him and smiling. It's only been a week and he is already hooking up with other girls, it really was just a one night stand to him.

I am so embarrassed and heartbroken. It was at this point that I stopped showing up to events that I knew he would be at. I have actually done a great job at avoiding him as much as possible. In the beginning, he would try to talk to me but I would ignore him. So he stopped trying and now we just ignore each other. Except at home hockey games, when I go to support Zane and Luke and I tap my hand against his gloves on the glass, because hockey players are superstitious and we

did that all through college. I won't chance him blaming me for losing a game.



Ugh, I feel terrible. Waking up after too much wine and crying too many tears hurts in more ways than one. I need to get ready to meet Emerson at our favorite little brunch spot. After throwing on some makeup, putting my hair in a cute messy bun, and slipping on an olive green jumpsuit that looks gorgeous on my skin I am ready.

Surprisingly, Emerson holds in all her questions until we are done ordering our mimosas and food. I grab my glass and stare at her chuckling softly “Okay go ahead, ask whatever you are barely holding in”.

“What did that idiot do?” she says pointedly.

Although I already know who she's talking about, I play along, “What idiot?”

“Lucy, don't start with me. What happened last night? And the idiot is Blake duh!” she says exasperated. I can't help but laugh.

I proceed to tell her everything from start to finish including the wine induced crying session I had after.

“Wow. So basically you are saying Wyatt is in love with you. You don't know how you feel about him. Blake is an idiot and jealous. Fiona knows you are still hung up on Blake. Is that about it?” she says knowingly before sipping her mimosa.

“I like Wyatt. I am not confused. Blake isn't confused, he is just an ass. And I am not hung up on Blake still, I moved on months ago.” I say rolling my eyes.

“Luc listen I love you but you only moved on because Blake said he wanted to settle down. You love him even if you want to pretend you are over him. You very clearly aren't and I don't think you are doing Wyatt or yourself any good pretending this is going to workout. Blake is jealous, he doesn't talk to you for almost two years and then all of a sudden decides to the day you bring home a boyfriend. That

boy is jealous, a jealous idiot,” she says with a look of sympathy. She knows how hard everything with Blake was for me.

I busy myself with eating my food while I try to take in everything she says. I think she realizes I need a minute to think, because she also focuses on her food, occasionally looking at me to see if I’m okay.

“I think I am going to skip family dinner the next two weeks and give myself some space from both Wyatt and Blake while I figure things out in my head,” I say softly.

We get up from the table and Emerson pulls me into a hug because she knows physical touch is my love language. We say our goodbyes and I decide to head to the gym. I need to use my free time over the next few weeks doing things to settle my mind before we leave on this trip.

Chapter Six

BLAKE

TRIP DAY

I wake up with plenty of time to shower and stop for coffee before we head to the airport. I can't wait to just relax before training camp begins next week. Anxiety starts slowly creeping in about seeing Lucy because I do owe her an apology for being a dick. Maybe if she had actually shown up at the last two Sunday family dinners I would have had the chance, but she had to 'pick up more shifts'.

I was going to text her the day after our big blow up but I saw on Instagram that she was out with Emerson, at brunch, because God forbid a girl go out to a meal and not take a photo before she eats it. Seems silly if you ask me. Emerson is not my biggest fan, for whatever reason, so I decided to just leave that alone. Luke and Zane have both mentioned Wyatt in passing and how nice he is. Just the thought of him makes me roll my eyes. He might be nice, but he is boring as hell, there is no way he has what it takes to keep Luc interested.

Getting out of my Uber at the airport and heading to the tarmac I see Charlie and Celisa talking.

"Morning Blake, try not to be a complete jerk today, please. Luc is coming right after her shift. She is going to be exhausted after working all night. Don't start things off on the wrong foot" Charlie says sweetly. Charlie has always been the sweetest of all of us. I don't think the girl has a mean bone in her body.

“I won’t bother her. I do need to apologize at some point though. Why would she come straight from work?” I ask.

“Not sure, but she is, so just let her sleep. Apologize later,” Celisa says with a smile but you can hear the warning in the words.

I go back to drinking my coffee and scrolling my phone. It’s not long after that everyone else arrives and we board the plane. Now we are just waiting on Lucy. Everyone gets settled in their seats and has their drinks in hand when Lucy finally pulls in.

She boards the plane freshly showered, her hair still damp.

“Sorry guys I was disgusting and needed to shower before I came here” she explains.

In her tight pajama pants with an oversized shirt and fresh faced with her blonde hair braided back, she looks pretty as ever. But looking closer you can see the bags under her eyes and the exhaustion radiating off her. She looks at me and narrows her eyes before going to find her seat. She decides on a cluster of four seats so she can stretch out and sleep.

I take a seat across the aisle but diagonally from her so I can hopefully get a moment of her time after she naps, so we can talk. It’s not long after take off that she has her headphones on and her eye mask on passed out. Zane and Fiona come to sit beside me, bringing me a beer.

Looking over Zane says “It’s so weird that she won’t just wear the AirPods I got her. It would be a lot more comfortable.”

Fiona opens her mouth to respond but before she can I am saying “Her ADHD makes her overstimulated easily and in ear headphones can easily set her off.”

They both stare at me while I take a sip of my beer. “What?” I ask.

“Nothing. You are right but I am surprised she told you considering she hates talking about her adhd because sometimes people act like she is using it as a crutch.” Fiona says looking at me.

“She didn’t tell me, I noticed” is all I say.

They must see that I don’t want to talk about her anymore because the subject changes to their plans and hopes for this trip. After a few hours, they move to the front of the plane to talk to Celisa, Charlie, and Luke. The best part of flying private is there is a lot of seating and you can move around whenever. I find myself occasionally glancing over at Lucy to see if she’s awake yet. I must have dozed off myself because I wake up and see Lucy looking over at me but when our eyes connect she quickly looks away.

I stand up and move one seat over, so now I am still diagonal but this time I am next to the chair she has her feet in. She takes off her headphones, glaring at me, and I can feel everyone’s eyes on us.

“I am sorry Luc. You didn’t deserve those things I said. I just miss our friendship, how things used to be back then, and it just hurts to see you talking to everyone but me, like I am not even there.” I say, my voice low.

“I’m fine. Thank you for apologizing. You can go now” she stares expecting me to be defeated by her dismissal.

“Luc, please. I don’t care if you put on Taylor Swift and ignore me the rest of the plane ride, but please don’t push me away again. I miss just being able to shoot the shit with you. I miss you as a human being. We have let this go on too long. Please Luc” beg her.

She didn’t immediately shut me down which means maybe we are finally getting somewhere. When she picks up her phone and sends me the jam session invite on Spotify it feels like a win. It’s small steps with her but I will take them to get my friend back.

I chuckle when the first song to play is ‘I forgot that you existed’. I can see a small smirk on her lips as the song plays. I just hope over this trip we can keep taking steps forward as friends. A notification pops up from my text thread with Fiona.

Fiona: □

Blake: Is this how you communicate now?

Fiona: I just think this is good for you guys. Use this time to work things out

Blake: I plan to try and see if we can work things out I miss our friendship too

Fiona: Good

Before I can go back to scrolling on Instagram another group chat notification pops up.

Luke: I'm surprised she didn't punch you.

Zane: I can't believe she didn't dump her drink on you like she did to that guy in college.

Luke: And she's playing every fuck you song she can find hahaha

Zane: Bet you didn't realize she shared the Spotify jam invite with all of us

Blake: Do either of you have anything useful to offer?

Luke: Nope. Just don't fuck up your chance at being friends again.

Zane: Don't forget she still has a boyfriend. Lol so don't be stupid.

Blake: I am just trying to get my friend back, I'm not a moron.

Luke: alcohol and vacations make people act like idiots

Luke: speaking from experience

Zane: Don't get us in trouble this trip.

I fall asleep at some point. When I wake up Lucy's music is still playing but she is typing away on her phone. I reach for my phone which alerts her that I am awake again.

"I am still mad at you. The way you treated me was so mean. I don't deserve to be slut shamed for my first relationship in years when you are in the media weekly taking some new girl home. But I miss you too so I am willing to work on our friendship. I am not sure we will ever be as close as we were because too much time has passed and too much hurt has happened. So let me do this at my own pace." she says softly.

"I can do that," I say then I get up and head to the front of the plane with everyone else, letting her have the space she wants. Which does not last long because a few minutes later the girls are all heading back to sit with her, with mimosas in hand. Luke, Zane, and I all get a round of drinks as well.

The plane lands shortly after we all finish our round of drinks. I am ready to get to the resort and get settled as soon as we all deplane. Loading up into 2 large SUVs we head pass quaint towns and beautiful landscapes. The resort isn't huge but it's state of the art. The concierge meets us in the front lobby, and she has someone bring us drinks as she explains the resort amenities and where our rooms are located.

Each of us has a bungalow on a secluded side of the resort, five in total. There are covered pathways to offer extra privacy, we aren't really celebrities but sometimes the perks of being a pro athlete are still damn good. We all head to our bungalows

to drop off our luggage and freshen up, promising to meet up by the beach bar in an hour.

I throw on my midnight blue swimming trunks and a light gray shirt making sure to grab my sunglasses and ball cap on the way out the door. I order a drink while I wait for everyone else to arrive. The weather is perfect with a breeze that offers some relief from the blazing sun.

The group of guys next to me start murmuring about some hottie they see walking up. I spin around to see Lucy and, my jaw almost drops, she looks amazing. Her hair is in two loose braids and she is in a white bikini you can see peeking out from under her sheer navy blue dress. Before the guys even have a chance I yell out “Luc what do you want me to order you?”

She looks at her phone as it rings. “Pina colada please I will be right over,” she says before picking up the call.

By the time her drink is brought over the rest of the group has congregated at the bar and Lucy is walking over. Luke orders shots and we all toast to 7 days in paradise with our chosen family. We decide to head to the beach for a bit.

They have wait staff on the beach so we are never without drinks. Luke points out some hot girls and then runs off to see if he can talk them into meeting up with us later. Charlie is sleeping in the cabana. Celisa is flirting with some chick by the bar. Fiona and Zane head back to their room early. Which leaves Lucy and I basically alone again.

“Wanna go swim?” I ask her hesitantly.

“Sure why not?” she says and I try to hide my look of surprise.

We wade out into waist deep water for me and it’s up to Lucy’s chest. We float around in comfortable silence for a bit before I ask her about her job. She animatedly tells me about her coworkers and some of her favorite patients. We talk about the craziest things she has seen and the funniest. It’s nice talking to her like this again. It feels easy and effortless.

We talk about hockey and how it's been seeing my biggest dream come true. She reminds me of a night I wished on a midnight shooting star that I would get drafted. At the time she lectured me for saying my wish out loud but it still came true. We have a lot of midnight memories full of hopes, dreams, fears, and laughs.

After a while I notice we have drifted so close I can almost touch her. I think she notices too because suddenly she yells "Race you back" before taking off through the waves. Once we are back on shore everyone calls out saying they are heading back to the rooms to get ready for dinner. I hope Luke doesn't have anything crazy planned for tonight but knowing him I am sure he does.

Last vacation we almost got arrested because he decided to streak through the street on a dare from Mateo. Luke is definitely the most wild of us all. Followed by Celisa but her crazy usually just ends with her wandering from the bar with some guy or girl during the night and everyone freaking out trying to find her. I am hoping the wild children can tame themselves a little for this trip. We all just need a relaxing break right now.

Chapter Seven

LUCY

“Girl WHAT!” Emerson is yelling into the phone after I filled her in on everything that happened on the plane and at the beach.

“Calm down, it’s no big deal, he just wants to be friends again and honestly it would be nice to move on so family things aren’t as awkward,” I say.

“I just don’t want you to get hurt. I know that your feelings for him aren’t magically gone even though you’re using Wyatt to pretend they are” she says.

“I am going to be fine. I got this. We can be friends, Em. But I gotta go get ready for dinner. I will talk to you later. Love you.” I tell her. She rattles off a quick I love you before hanging up.

I am torn emotionally about this whole thing with Blake. As I run the conversation back on replay I really do think he’s sorry. I think I do want to forgive him and move on but my head is just so confused because he is acting like the other night with Wyatt was the beginning of our issues. I wonder if he realizes that this all actually began because of how he just left me alone in the hotel room after we had sex like I was a casual fling. I want to tell him everything I still feel about that night. I want him to know the pain he caused me but then a part of me just wants us to move on entirely without having to hash it all out again. We were good friends and it would be nice to get that back even if it’s not exactly the same.

I realize when my phone pings that I haven't thought of Wyatt once this entire time which only further proves Emerson's point that I don't feel for him what he feels for me. I shoot him a text letting him know I made it here safely, and that we hit the beach right after landing, so that's why I hadn't texted him yet. He responds immediately, of course, telling me it's okay and he misses me. He really is incredibly nice.

Heading to dinner I wear a cute green dress that is long and flowy but low cut enough to warrant a second look. I let my hair hang in waves and only swipe on some mascara. Walking out the door I can see that Charlie had the same idea of being cute but comfy in her tank top style jumpsuit. We link arms and walk together to dinner. My mind begins to relax as we all take our seats at the table. That is until I look up and see Blake sitting down across from me with a smile on his face.

His smile could light up this whole town. I can't even pretend he is not incredibly good looking with his trimmed beard and tight button down in a light pink that pairs perfectly with his sun tanned skin. He clears his throat, having caught me staring at him, and gives me a smirk. Fuck this is going to be a long week. It has been a long time since I have been around Blake closely for an extended time.

I order a drink and I am honestly thankful when Celisa orders shots for the table. I down my shot without another glance towards Blake. I listen with almost too much effort to Luke's story about the hot girls he asked out earlier and how he is going to the resort club with them tonight. Once our food comes it's easy to keep my eyes focused on my plate as I eat.

Another round of shots comes and as I lift mine to my lips I lock eyes with Blake as he murmurs "So you do see me princess?" just low enough only I can hear. I almost choke and Charlie reaches over patting me on the back as Blake chuckles. This man is not helping his case by being infuriating.

Once we are all done eating Celisa comes over and drags Charlie and me over to the makeshift dance floor inside the restaurant. With drinks in hand, we are all dancing and grinding to the club mix the DJ is playing. I am very tipsy by the time I notice some guys start getting closer to us dancing. I

am not too worried though because the three very large men at the edge of the dance floor with their arms crossed glaring pretty much scare away anyone before they get too close. I think the boys are enjoying their time as security.

After a few more rounds I am stumbling and know it is time to head to bed. I start to head back to my room when Blake comes over stopping me.

“You are not walking back by yourself. Let me say bye to everyone and I will walk you back” he tells me.

I agree but only because I know he won't let it go. He is a good guy like that.

We are quiet on the walk back and I can't help but wonder what he's thinking about.

“Can I have one of your midnight moments?” I ask him.

“It's a little after midnight but yeah sure. I am thinking about the night we met and how we became instant best friends” he says with a smile.

I laugh before saying “That was a fun night. One for the book for sure.”

“It will forever be one of my favorite nights. The way you threw your drink on that guy before heading outside telling the entire bar he had a small dick killed me” he says chuckling.

“He was a creep, I stand by the drink throwing. I won't forget you following me out and introducing yourself ‘Hi my name's Blake, can I ask for a midnight moment?’ you didn't realize I was your teammate's sister. Also, that was such a corny pickup line.” I look up at him.

“For the record you had just cut your hair. But you gave me a midnight moment and it was ‘you already know me idiot’ then you grabbed my hand and dragged me to the taco shack down the street” he says to me.

I stop walking for a moment, laughing so hard remembering me dragging this giant hockey player with me to get tacos.

“I will always love midnight thanks to you,” I say smiling before I start walking again.

The conversation ends there as we continue our walk to my little bungalow. When we get there it’s awkward as I turn to him and thank him for walking me then I go inside. I look through the peephole to see him staring at the door for a few minutes before he finally walks away.



I wake up to the sun streaming through the window brightening my room feeling hungover. Looking over at the clock I realize I slept until 1 pm. I am sure the group expected that I would need to sleep in since I had worked the night before we left. I check my phone. There’s just a text in the group chat telling me to head to the beach when I wake up.

I stop for a drink and a shot at the bar first, then I head to the cabana. I can see Luke standing talking to Charlie who is in a lounge chair.

“Damn babe you look HOT!” I hear Celisa yell as I walk up. I wore a hot pink bikini that shows off more asscheek than I normally would but Celisa insisted. Everyone looks over. I pretend to ignore them as I take a seat and take a big sip of my drink.

We all start to discuss the plans for today which are to just do whatever and then meet up at the club Luke wants to go to tonight. These plans sound perfect because I could use a day to just lay around, get some sun, and read a little on my Kindle.

The day seems to fly by with drinks coming nonstop and Morgan Elizabeth’s new book on the Kindle. I love a petty ex and no one writes a petty ex like Morgan. I finally make my way back to my room and shower. I made the mistake of lying down on my bed in my bathrobe and I end up falling asleep because nothing hits like a nap after being in the sun all day.

When I get up I order some room service for dinner before calling Wyatt. I let him know how amazing the beach is and how delicious the drinks are. I leave out anything about Blake but not because I think he will care, but because I don’t want

to have to answer questions about why we stopped talking in the first place. Once we hang up I see a text coming in saying we are all supposed to dress top notch tonight. Luke and Celisa are so ridiculous with how serious they take clubbing, but I will follow directions out of fear of the lecture they would give me.

My hair is straightened and I braid the front pieces back on each side pinning them back so it looks like a crown. I slip into a tight deep blue dress with sparkles so no matter how I move it will shimmer. I make my eyeliner wing sharp and paint my lips red. The silver heels and silver necklace that draw the eyes to my chest really complete the look. I sent a picture to Emerson and got ten fire emojis back. I send it to Wyatt and he sends a kiss emoji.

Walking up to where everyone is meeting I immediately feel overdressed. There isn't one person in our group not staring at me. "What? You told me to dress nice so I did" I say rolling my eyes.

"We didn't say dress like the baddest bitch to ever roam this planet. Damn, we are going to be fighting the men off tonight" Celisa says before looping her arm through mine.

I swear I can see a flash of anger in Blake's eyes when Celisa makes that comment. I don't think much of it once we get inside. There is a constant flow of shots from everyone ordering rounds, and after my fourth shot, I decide to stick to my vodka Red Bull for a bit because I am plenty tipsy at this point.

"Hey, I am a little overstimulated, want to step outside real quick?" I ask Charlie.

"Yeah," she says, taking my hand.

It is so nice outside, it's quiet and there is a nice breeze.

"I forgot clubs can overstimulate you. It's been a long time," she says reminiscing.

"Yes, it has been a while, I feel better now, though. We can head back in, I just needed a minute." I tell her with a smile, linking arms.

Inside when we join our friends, I notice we are attracting a lot of random strangers on the dance floor, but there is no major issue until some guy comes up and places his hands on Charlie's ass. Luke gets pissed and starts yelling at the guy. I am way too drunk for this. Blake and Zane seem to have settled everything down. Or so we thought. That same guy takes that as an invitation to come grindin' up on me next. Before I can even react, I am being dragged out of the club.

"What the fuck?" I yell at the caveman who just dragged me away.

"You are too drunk and he was all over you!" Blake says yelling back.

"You are drunk too. I am not so drunk I can't defend myself. It's not your job to defend me. I was going to handle it if you gave me a chance to!" I toss back.

"Don't be stubborn, I was trying to help. You have a boyfriend who isn't here, so I stepped in to defend you in his place. Plus I wanted to be sure you didn't cross a line with William or whatever back home. Drunken hookups are not a good look." he says with so much anger I can feel tears in my eyes. I blink them away quickly before responding.

"You had no problem going to bed with me when I was drunk. I know about my boyfriend. I wouldn't have crossed that line. And you know what FUCK YOU. You destroyed our friendship the moment you took my heart and tore it to shreds. I hate you for that. I hate you for letting me think we could actually be something, just for you to change your mind after we hooked up." I say quietly but I am sure he can hear every ounce of pain in my voice.

"You want a midnight moment, a midnight truth, per se. I loved you and back then I thought this is it, we are finally going to get our chance at love. Now you are just a stranger who I see at family events. Two years later and here I am still dealing with the heartbreak trying to move on and you think you have a right to pull me out of a club because another guy puts his hands on me. FUCK OFF!" I tell him before taking

off as fast as I can in these stupid shoes that I definitely did not think fully through wearing them tonight.

I know that he could catch me if he wanted to but instead, he walks behind me. He waits until he sees me enter my room before turning and walking away. I head to bed and let the tears flow until I drift to sleep.

Chapter Eight

BLAKE

The door shuts but I can still hear her crying. I feel horrible and confused about everything she just said. I knew she might have had a crush, she was flirty, but I wrote it off as fun. Like Luke who flirts with anything with a pulse. That explains so much about why she was so mad the next morning. I fucked up and I have a lot of apologizing to do to her.

I debate knocking on the door but as I lift my hand I hear a voice in my head say, “Leave her alone tonight”. I dread even turning around because if everyone followed us out of the club then they are going to have questions I don’t have the answers to. I walk over towards the gazebo getting away from Lucy’s door then I take a seat and look up. I see that Celisa, Zane, and Fiona did follow us, and probably heard everything.

“You really fucked this up,” Zane says as I turn to face them.

“I am not even sure how we got here,” I say.

“Well, you fucked someone who was obviously in love with you, whatever miscommunication happened that night cost you your best friend,” Celisa says pissed.

“Did you really think she saw you as only a friend? Did you think ignoring the obvious signs she felt more would make it go away?” Fiona asks me softly.

“I don’t know, I don’t think I feel that way about her, we are just friends. I think at some point I convinced myself she was just flirting for fun, kind of like Luke does,” I explain.

“Bullshit. Don’t try and tell us you don’t return those feelings. You get defensive if any of us talk poorly of her. You hate Wyatt just on principle because he is with her when he actually is a cool dude.” Zane says.

“We will leave you alone but you need to give her space. She has a boyfriend so you can’t make any rash decisions until you figure out if you want to be with her. If you do, then you tell her privately and let her decide what she wants to do. But either way, you need to give her space to decide. If you don’t want to be with her, then you need to let her be with other guys without interfering. No more jealous bullshit.” Fiona says before hugging me and walking away.

I head back to my room, my mind racing with everything that just happened. Did I really ignore all the signs? Did I ruin everything for one night with her? Everyone saw it clearly but as I begin to really think about it I start to see even recently the things I have missed.

She was apparently hung up on someone from college, I assume that has been me over the past year and a half. My hookups being on the internet probably haven’t helped at all. But she has moved on with Wyatt so maybe she’s over it. Although according to Fiona I still have a chance. Do I want that? I don’t know what I want at this point. She is still dating Wyatt and it’s not fair to him if I shoot my shot while they are together. But I owe it to both of us to figure out my feelings and then be honest about them while still being respectful of her relationship. I head to bed deciding to wait to make any decisions until morning.

Waking up hungover around noon I text the group chat saying I am heading to the restaurant to get food and a drink. Luke and Zane meet me there, no sign of the girls which can’t be a good sign. I order and I can feel Luke glaring at me.

“If you have something to say then say it,” I tell him annoyed.

“I can’t believe you hooked up with my sister. She was in love with you, idiot. I knew something bad must have

happened but I hoped you weren't that dumb," Luke says anger radiating through his voice.

"She was a consenting adult, Luke." I defend.

"Dude, she is my sister, that's bro code. I mean it was obvious she was into you but still..." he tells me.

"Well I didn't know and I lost my best friend over it so back off," I try and control my volume because people are starting to look.

"Your friend! You lost your friend! My sister had her heart destroyed, it's been two years and she is still not over it. We talk her into coming to events hoping to get you two talking again not knowing that all this time she had a valid reason to ignore you." he tells me.

"Calm down. Everyone needs to calm down. The girls are spending time with Luc and they are going to fill their day with drinks and spa stuff. We are going to give them the day to themselves. Tomorrow everyone has excursions planned so we don't have to worry about much overlap and Lucy opted out of one so she can lay on the beach for the day." Zane says.

I nod but I am not blind to the fact that at this point all of our friends are on her side. I don't want to do anything to make things worse so after lunch I head to the pool and swim some laps. It's not the same exercise my body is used to, but I definitely feel tired after I am done. Heading back to my room to sleep until dinner.

I'm suddenly woken up from my nap by my phone ringing. I see it's my cousin, Imogen, she is the family member I'm closest to since my parents passed and I am an only child. I catch her up on all the things starting at the family dinner where Wyatt showed up to now. She agrees that I need to give Lucy space if I want to salvage any kind of friendship with her. She also asks what everyone seems to want to know right now. Do I want to be with Lucy?

After that long conversation, I decide to order room service and stay in for the night. Letting myself get some alone time to think about what I do and don't want. Do I think Lucy

is wonderful? Of course. But do I want to date her? I honestly hadn't even thought about it before. I am a professional athlete and she is a nurse that can be working days one week and overnights the next. Would our chaotic schedules ever give us time to see each other? I also don't know if we even want the same things anymore.

She used to be the person I would trust with all of my secrets. I would have burned the world for her no questions asked. But now she doesn't even want me looking out for her when she is drunk and possibly going to make a mistake she would regret. How would we be able to have a functioning relationship? I fall asleep still trying to figure out what I want to do about Lucy.

Luke and I's jungle zipline adventure is leaving after breakfast. We had already to agree to meet down here to eat before we leave so hopefully he shows up so we can talk.

When I arrive I am grateful to see Luke sitting down, I grab some waffles and fruit before sitting across from him. He looks up looking pissed but says nothing continuing to eat.

"Look man, I am sorry about Lucy. I fucked up." I tell him.

"No shit," he says, rolling his eyes before going back to his food.

"I ignored all the signs desperate to keep our friendship intact. Then that night we both had too many drinks and I made a stupid choice. These are things I need to say to her though. But you are my best friend and teammate, you trusted me as her best friend and I ruined that." I tell him.

"There is no guarantee I can fix things with her, but I am going to do my best to show her how sorry I am and earn her friendship back." I continue.

"I know you are sorry, We can get past this but I don't know that Lucy will forgive you. Just please give her space. Do you want to be with her? Now that her true feelings are out there? Would you have given her a chance back then if you had known?"

“I don’t know the answer to either of those questions honestly. I need to really think about everything, and then figure out how to tell her while respecting her boundaries and relationship. But I am glad that you and I talked it out and can go have a good time today!” I tell him.

We spent the entire day ziplining and hiking, and we got to stop in a cute little town for lunch. The seafood was amazing! I have never ziplined before so going through the jungle at that elevation and speed was the craziest experience and I will for sure be doing it again. By the time we arrive back at the hotel, it’s late so I grab a drink from the bar and head back to my room after finishing it, falling straight to sleep exhausted.

It’s day five and it seems like this trip has flown by. I can’t believe there is only today and tomorrow left as full days here. I have gotten a nice tan while we are here though. I get up and head right to the beach bar getting some liquid courage before I head over to the group. This is my first time seeing Lucy again since the night at the club.

I sit down and scan the area looking for her familiar head of blonde hair but I don’t see it. “She’s on the phone with Wyatt, she’ll be back in a minute,” Charlie says. I obviously wasn’t as subtle as I thought. The thought of her on the phone with him annoys me more than it should. But I just shove that feeling back down and focused on having a good night.

“That feeling you just felt hearing Wyatt’s name should clue you in on how you really feel about her” Charlie leans over to whisper. I just roll my eyes and slide my hat down covering my face. Luke walks over to me and sits on the chair beside me.

“Yo, we are going to the rooms to get ready for dinner, you coming?” he asks me.

“Yeah, see you there.” I say before mumbling “Let’s hope it’s uneventful.” as he walks away.

When I do get to the restaurant I notice that the only open seat is next to Luke who sat across from Lucy which I am sure was a very purposeful move. It doesn’t stop me from trying to catch her eye as we order dinner. I can see the bags under her

eyes even with her makeup on. Charlie does her best to keep the conversation flowing despite the awkward tension. After a round of shots and everyone seems to loosen up a bit.

Luke asks if I want to hit up the same club we went to last time with him tonight since everyone else is calling it an early night. The mention of the club has caught Lucy's attention and she turns to me. I lock eyes with her as I tell him No. I get up excusing myself for the night. I catch Lucy's eyes again before I walk out and give her a pleading look and a subtle nod towards the door hoping she takes the hint and follows me. I turn and walk out the door and head toward my room.

Chapter Nine

LUCY

Everything seems to stop when I overhear Luke invite Blake out to the club. I look up making eye contact with him for the first time since the other night. I let out a sigh of relief when he says ‘No’ keeping his eyes locked on me. He says his goodbyes and then gives me a nod towards the door. I know he is inviting me to come talk to him, I just don’t know if I am ready for that yet. I know we need to talk at some point. After I unloaded two years of pent up emotions on him last time.

I take another shot knowing I need to be tipsy to go talk to him. Is that mature? No. Do I care? Also no. I give a quick goodbye wave to the group before I head outside. I am slightly disappointed when I see that he isn’t outside. Maybe he assumed when I didn’t immediately get up I wasn’t going to come at all. Whatever, I’ll just talk to him tomorrow, I head down the path to my bungalow. I feel the tears welling up with every step.

My feelings are a mess. I am in a relationship with a really nice guy but I don’t really think he’s the one. I just confronted the man I used to be in love with about breaking my heart. I just wish I knew how to get through this, but either way, someone is going to get hurt, and this time it will be my fault. When I get close to my door I see someone sitting outside the door looking down.

“Fancy meeting you here” is all I think to say. Why am I this way? I groan quietly.

“Luc. I am so sorry” Blake tells me, looking up at me, I can tell he really means it.

“Sorry, for which part?” I ask, I know it comes out rude but I deserve to be upset.

“For everything Luc, I didn’t mean to hurt you,” he tells me.

“Really? Because two nights later your face is on Sportscenter’s Instagram walking out of a club with another girl. Like you didn’t even have the decency to keep it out of sight from the paparazzi?!” I tell him.

He stands up and tries to move closer to me “Lucy I am sorry, I didn’t know how you felt about me. I didn’t anticipate anyone being there. We walked out and suddenly there were flashing lights and it was too late.”

“How did you not see the signs? I gave you all the signs!” I tell him emotionally.

“I am sorry Luc,” he says again.

“I’m tired Blake. You should go” is all I tell him before going inside and closing the door.

I don’t know what to do about Blake. Or Wyatt. Everyone here is being supportive and is happy they know what happened now so they can understand my actions towards Blake better. I never wanted them to be mad at him, or things to be weird, which is why I never told them. I didn’t need them to be mad at him because he didn’t like me back in the same way.

When I get back I need to either end things with Wyatt or really truly give him a chance. He deserves someone who gives a relationship their all. Taking a minute to text Wyatt goodnight, I climb into bed to let my body overpower my brain and shortly fall asleep.

Waking up on day six I can’t believe it’s our last full day. I wake up surprisingly refreshed, I think the years’ worth of emotions coming out helped to lighten my emotional load. We have group plans tonight so I decide to take the shuttle into town today to get some alone time and shop around. It’s

peaceful sometimes to just step away from everything. I got some ceviche and tamales and grabbed a beer at the restaurant the shuttle driver recommended and then proceed to take my time roaming the shops and vendors set up all over the road.

I found some cute souvenirs for Wyatt, Hunter, and Emerson. Hunter would kill me if I came back empty handed. I find a store with the most beautiful dresses, they are all handmade and perfect in their own way. I fall in love with a beautiful blue one that I decide to buy for tonight. I grab a few which makes the old lady shop owner smile, one of those smiles that makes you feel warm inside.

On the shuttle back to the resort there is a cute couple sitting across the aisle. Who are just so in love it makes me jealous. I want that with someone one day. I want to never tire of each other and be so in love that it makes others sick to watch. True love isn't too much to ask for. I think of Wyatt and the little things he does that make me feel appreciated, which usually feels a little bit off to me. It's not like he doesn't try to do little romantic things for me. But sometimes I just want someone to spontaneously dance with me in the midnight rain.

Getting back to my room I remember that today is booze cruise day! We get to go on a mini yacht with an open bar and it's just a giant floating party. I try to pump myself up, pushing all of my romantic issues out of my head for a little while. I put on my pretty light blue dress that hugs my curves just right with white strappy sandals and I leave my face makeup free except for mascara then run my fingers through my waves before deciding I am ready.

I meet the girls for dinner knowing they just want to know what happened last night after my sudden departure from dinner. I give them the cliff notes version that basically Blake is sorry but he still doesn't understand how badly he hurt me.

“So let me just ask, are you ever going to admit you still have feelings for him? And if he had feelings for you would you give him a chance?” Fiona asks.

“I am with Wyatt, so it’s a moot point,” I tell her before downing my drink.

“Ok. Well, now that is settled, now we can all move on and focus on having an amazing time on the booze cruise” Celisa says trying to change the subject. Fiona is still looking at me like she doesn’t believe a word I just said.

The boat is amazing. It has tons of space and different areas to hang out. There are multiple bars to help keep lines short although it looks like there are no more than 30 people on here. We all take a minute, looking around at the different areas on the main deck. I walk over to look out at the water as the boat starts to cruise. The view is stunning

Turning around to investigate when I hear laughing behind me, I see that Luke is already at it with the ladies on the boat. I make my way to the bar and grab a drink and I head over to Charlie who is with a few people, she must have just met and I just hover on the outskirts allowing myself to enjoy the conversation without needing to participate. I decide to continue my rounds after I grab another drink. I visit with Zane and Fiona for a bit who seem to be having the best night just being with each other so I only hang out with them long enough to finish my drink, then move on.

Another drink, another group of people to hang out with, this time it’s a group of mostly guys that Celisa has befriended. I look over to see Blake staring at me. He gives me a small nod before turning back to his conversation. I take this as my opportunity to take a walk alone and clear my head. I can feel Blake follow me with his eyes as I walk out to the deck.

Taking a deep breath I take a minute to embrace how peaceful it is out here. Stars are scattering the sky and the waves crash rhythmically against the boat. The dark blue of the ocean almost matches that of the night sky and I have never seen so many stars glittering in the sky before because Tampa has a lot of big city lights that outshine them.

“May I share this midnight moment with you, princess?” Blake says walking up behind me. I jumped because he

honestly scared the crap out of me.

I just wave my hand in response, allowing him to join me leaning on the railing.

“It’s beautiful out here,” he tells me.

“It is” is all I say in response. Things between us feel so awkward.

“I am sorry for being an idiot back then and treating you like you weren’t... aren’t one of the most important people in my life,” he tells me grabbing my hand to turn me towards him.

“I know,” I say truly meaning it. I know he is sorry even if that doesn’t just magically make things better.

“Will we ever be able to get back to that point again? I hate how things are now,” he says looking at me with my hand in his.

“Maybe but it is going to take time though. I need time. My feelings were real. My heart breaking into a thousand pieces was real.” I tell him with tears forming in my eyes.

“I would take a thousand paper cuts, one for every broken piece of your heart if it meant you would stop hurting,” he says wiping a tear off my cheek.

“Was that a Taylor Swift reference?” I chuckle.

“You do love her,” he says with a shrug and a soft laugh.

We are both emotional and drunk.

“Thanks for this midnight I am going to head back inside,” I say, dropping his hand before walking inside.

I join Celisa’s group again chatting, unfortunately right as Blake walks in he sees some drunk guy try to put his arm around me. He storms off before he can see me shake him off and move back to Charlie’s group. He must be mad because I don’t see him until we get off the boat, but what right does he have to be mad? I’m not his girl.

Once the boat docks back at shore I see him walking off the boat with his arm around some stunning girl, her leaning

close into him. I can feel the old ones opening all over again. As the tears fall Charlie takes my hand in hers saying nothing but supporting me just the same.

Here I am, the girl with a boyfriend back home, standing on a boat watching the man I once thought was going to be my forever walk off with someone else. My brain hurts, and My heart is confused. I need to make a decision and stop messing with both of their hearts.

Chapter Ten

BLAKE

I know I royally fucked up the minute I see the look on her face when I step off the boat with my arm around the girl I found when I saw Lucy with that dude. I drop my arm, apologizing to the girl, and turn back to try and find Lucy. Maybe I can explain I was just jealous seeing that guy with his arm around her. I start scanning the resort's boardwalk so I can catch her before she gets to her room.

"No" is all I hear before turning around to see Zane and Fiona.

"What? I need to talk to Lucy" I tell them not looking to explain why.

"Yeah, we know what happened. We saw you follow her in and the guy put his arm around her. We saw you storm off before you saw her shake him off and move to a different group. We also saw you walk off the boat with some chick. So no, you aren't going to talk to her right now. You are an idiot. You need to get your shit together because she loved you more than she has ever loved anyone. And even though she is dating Wyatt right now, she'd break it off with him for you. But you need to be all in, not walking off the boat with random girls in front of her. You're just making things worse." Fiona tells me anger and hurt radiating off her.

"You're right I messed up. We had a really nice moment outside. I think I can fix this" I tell them.

"You can't fix this until you decide if you are fixing this because you want to be with her or because you want to be

friends, stop dragging her along. Once you have figured that out then I will help you try to repair what you just rebroke. Until then stay away ” Fiona tells me sternly, before turning away and I see Zane giving me a nod obviously on his wife’s side about this.

We leave tomorrow morning, and my main focus now is getting back home where hockey can distract me from the way I made things between us even worse, somehow, on this trip. Maybe giving Lucy some breathing room, away from me, will be for the best. I head straight to my bungalow and go right to sleep. Sleep seems like a much better choice than replaying the events of this trip, over and over in my mind.

Boarding the plane I immediately spot Lucy but decide to respect her need for space and I take a seat up front. Putting my headphones on I focus myself on the things I need to handle when I get home. It will be good to be back in my own bed. Everyone keeps to themselves during this flight home. I wasn’t prepared for the emotional toll this was going to be, so much for a relaxing trip.



The first day of training camp sucks! Everyone is fresh off break and no one is working as a team. If this is going to be a Stanley Cup year we need to get our shit together! We have a rookie, Carter Wilson, who seems really good, but he needs to just get intertwined into the team. Luke, Zane, and I will help to make it happen, no problem, he will fit right in because he seems like a no drama, chill, guy. This year’s captain is retiring at the end of the season and he wants to be sure we have a solid team in place before he leaves.

I try to catch Luke when we get off the ice but he slips past me. I will just try and catch him when we go to the weight room later. He has been not so subtly avoiding me since the trip. I know he is mad about Lucy, but this is ridiculous. I see Zane about to head out and catch up with him after I change.

“Miller wait up man” I holler to him.

“What’s up?” he replies as he turns around.

“Just wondering if we are having family dinner this week? I know we skipped last week so everyone could get settled back at home” I ask.

“Yes we are, no Lucy won’t be there,” he tells me.

“That isn’t why I asked,” I argue.

“Sure. Leave her alone until you have your shit figured out, Fi already warned you dude” he states before walking away.

Well, that went well. I am just going to keep my mind focused on hockey over the next four weeks of training camp. I am going to avoid my phone and skip dinner giving myself a chance to think. Letting myself sort through all of my feelings from the past and now.



ONE WEEK LATER

“CAMPBELL! What the fuck dude he is on your own team?” our Captain yells at Luke across the ice. Luke has been checking me all practice. I know he is mad at me about Lucy but we have to get through this. This was one of my worries, that we would fall apart as teammates. Coach doesn’t seem happy with us right now. Practice thankfully comes to an end. As I am heading off the ice Luke and Zane both block the door.

“What?” I ask.

“WHAT! WHAT! You tell us asshole” Luke yells.

“Well I literally haven’t done shit, since the trip, so I don’t know why you are so pissed at me. Your stunt in there made both of us look like fuckups during practice” I tell him getting annoyed.

“You haven’t been answering anyone’s calls or texts, and YOU missed family dinner. We have been worried about you” Luke angrily says.

“My bad I just wanted to step away from everything but training camp for a few weeks and clear my head. I know everyone thinks I am a terrible person but I genuinely thought

Lucy and I were just friends back then, and now, after the trip, I am just confused about everything” I state honestly.

“Well, next time don’t scare us by not letting us know. You never miss a dinner so it freaked everyone out” Zane says.

“I will let you guys know next time,” I tell them and then walk past them to the locker room.

Regardless of Lucy being their actual family, I think they should cut me a fucking break and maybe take a second to see that I am not some dick that set out to hurt Lucy on purpose. It’s like they suddenly forgot who I am as a person. Luckily I know exactly who will be able to help me sort everything out. I am going to head there after work.

I head to my condo and wait for my favorite problem solver to arrive. I hear a slight knock and head to the door.

“Hey, Penny. Thanks for coming!” I pull her into a side hug.

“Of course, you must be desperate if you want to talk to me over dinner. Is this about my brother because you know I don’t get involved in Zane’s stuff.” She tells me as she sets the pasta she picked up from the Italian place down the road on the table.

“It’s about Lucy, and you are the most unbiased and level headed person in our whole group” I compliment her.

“So tell me everything and let’s see if I can help. Sometimes it helps just to talk it out and you will figure it out yourself. I tell my students that all the time” she tells me as I pour us both a drink.

I tell her everything that has happened since the wedding. I also tell Penny about the boat chaos and miscommunication. She listens intently asking random questions but mainly just letting me get everything off my chest.

“So you see I don’t even know how to move forward from here. I need to figure out my feelings and then talk to Lucy” I say.

But then she laughs and I just stare at her confused as shit.

“Mind cluing me in on what is so funny,” I ask her, annoyed.

“You are in love with her, you idiot,” Penny tells me.

“How are you so sure?” I ask.

“If I told you that Wyatt is planning to propose this Christmas what would you say?” Penny asks.

“Are you fucking kidding? She won’t say yes. She hates cliché holiday proposals. Plus she barely knows the dude” I state matter of factly.

“Do you even hear yourself? You got angry and almost broke the fork in your hand while you explained multiple reasons she would say no. You love her. You want to be with her. Now you need to figure out how to make that happen without making things worse” she says and continues to eat like she didn’t just hit the nail right on the head.

“What do I do now?” I ask her seriously.

We spend the rest of dinner figuring out things I can do to win my girl over, which is tricky when she has a new man. We also talk about Penny’s class this year, she is a kindergarten teacher, and how things are going romantically for her. I know she pretends like she enjoys being single, but Penny wants a family and I hope for her sake that happens for her soon because she deserves the absolute best. Once she leaves, I log into Penny’s classroom wishlist on Amazon, she posts on Facebook each school year and buy everything. She won’t let me pay for dinner but she can’t stop me from supporting her in another way.

Penny: You didn’t have to do that!

Blake: It was payment for helping me figure out that I’m in love. Plus you don’t get paid nearly enough to be teaching the future leaders of America.

Penny: Thank you. Good luck!

I made a group chat with everyone but Lucy.

Blake: I finally got my head out of my ass enough to realize that I am in love with Lucy. I am going to win her over. Then one day marry her.

Celisa: Holy Shit!

Fiona: You guys all owe me \$20

Blake: What!

Zane: We all bet how long it would take you to figure it out. I said 3 months.

Luke: I said after the season is over.

Charlie: I bet it would be at the first hockey game.

Celisa: I said the holidays because you can get sappy around them.

Blake: I hate you guys

Fiona: No you don't. I am glad you figured your shit out. Now go win the girl. Also, don't miss any more dinners! The season starts soon we only have so many left!

For the first time since before the dinner with Lucy and Wyatt, I sleep through the night.

Chapter Eleven

LUCY

We have been home for two weeks now and it still feels weird being back in real life with adult responsibilities. Today is my first day off in 4 days because I picked up an extra shift. I am meeting Emerson for lunch and then going to have dinner and drinks later at Slapshots with her and Wyatt. There are no games going on tonight, so it shouldn't be too busy. So fingers crossed we have a nice night.

Things with Wyatt have been weird since I got home. I feel guilty for never telling him everything about Blake. I feel confused about if I want to be with him or not. I don't want to let a great guy go just because I got rattled by old feelings on vacation either though.

The night after I got back home Wyatt and I met for dinner in uptown. When we kissed it just felt bland, there was no spark there. Conversation felt forced, and it is like everything that bothered me slightly before is more enhanced. I know I need to figure things out but after the trip, I am even more confused.

On top of things with Wyatt, I have been skipping family dinners to avoid seeing Blake but the season starts in two weeks so I need to show my face soon. We don't get those dinners much in season.

I got dressed in my new pink, one shoulder, bodysuit with a black skater style skirt. I am living for the Barbie rock vibes happening. Putting my hair in cute space buns and throwing on some mascara I head out before I am late.

Oxford Exchange is the best place for brunch in all of Tampa. The library in the front always makes me feel so cozy. I try to stop here once a month for a new book and brunch. I see Emerson in her cute black jeans with a plain white v-neck and a cute pair of heels.

“You look so cute, girl,” I tell her as I walk up to where she has snagged us a table.

“Thanks, girl! You are in your Barbie era I see” she laughs.

“Feeling like I am more in my 1989(Taylor’s Version) era after I saw Blake leave the boat with another girl right after him and I seemed to have really connected and made a breakthrough,” I told her.

“Seems like you know where your heart currently lies. I can’t tell you what to do but I know what seeing him with other girls so quickly after the wedding did to you. I also know you never really moved on. But you need to pick and soon. Wyatt’s a good guy who deserves more.” she tells me.

“I know. I know. I just don’t know what to do. I will decide soon. Let’s talk about you! Is there anyone new in your world?” I ask to take the heat off myself.

“NOPE,” she pops the ‘P’ as it comes out.

“Well, there are plenty of ladies and men around me if you want me to help wingwoman you,” I tell her.

“Figure your shit out then maybe I will let you help me with mine.” We both laugh at that.

The rest of brunch is full of laughs and venting about work. I don’t know how I got so lucky to have a best friend and coworker all in one. No one else really understands what it’s like as a nurse but she gets it and lets me vent when I need to. I grab a new book at the attached bookstore before we head out agreeing to meet at my apartment tonight and walk over to Slapshots.

Tonight I picked out a cute pair of jeans with an old t-shirt from Luke’s college hockey team. I haven’t worn it in forever, but I found it when I was packing for the trip. It’s cut as a crop

top and slides just a little off the shoulder. Paired with a pair of black vans the outfit is casual and comfy. My hair is down in loose waves and I put on minimal makeup, as usual.

When Wyatt and Emerson arrive we head over to the bar. It's pretty empty so we get a nice booth near the pool tables and dart boards.

"You look super cute tonight," Emerson tells me, giving my outfit a once over.

"Thank you. Vintage works" I laugh pointing out the oldness of my shirt.

We are having a great time. Things are even good with Wyatt. He casually has his hand on my knee under the table. It just all feels normal.

"LUCY" I look up when I hear someone yell my name. Then take off running and end up receiving the biggest hug ever. When we are done hugging, I pull back wiping the tears, and walk Rodriguez over to the table. Wyatt and Emerson are staring confused.

"Mateo meet my best friend Emerson and my boyfriend Wyatt. Guys meet Mateo Rodriguez. He played college hockey with Luke. We have been waiting for him to get transferred to Tampa but he currently plays in Jacksonville." I tell them, so excited. "I haven't seen you since the last family dinner after Zane's wedding. I missed you" I told him.

"I missed you too! Your schedule is crazy the few times I am in town" he tells me then takes the seat next to Emerson.

"So Mateo tell us about college Lucy!" Emerson says laughing.

"She was crazy. She was always getting into something. Partying just as hard as us hockey boys. How she had good grades I will never understand. Probably Stuntz being on her to study I'm sure" he says. "How did you guys meet?" he says, turning to Wyatt.

Wyatt tells him the same story he said at the family dinner.

“Hopefully I can keep her unlike the loser who lost her in college,” Wyatt says at the end with a dreamy smile looking at me.

“LUCY? Dating in college?” Mateo almost spits out his beer “She was in love of course but they weren’t dating”

Emerson elbows him and if looks could kill he would drop dead when he looks at me.

“What? You said you were still getting over someone from college? Not that it was someone you never dated but you were in love with” Wyatt says turning to me.

“I was. I was hung up on someone from college. You never asked for specifics and it was a long time ago. Plus I never said ‘love’ that was Mateo, who I am going to kill later” I say.

“My bad Luc. I have to go snag a table but please don’t kill me. I will try and see you before I leave again” he says before hugging me and walking away.

“Well, that was awkward,” Emerson says, taking a long drag of her beer.

“I’m sorry Lucy, I just always assumed it was an ex-boyfriend. I never asked questions, my bad.” Wyatt says, rubbing my knee in soft circles with his thumb.

“Sorry, I didn’t tell you. It’s embarrassing to be hung up on someone you didn’t date” I say.

“It’s okay, I understand babe” he reassures me.

Emerson and I exchange a look saying we will talk about this later. We settle back into our food. When we are about to get up to leave I see a look cross Emerson’s face. I can tell something is wrong. I turn around and lock eyes with none other than Blake fucking Stuntz. I decide I will just give them a half-assed wave and keep walking. Which I try to do until Blake calls out my name as we pass. I give him a nod and keep pulling Wyatt out the door. I don’t have the energy for whatever he is trying to pull tonight.

The walk back to the apartment is quiet. I am grateful that Wyatt has work tomorrow so he just gives me a kiss after

walking me to my door and before he leaves. Emerson heads straight to the liquor cabinet once we get inside alone.

“Well, that was something,” I tell her reaching for the bottle of tequila.

“Girl Mateo almost ruined everything. I don’t know how you and Wyatt could recover if he finds out who it is that you were hung up on” she says taking a shot.

“Yeah well let’s hope we don’t reach that point. It is not something he needs to know or feel insecure about” I explain.

“Well prior to our little visitor, I noticed you guys seemed better today. You seemed to really be happy with Wyatt. Have you made your choice?” she asks nonchalantly.

“I am actively trying to give him a full chance,” I say.

“Honey, you shouldn’t have to talk yourself into giving your boyfriend a chance. But I will support you either way” Emerson says.

She walks over and pulls me into a hug before heading out the door and leaving me in my living room to run tonight over what happened in my head. I have work tomorrow, but I do shoot off a text to the family group chat letting them know that Wyatt and I will be at dinner this week.

Lucy: Hey, Wyatt and I will be at dinner this week.

Fiona: Can’t wait!

Celisa: Interesting that you and Wyatt are coming to dinner the same week Blake is returning to dinners and Mateo is in town

Zane: Shut up Celisa

Lucy: Blake never misses a dinner so fuck off

Celisa: Then why did he miss last week?

Lucy: Either way. I saw Mateo tonight. I miss him.
We will be there.

I immediately regretted that I said we were going. I just thought it was a nice gesture to Wyatt that I was trying. I am sure after today he is going to start asking questions. I find myself thinking about what Celisa said, that Blake missed dinner last week, which is weird but maybe he was busy. Why am I even thinking about what Blake is doing or not doing? I'll just be polite to Blake so things don't seem weird, and as long as fucking Mateo keeps his mouth shut it won't even be an issue.

Chapter Twelve

BLAKE

“According to the group chat, Wyatt will be at dinner on Sunday,” I say to Mateo rolling my eyes.

“Are you going to come out and admit you love her or am I supposed to pretend I don’t see it?” He says with a chuckle.

“I do have feelings for her, but she’s not exactly available, so it’s a tricky situation,” I say pondering my options.

“Well, I accidentally mentioned earlier, that the person she was hung up on wasn’t someone she dated. Also, maybe try and get her alone Sunday and talk to her” he advises me.

After dinner, I walk home from Slapshots considering my options for this weekend. She’s not really a grand gestures kind of girl, Lucy likes things simple and uncomplicated. Which I guess is something we have never really had. Hopefully, she will give me a minute to let her know how I am feeling.



Family Dinner night

Training camp went great this week. Everyone seems to finally be melting together as a team. It helps that Luke, Zane, and I are no longer fighting. Tonight is dinner at Zane’s and I plan to talk to Lucy and let her know everything. I decided on a plain black shirt that shows off my arms and a pair of khaki pants. In college, Lucy commented multiple times on how much she loved how my arms look in shirts.

I arrive early and make myself a whiskey on the rocks then help Fiona set the table.

“You are early, dressed nicely, and in a good mood. What are you planning to do?” she asks once the table is set.

“Can’t I just be happy and look nice without being up to something?” I ask her.

“No, actually you can’t. Whatever your plan is be careful, Wyatt will be here tonight too” she warns before walking away.

I grab my drink and go sit in the den to watch the sports center while we wait for everyone to arrive. I’m not surprised when Lucy and Wyatt are the last to arrive. They make their rounds stopping at Mateo and I last. All eyes are on us when I reach a hand out to Wyatt shaking his hand.

“Welcome back Will,” I say before looking at Lucy “Luc good to see you”.

“Um. It’s Wyatt, but thank you” he says politely.

Mateo snorts beside me while Lucy glares at me pissed. I mouth ‘oops’ at her. We all take our seats and I make sure to be across from Lucy leaving Mateo across from Wyatt. Dinner starts out normal, with a lot of talk about Mateo being in town and the vacation we all just took. Mateo talks to Wyatt about his job while I try to catch Lucy’s eye but she avoids my gaze, still mad about the name mix up.

“What was it like all meeting in college? You all seem so close. It reminds me of my crew at work, we are more a family than friends” Wyatt asks. He really does seem to be a nice guy, but he has my girl so that makes him enemy number one.

“It was great we were all there for each other in our best and worst moments,” Zane says looking longingly at Fiona no doubt thinking of the shit her ex put her through during our senior year.

“Speaking of bad, remember when Lucy puked all over my bed and it took weeks to get rid of the smell,” I say laughing.

“Ew, yeah, it was horrible. But you paid her back by puking in her car the next semester. You guys were the worst when you competed in drinking games. Neither of you knew when to give up” Luke says.

“OW,” I say after I am kicked under the table. I look up to see Lucy glaring while Wyatt looks around, trying to keep up with the conversation.

“All of you were too competitive. Those two just took it too far. That is why we created the rule that they can’t be on the same team anymore. The dynamic duo who don’t accept anything less than a win.” Zane says.

“Anyways, are you guys ready for the season to start? Wyatt and I are coming to the opening game with Emerson.” Lucy says, obviously trying to change the conversation.

“Yes, we are. Speaking of the game, whose jersey are you wearing this year?” Mateo asks genuinely, wondering.

“What do you mean? Wouldn’t she wear her brothers?” Wyatt asks.

“In college, she never wore Luke’s jersey,” Mateo says, not reading the room.

“Shut up Mateo. Yes, I am wearing Luke’s jersey, of course” she says, refusing to look him in the eyes.

The entire table can feel the tension between them escalate as he puts the pieces together after Mateo stupidly lays it all out in front of him. Lucy might kill him after dinner.

“But a few days ago you were wearing a hockey shirt from college,” Wyatt says. “Wait, you wore a shirt from some guy you were in love with back then, on a date with me!” he raises his voice.

All of the men at the table stand. Zane, Luke, Mateo, and I glare at him.

“Sit down all of you” Lucy yells at us.

“He better not raise his voice at you again,” Luke says, then looks at me.

“Who is this mystery guy, Lucy? I assume he is friends with everyone here. You loved him so much that you only wore his jersey? You have a collage of pictures on your wall of you and your friends at games wearing hockey shirts so you must have worn multiple of his” Wyatt continues but he isn’t yelling.

“He was someone who at the time meant the world to me. Yes, I wore his jersey and I wore his shirts. But that’s over and I am with you now. Can we please move on?” Lucy begs.

“Does he come here to these dinners like Mateo does? At least I know it’s not him since he is the one who spilled everything” Wyatt asks, calming down.

“Sometimes,” Lucy says, avoiding eye contact with me.

Wyatt stands up suddenly and starts to walk to the living room “wasn’t there a picture of you at the game with everyone up somewhere, at the championship game or something? I remember your brother mentioned hanging it last time I was here but I didn’t take a good look.”

“Oh shit,” Celisa says. As Wyatt walks into the living room, Fiona whispers “It’s from the front it won’t have a name, just a number. Mateo, you are an idiot for starting this.”

We all collectively wait and when he walks back I don’t look away when he scans all of our faces before landing back on Lucy. Then he glares at me again and I know he figured it out.

“YOU LET ME SIT HERE LIKE AN IDIOT IN FRONT OF THE MAN YOU LOVE OR LOVED, WHO KNOWS AT THIS POINT. DID YOU HAVE SEX WITH HIM?” Wyatt yells as he turns to look at me.

“Dude, chill out. Do not raise your voice at her again. She doesn’t owe you any explanation for the past” I calmly tell him.

“Fuck you. Honestly, I should thank you for fucking up because then she got to meet a real man like me,” he tells me lowering his voice but it is still dripping in anger.

“Wyatt, let’s talk outside. Things with Blake and I were over before they could ever begin” Lucy grabs his arm trying to lead him outside.

“Luc you don’t owe him an explanation,” I tell her.

“Back off, this is between my girlfriend and me now. Thank you for having me for this enlightening dinner.” Wyatt says as he gets up to leave.

“Career be damned, if you hurt her Wyatt, I will make you regret it. I will burn the world if it guarantees her happiness” I say before I get up and head out back.

I step outside and take a breath. I probably didn’t handle that well. Who raises their voice over something so simple? I am debating heading to check on Lucy when the door opens and I see her walking across the deck.

“I know I need to deal with this, but Blake you can’t say stuff like that,” she tells me.

“Why not, princess? I mean every word. Your happiness is worth more than anything else” I tell her.

“See, those sweet nothings are what hooked me the first time. It was these little moments that made me fall for you back then. But you don’t see me that way and Wyatt does, so please don’t make this harder on me than it already is” she says, looking away.

I reach out and grab her hand, gently, pulling her towards me, she looks up and our eyes lock.

“I don’t see you the way Wyatt does. You’re absolutely right. I don’t see you as someone I can raise my voice at and disrespect in front of her friends and family. I mean what’s next? He tells you to stop coming to family dinners too? You deserve so much more Luc, I just wish you could see that” I tell her.

I pull her into a hug and without thinking I drop a kiss on the top of her head. I feel her freeze in my arms. “I will never not stand up for you Luc,” I say. I look down at her and we lock eyes again, every fiber of my being is telling me to kiss her. I can see her eyes glossing over just a little as she looks at

my lips and then back to my eyes. A few more inches and I can claim her beautiful lips and prove to her I want this with her.

But she steps back and motions her arm for me to lead the way inside. “No. You go first I won’t walk away from you again. If you are going to leave then, you go first” I say. She tilts her head almost as if she can’t believe what she heard then walks ahead of me shaking her head.

I stop in the living room as she grabs Wyatt’s hand and turns to head out the front door. Wyatt looks at me and then pulls her into a deep kiss. Before smiling then walking out the door holding hands with the woman I have every intention of making my wife one day.

“Damn did he want to pee on her leg while he’s at it,” I say full of anger, my hands tightening into fists.

“Drop it between you and Mateo that dinner was a fucking shit show” Fiona says, placing her hand on my chest.

“He wasn’t happy when she insisted on saying bye to you,” Celisa said.

“I’m sure” is all I say before I decide to head out front.

“Do not go out there. Let her handle this how she wants to. You messed up, you are going to have to wait for her to decide if she wants to give you a chance or stay with him. Leave her alone.” Fiona says.

“I can wait as long as it takes. I am going to marry that girl one day. Once she gives me a chance I am going to show her every day how sorry I am for the time we lost due to my stupidity” I tell them.

“I believe you,” Luke says, slapping me on the back.

I head home and let thoughts of how much I loved having her in my arms if even for a moment fill my head as I drive.

Blake: Get home safe princess.

Chapter Thirteen

LUCY

All I can think of as we head outside is how Wyatt just marked me as his territory like a dog. I am actively trying not to think about my private moment with Blake as I buckle up literally and figuratively for this car ride. I am going to murder Mateo when I see him again. I pull out my phone to text Emerson and see a text notification from Blake I swipe it away, not even reading it, before Wyatt can see, before shooting off a message to Em.

Lucy: 911 my house as soon as you wake up tomorrow

Emerson: OH NO

Lucy: u have no idea bring comfort food we will need it. gtg.

“So do you want to explain anything to me?” Wyatt asks as we start the drive.

“Yes. Things with Blake and I are complicated. We were best friends in college. At some point, I fell for him. He had no idea. I got my heart broken. It took a while to get over that, especially because he’s around all the time. But we haven’t spoken in years until recently. That was when he found out about my feelings. But it’s settled, and there is no need to stress or worry about him. It’s a thing of the past ” I tell him, leaving out some things.

“Have you slept together?” he asks repeating the question he asked earlier I avoided.

“Yes. Years ago at Fiona’s wedding. We were drunk, but it’s in the past.” I tell him honestly.

“Is it though? You haven’t spoken to him I am assuming since that day. Then recently you tell him about the feelings you had back then. Then you go on a freaking trip together? Don’t you think I should’ve known what I was walking into? Everyone probably thinks I’m a schmuck” he says, audibly upset.

“No one knew that we slept together until recently. So no they don’t think you are a schmuck. They all like you. If anything they are pissed at Blake” I say.

“When did all this history come out?” Wyatt asks.

“On the trip,” I tell him.

“The trip that you took and I barely heard from you? That trip? Is that why I didn’t hear from you because you were busy with Blake” Wyatt says.

“Be careful where you start with those accusations. I was busy trying to relax. It came up one night after everyone was drinking. Blake and I stepped outside and everything came out. I was walking to my room and he was there waiting outside and apparently, everyone had followed us out and overheard” I say.

We pull up to my apartment and I look over at him and feel horrible for the pain on his face.

“I am sorry that it came out like this, but it is in the past. I am with you, not him. Can we try and move on from this? Please” I ask.

“I just need some space. I will call you tomorrow after your shift. Bye Lucy” he says. Then I get out of the car and head upstairs.

My head is spinning when I lay down. I can’t stop thinking about Blake and what he said. I almost kissed him, being in his arms, and him staring me down with those gorgeous green

eyes. But I didn't and for that I am grateful. I grab my book and decide to think about someone else's problems for the rest of the night.

It's ten am by the time that I am awake and showered. I lay on my couch reading while waiting for Emerson to arrive. I love Fiona, Charlie, and Celisa but they aren't going to be helpful right now. Just shy of eleven she comes walking in with tequila and pancakes.

"PANCAKES" I cheered while reaching for the take out container.

"Spill or I will snatch those pancakes back," she tells me.

So I do. I tell her everything from the name mishap (which she laughed at) to the car ride home. I am full of emotion and exhaustion as I tell her everything. I have run through it over and over in my head, so I don't understand why it bothers me so much to say out loud.

"That's everything," I say then sigh.

"Wow. I don't even know what to say. Mateo is an idiot first of all. Blakey boy might have finally realized he's an idiot. Don't look at me like that, you can't say you didn't feel weak in the knees when he mentioned not walking away from you again. Girl, the tension you described when you were hugging. Ma'am, he wants you, don't even try to deny it. Also good on Wyatt for finally defending himself. He needed to finally snap out of it and either demand all your attention or leave you. Sorry, not sorry" She says.

"I thought you didn't know what to say," I say, chuckling.

"Well, it came to me, as I talked. It's a gift, honestly" she says with a smile.

"What do I do?" I ask.

"I can't tell you what to do. You need to decide who you see a future for yourself with," she tells me.

We spent the rest of the morning catching up on work and I showing her pictures of how cute Hadley is getting. The next two weeks are going to be brutal leading up to the game. I plan

to drown myself in work, maybe I will even pick up some extra shifts so I can avoid both of the chaotic men in my life right now.



GAME DAY

“I am glad you decided to come today! It’s going to be fun, I promise!” I tell Wyatt.

“I am excited, I haven’t watched much hockey, but I want to support your brother and get some quality time with you,” he tells me with a smile.

Over the past two weeks, we have talked pretty regularly and gone on a few dates. We seem to be getting back to normal. I was surprised he decided to come today, but I am happy he did, so maybe we can move forward. Emerson keeps saying that tonight will make or break us. We shall see!

“Thank you again for coming,” I say as we settle in our seats. Charlie, Celisa, Fiona, Emerson, Me, and then Wyatt.

The guys come out circling the ice and I ‘aw’ when Zane comes up and throws an Airhead over the glass for Fi.

“They have done that since college,” I tell Wyatt. Emerson knows because she has come to a few games.

“How sweet. They seem so in love” Wyatt says before waving at my brother who stopped in front of us for a minute. I reach forward, tapping my hand on the glass against his. Like Celisa, Charlie, and Fiona did. Something else that we did in college that we have continued.

“They are” I look at him and smile.

Luke comes by tapping the glass and we all repeat the movement to him placing our hand on the glass as he stops in front of each of us.

“Is that a hockey thing?” Wyatt asks.

“Sorta we started it in college and never stopped. Yes, Blake will do it too. Yes, I will do it back because it’s a superstitious thing and even with all these games since our

issues when we were not speaking it was the only thing we never stopped” I tell him honestly.

“That’s true. Even when it has been over a year since they talked they never stopped the glove tap” Fiona says.

“Thanks for being honest and not letting me be blindsided,” Wyatt says as he gives me a genuine smile. I squeeze his hand and smile.

Blake takes the ice and you can feel the vibes change. Luke and Zane skate over to chat with him before he circles the boards. Probably to warn him that Wyatt did indeed show up. I give Wyatt another reassuring squeeze before Blake reaches us. I tap my hand against the glass and give him a nod. With that, he nods back and skates off to prepare for the game.

Once the game starts I try to focus on everyone evenly, but it’s harder than expected. We are winning by the fourth period 2-1. Blake had an assist for one of those goals so everyone, even Wyatt cheered for him when he skated over to us. Tensions are rising on the ice though. It’s the opening game and everyone wants to win.

Someone crosschecks Zane and I see Luke and Blake exchange a nod.

“Not the nod. Why can’t we have a game without one of these three getting a major penalty” Charlie says. We all laugh.

Sure enough, less than two minutes later Luke gets put in the sin bin. Blake takes a big hit in the next play. He’s down for a few seconds and I hold my breath as I wait for him to get up. Once he is up we all take a collective breath and Wyatt gives me a kiss on the cheek. I hate seeing any of them get hurt.

The rest of the game goes by without any issues. We head to the family area and wait for the guys to come out. I hug Luke and Zane when they come out. They shake Wyatt’s hand and then begin to talk about celebrating more than just the

win. Before I can ask what we are celebrating I see Blake walking out with the 'A' for the alternate captain on his jersey.

"Go. Congratulate him. He is important to you. I won't interfere in that" Wyatt says. I kiss him on the cheek and take off to Blake.

I run over and he picks me up spinning me before setting me down.

"You are doing it, Blake. All the things you ever dreamed of are coming true" I tell him as we walk to the group.

"Not everything. Not yet. But thank you. Thanks for keeping up with tradition" he says bumping me as we walk.

I can't stop smiling until I overhear Wyatt whisper to Emerson. "I might have just signed my own death wish. I have never seen her smile like that at me." He smiles at me not realizing I just heard everything.

I look up at Blake and I know he heard it too. He still shakes Wyatt's hand thanking him for coming and calling him by the correct name this time. I make sure that everyone else is occupied then move back over to where Wyatt is standing.

"I'm sorry," I say with tears welling up.

"You can't help who you love. Trust me I know, sometimes it's a lesson, sometimes it's lifelong love," he says, kissing my cheek before walking away. Leaving me standing there feeling alone in a crowd full of people.

Emerson sees my tears and grabs me by the elbow announcing that we are heading to the parking lot. As we walk out Blake cuts us off, seeing my tears he reacts instantly.

"What happened, are you ok?" he asks.

"She's fine. We are going to head out. You go on and celebrate!" Emerson says.

"Luc?" he says tilting my chin so I am looking at him.

"I'm fine Blake. Go and have fun you deserve it" I say before I start walking again so he can't stop me.

“I feel like the worst person ever. I hate that I hurt Wyatt” I tell Emerson.

“I know honey. You were never going to love him the same way though. Clear your head then decide how you want to handle the hockey player who is still watching us.” she says.

I refuse to turn around and look and keep heading to the car. I go home, turn my phone off, and head to bed.

Chapter Fourteen

BLAKE

I head to Slapshots torn between being excited about the win and my new alternate captain patch or checking on Lucy. It's busy when we get to the bar but we have a booth reserved. When I reach our group I scan looking for Lucy and Emerson to see if they changed their minds on coming out.

"She texted saying she can't come out because she has work in the morning," Zane says.

"Sure," I say while taking a drink from my drink on the table.

"I think Wyatt dumped her, I saw him leave before her and they both looked upset," Celisa says.

I pull out my phone to text her and check in on her, but a hand reaches out and blocks the screen.

"She may not have loved him, but she has been with him for a few months, let her mourn this loss before you are right up her ass," Zane says.

He is right so I put my phone away deciding to celebrate with my friends and family that are here right now. I feel like I am on top of the world and things are finally coming together for me. I just need to give Lucy some time before I make my move. Later that night, when I get home, I have the most peaceful sleep of my life.

The next few days fly by in a blur as we get ready to head into back-to-back home games. The morning of game one I decide to finally text Lucy and see how she is doing and if I

will see her at the game. I haven't talked to her since the game where I got my A patch, trying to listen to advice and give her space.

Blake: Hey are you coming today? Or tomorrow?

Lucy: No sorry I have work both days. Good luck captain!

Blake: *glove tap*

Lucy: *glove tap*

I am sad entering the stadium knowing Lucy won't be there. But I am excited it's my first game as an alternate captain. I can't wait to prove that I deserve the honor. The team hollers when I come in and damn, does that feel so good. I will never forget sitting in the grass, back when we were in college, telling Lucy my midnight truth that I wanted to be the captain of an NHL team. Preferably one that wins the Stanley Cup. She never doubted me, she has always believed in all my dreams. I don't know why I never got my head out of my ass and realized what I had in front of me back then.

We enter the ice and I am more determined than ever to prove my worth as a player tonight. I proceed to play one of the best games of my career, with two assists and one goal, I leave the ice knowing I gave everything I had tonight. With another win in our pocket, we all want to celebrate but decide against it with another game tomorrow.

I don't check my phone until I get home and I am happy to find a message notification from Lucy.

Lucy: Great game! I have never been more proud. Way to give it your all. I watched as much as I could in between patients.

Blake: Thanks, princess. Tonight's midnight truth: I was terrified to not live up to my new patch.

I wake up and head to the arena since we have an earlier game today. I can't explain it but something feels off today. It puts me in a weird headspace during our tape review, where we watch footage of ourselves and the team we will be playing, and the workout with trainers. I try to figure out what is making me feel weird, but I can't think of anything so, I try to ignore the feeling. I just focus on getting my mind right for the game today.

Lucy: *glove tap*

Blake: *glove tap*

“What are you smiling at?” Luke asks, sitting down on the bench next to me.

“Nothing,” I tell him, closing out my texts.

“Mhm, sure. Anyway, Lucy confirmed they did break up and she will be at the family dinner solo. Might give you a low stress place to try and talk to her” he says tapping my shoulder.

“Good to know. Thanks” I say. I had assumed they had broken up because she was texting me. But it is nice to have it confirmed. I smile thinking of Sunday, two days, then I can ask her out. I can wait two more days.

By the time we take the ice any weird feelings I had are gone and now I am just focused on getting another win. At intermission, we are neck and neck and I can tell we are going to be battling the entire game if we want to take the win. This team doesn't mind taking any penalty calls apparently because they are coming for us left and right. Coaches pep talk, before we hit the ice today, was all about playing hard but being careful of the people around us. Basically, try to stay out of the damn penalty boxes.

The third period comes around and everyone on both teams is tired. It's been a fight and everyone knows that we have reached the final battle and only one of us can win it. We are tied 1-1 and every moment on the clock counts. Their right

wing has been cross-checking and slashing everyone, how he hasn't been ejected yet I don't understand.

We have two minutes left in the game when their defenseman slapshots the puck. That is the last thing I remember before everything goes black.

Chapter Fifteen

LUCY

I am charting a patient on my computer when all of a sudden Hunter and Emerson come running to me.

“Have you seen your phone?” Emerson almost yells.

I am fumbling to pull out my phone when I see the 18 missed calls and 21 texts.

“Someone tell me what is going on. Is it Luke?” I ask

“No but just look,” Hunter says.

A clip of the hockey game is playing on his phone he is holding up to me. I see the other team slapshot and the puck hits Blake hard in the left side of the chest. All I can see is Blake clutching his chest and then collapsing onto the ice. The footage stops when the medics hit the ice and CPR begins. My mind is going a mile a minute when I hear the sirens approaching and the announcement is made that makes everything even more real “CODE BLUE ER INBOUND 2 mins”

I don't have time to reflect on the fact that the man I have loved since college is lying on a stretcher without a pulse. I don't have time to think about all the time we missed with me being mad. I don't have time to think about how I wish I had told him how I felt sooner. Or how I wish I had kissed him that night after he got the patch. I have to focus on saving his life right now, nothing else can matter.

“Stop staring at me like that. We are short-staffed tonight, you know you need me in there. So let me go in.” I say.

It's like a robot takes over my body as I head to the trauma bay and prepare everything that we will need. When the stretcher comes in and I see Wyatt's crew working on him my heart aches. I jump up to begin compressions taking over for the medic.

Doing CPR on a stranger is traumatic enough, but doing it on a loved one is different. I know it's only a matter of time until I am pulled out of the room so I make every moment count that I am in here. Tears are running down my face as I look up and see Luke standing outside the doors. Wyatt is talking to him, probably explaining where the family needs to wait.

"We have a pulse" is the last thing I hear before Wyatt takes my hand and escorts me down the hall to the family room. Where everyone else is already waiting.

"You knew who we were bringing in Lucy. You should have left. There are policies for a reason. You can't be distracted by Luke while doing compressions on Blake crying so hard you can't see straight. It's not allowed, that's how things get messy, you know that." Wyatt tells me loudly but he pulls me into a hug. Turning to everyone else "We got him back. *She* got him back. They will be in with updates. I would expect the house supervisor to talk to you." With that, Wyatt walks out the door.

I sit in silence for what feels like forever before the doctor and my supervisor come in with Hunter following close behind them.

"First off, he is going to be fine. We need to run some more tests to be sure but we think the impact of the puck caused his heart to stop briefly. It has happened before to hockey players, but it's rare. He is being moved upstairs and once he is settled we will let you know and then you can visit with him. Good work Lucy." the doctor says before stepping out. Hunter hugs me quickly before following him out.

"Lucy don't do that again. The minute you knew who it was you should have stepped away. You are off the rest of the

night. I want to say go home and get some rest but I am sure you won't." my supervisor says before leaving as well.

"I am glad he is okay. Are you okay Lucy?" Fiona asks through tear filled eyes.

"I am fine. I knew the choice I was making by staying in the room" My voice sounds flat as I sit and try to process everything going on.

Emerson comes in about an hour later and takes us up to his room. He is sleeping when we get there, everyone is outside the room deciding who will take the first shift to wait with him, but I insist on staying the whole time. I am not leaving until I see him awake with my own eyes. I hold his hand and talk to him.

"Blake, you need to wake up. Please. I know you are going to be okay. But I need to see you open your eyes and hear your voice before I believe it. I've heard talking to patients helps to wake them up faster so I guess I will just be sitting here talking your ear off. So, Wyatt and I broke up. He thinks I am still in love with you" I lay my head on the bed still holding his hand.

"And he's right, I think I am still in love with you. How did we fuck this up so much, both of us trying to prove we didn't have feelings for each other. You have to be okay because I need us to have another chance. You promised me you wouldn't walk away and I won't either. Let me show you that I choose you, always." I whisper to him as he sleeps.

"It's almost midnight Blake, so here is my midnight truth. I never stopped loving you. I tried and failed to move on many times. When I heard you say you wanted to settle down and have a family I jumped into the first relationship I could find so that I could distract myself as you found whoever it was you were going to settle down with. Poor Wyatt he is a great guy and who didn't deserve to be used like that" I tell him.

I fall asleep even with the nurses in and out of the room all night. I wake up slowly to voices around me talking.

"What happened?"

“You took a puck to the chest. Wyatt and the other medics did CPR and brought you here, where Lucy took over compressions. I watched her trying to save you as tears rolled down her cheeks. She refuses to leave your bedside until she knows you are awake”

I open my eyes and squeeze Blake’s hand gently.

“Glad to see you awake, we were worried,” I say.

“I heard a thank you is in order,” he says.

“None needed, it’s my job. Since I know you are ok, I will head out, you are going to have lots of visitors today I am sure.” I say and go to get up.

“Luke, can we have a minute please?” Blake asks. Luke nods and then heads out the door.

“I am sorry I scared you, Luc,” he says.

“It’s okay you had no control over what happened last night.” I give him a warm smile.

“We need to talk,” Blake tells me, holding my hand.

“I know, but not today. Just rest and we will catch up soon, I promise” I tell him. I give him a gentle hug and kiss the top of his head before I walk out the door.

I head to my car and cry. I let it all out, the fear, the anger, the sadness, the joy when we got a pulse. All the feelings I tried to bury in that room just came bubbling out. Once I feel like there is nothing left, I head home to shower and sleep.

I sleep for a solid ten hours. I wake up to a bunch of texts mostly with updates about Blake. I have a few messages from Emerson and two from Wyatt checking in. Once I respond to the ones that require an answer, I decide to clean the house.

I need to keep my mind busy with anything to avoid going to talk to Blake. Things are awkward because I am single, he knows all my feelings from the past few years, but I am still confused about how he feels. It’s not weird for me to be afraid to get hurt again. It is weird to avoid someone you love who is in the hospital though, but I don’t think I can go back there right now. But I stand by the keep my mind busy excuse.

After cleaning the house, grocery shopping, and doing my laundry I decided to check my phone again. Once again the group chat is busy with messages. Apparently, Blake can go home tomorrow. Of course, I am off so I have no excuse to not go by. Emerson texted me that I can't avoid him forever. She knows me so well. I spent the rest of the evening reading and listening to Taylor Swift on repeat before texting Blake and going to bed.

Lucy: Hey If it's okay I was going to come by your condo tomorrow around 2. I can bring food or anything else you need.

Blake: Can't wait! See you then.

I sleep until noon giving me plenty of time to shower, get ready, grab food, and get to his place. I wear my hair down in its natural wave, putting on only mascara and some lip tint. I decided to wear a cute pair of black leggings and another one of my old hockey shirts I cropped. Perfect! I say to myself in the mirror. Casual, cute, and looks like I gave this no effort. I order sandwiches from Publix then head out the door.

Chapter Sixteen

BLAKE

I am happy to be home. The doctors called it a freak accident, the puck hit me just hard enough to stop my heart. It has happened before but it still has the league in a tizzy. I have to meet with a cardiologist and the front office team to see when I can get back on the ice. Even though I feel fine so I think it's protocol.

Imogen was terrified but Luke and Lucy kept her in the loop with updates and let her know when I woke up. I promised to call her again today once I was settled at home. Everyone just left, so I could call her now, but I know Lucy will be here soon and honestly that is all my mind can focus on right now. It feels like now or never like everything has led up to this moment. If I've learned anything it's that life is too short and you never know which day is your last.

My stomach is uneasy when I hear knocking on the door. I haven't ever felt this nervous over a girl, so this is all new to me. Lucy and I have so much history and I am hoping that it's not too late for us to unpack it. I just want her to give me a chance to show her I can be so much more than the idiot I was back then.

"Hey Luc, nice shirt," I say with a smirk.

"Oh this, it was just something I found in the back of a drawer," she says walking past me to the table. We both know that shirt is one of the ones I gave her all those years ago.

"Thanks for coming by, and for bringing subs, hospital food sucks," I tell her sitting down across from her.

We eat and talk about the test results. I talk to her about the cardiologist I have to see. She asks me to tell her about the appointment when it happens. It is nice to be like this again, to talk without it always being a fight. I have genuinely missed our friendship so much. We head to the couch to talk.

“So you wanted to talk?” she says nervously.

“I did. I heard you and Wyatt broke up. I’m sorry” I told her.

“We did,” she says, looking at me.

“I’m sorry for everything Lucy. I fucked up. I missed all the signs. But I don’t want to lose you again” I tell her.

“No, I am not doing this right now. You are scared and that’s ok you just went through something huge” she says getting up and walking to the door.

“Luc, I have known since we got home from the trip, I was just trying to wait for the right time. Please just talk to me” I say, grabbing her hand and turning her to look at me.

“Look at me, Lucy” I brush her hair from her face and tilt her chin to look at me.

“If you tell me you don’t feel anything towards me then I will let you go. But if you do even a little we owe it to ourselves to try” I say breathlessly looking into her eyes.

“You don’t know what you want Blake ” she tells me looking from my eyes to my lips and back.

“Tell me to kiss you and I will. But I won’t take that choice from you. I already hurt you once by doing something with the wrong intentions and I won’t do that ever again” I say quietly then move a little closer to her.

“I know that you are the person I want to spend the rest of my life with. I know that I want to settle down with you and have a family. I want to tolerate Luke and Zane being my in-laws. I want to wake up every day next to you knowing I got the gift of a second chance with the best person to ever walk into my life. I want to tap my gloves on the glass, with your

hands on the other side, knowing I will be holding you in my arms the minute I leave the ice” I tell her.

“Blake,” she says and I see the tears in her eyes.

“Don’t cry, princess. Let me show you what you deserve. Let me show you that I can be that man for you” I tell her.

“Kiss me, Blake,” she says, lifting onto her toes and throwing her arms around my neck.

I waste no time lowering my lips to hers. I wrap my fingers through her hair cupping the back of her head. I kiss her like she’s giving me a second chance at life. She lets out the tiniest moan and I am lost. I drop my hands to her perfect ass lifting her up and her legs wrap around me. I walk her to the counter and set her down and I move to start kissing down from her ear to her collarbone.

I hit that sweet spot where her neck ends, giving it a little nip before continuing to kiss it again. Lucy moans again and I swear it’s the most beautiful sound. She has a hand tangled up in my hair pulling me up to kiss her. After what feels like hours and seconds all at the same time I pull back taking a breath.

Putting my forehead against hers I cup her cheek and smile. “Hi princess,” I say with a chuckle.

“Hi Blake,” she says breathlessly “Where do we go from here?”

“Well, we date and I show you that I am serious about you, about us,” I say kissing her forehead.

“I don’t want to tell anyone yet, ” she says seriously.

“Okay, Luc we won’t. But I don’t want to keep this a secret forever. I am happy to be with you and I want to show off how proud I am to have you” I tell her.

We move to the couch and put on a movie. Any worry I have about awkwardness melts away the minute she cuddles up next to me. This is what I have been missing in my life, her. I hold her close like I am afraid if I let go she will disappear.

I want to tell her I love her, that I think I have always loved her. But I know she needs time. Time to adjust. Time to forgive. My mind is spinning with a thousand thoughts when she looks up at me and kisses my cheek.

“What is your schedule like this week?” I ask her.

“I work three twelve-hour shifts back to back. My next day off is Tuesday, which is an away game day for your team” she says.

“Well if I am not traveling with the team I want to have a date Tuesday and if I am then Wednesday? Apparently, after cardiac events, we can’t always fly immediately, more protocols.” I ask her, suddenly nervous she might say no.

“Yeah, that sounds good,” she tells me before getting on her tippy toes and wrapping her arms around my neck.

“I’m going to kiss you now,” I say quietly as I lean down I see her eyes flutter closed and her sweet lips pucker to meet mine. I can smell her citrusy perfume as I take in every moment with her. When our lips touch this time it’s less of an explosion of feelings like our last kiss. This is the kind of kiss you don’t rush, the kind that blooms with emotion slowly with each passing second.

When it ends we both breathlessly say goodbye. I watch her walk away, then slowly close my door and pick up my phone to call Imogen knowing if I don’t call her soon she might report me missing. I tell Imogen everything that happened with Lucy and almost go deaf from her squeals of delight.

“I need to plan a perfect date,” I tell her.

“Lucy isn’t a perfect date girl. Just show that thought and effort went into what you plan and she will be happy. Lucy loved you when you were a fuck up, party animal, college hockey player. And she is going to love you now as a stable NHL player” Imogen explains.

“Yeah but in the middle I broke her heart” I counter.

“You did but one perfect date won’t fix that. A bunch of dates that show effort will though” she says.

“You are right. Thank you! Sorry to worry you, I am feeling better!” I tell her before we end our phone call.

I shower and get in bed but sleep feels far away. I can't decide if I should text Lucy or not. Like we are going on a date but are we dating? I never thought I would be this guy overthinking every little move I make with a woman. I decided to send a goodnight text hoping that it comes across as sweet and not weird.

Blake: Good night Luc. Thank you for coming today.

Lucy: You're welcome

Blake: Can't wait for our date

Lucy: Me either

I have never really had a real relationship so I am already at a loss of what I am supposed to do. Then you add in that this is Lucy, not just any girl, that I am trying to impress. My emotions are a tangled mess but I am determined to do whatever it takes to do things right this time.

Chapter Seventeen

LUCY

I am bombarded the minute I walk out of my first patient's room with questions from Emerson. You would think calling her when I left Blake's would be enough. I told her everything and yet here she is harassing me for more.

"Girl that kiss sounded HOT," she says.

"It was," I say, my face turning red and I turn to look at my computer to chart.

"I was wet just hearing about it. I am surprised you didn't undress right there" she fans herself.

"Will you stop?" I say, giggling and blushing. "I would have but he didn't seem like he wanted to do more."

"That man is hooked on you. You said sex the first time was mind-blowing I bet it will be even more orgasmic with all your feelings involved" she says with a wink.

"I can't believe he wouldn't kiss me until I asked. Girl when he picked me up I could have burst into flames right then" I smiled at her.

Apparently, the city of Tampa decided that was enough gossiping because we spent the rest of our shift slammed without much of a chance to even hydrate. I love my job but it is definitely exhausting sometimes. I worked hard to get here though and, as of right now, there is nothing else I would rather do.

Once our shift is over I head home hoping the next two days fly by. When I am home and showered, I heat up some food and check my phone. Blake texted and let me know that he won't be traveling with the team for this game but he is cleared to go back next week. I have a message from Fiona telling me the same thing, I assume because she knows I care and doesn't know Blake and I are already communicating.

Lucy: I am happy to hear you are cleared to go back so soon.

Blake: Me too I didn't want to be bored

Lucy: so I guess this means Tuesday we are on for a date

Blake: yup I will pick you up around 4 pm if that works for you

Lucy: That works for me. What are we doing?

Blake: It's a surprise. How was work?

Lucy: Long and exhausting.

Blake: I hope you enjoy a nice relaxing night then.

Lucy: I will. You too

Blake: Good night Princess

Lucy: Good night Blake

I go to bed with a smile. This is what I wanted all those years ago. It's a second chance. I just hope that all the things from

our past don't interfere. I am not sure what we are but I am excited to explore this.

Halfway through my shift Emerson walks up giggling.

“What?”

“Come with me,” She says, dragging me to the break room.

“What are these?” I say starting at a bouquet of fruit and chocolate.

“Read the card,” Emerson says, shoving the card at me.

Luc,

Since you said you don't have time for a full meal, I hope you enjoy something quick

To snack on. Don't worry, coffee is also on the way too. tell Emerson she has one too.

Have a good shift.

Hockey Boy

“And we are getting coffee! Hell yeah,” Emerson says, shoving a flower-shaped pineapple in her mouth.

“He is so thoughtful,” I say smiling. Then I sent a selfie of me and the bouquet and one of Emerson stuffing her face to Blake.

Blake: I am glad it is being enjoyed. You look beautiful. I will miss you at Sunday dinner tonight

Lucy: It's the first time I am really bummed to miss a dinner

Blake: I am glad you won't be there because I wouldn't be able to keep my hands to myself.

“What are you blushing and smiling at?” Emerson says walking up and reading over my shoulder.

“Girl, this man has it bad for you,” she says before grabbing another piece of fruit then she walks out the door.

I get back to work with coffee and fruit in hand. This shift had all the makings to suck between codes, drunks, and just being slammed busy, but the care package from Blake really kept my spirits high. My other coworkers loved the fruit too so everyone was in a decent mood.

I am actually sad to be heading home tonight, usually after shifts I don't like to socialize and rush as fast as I can to shower, eat, and crawl into bed. I really wish I could have made it to dinner tonight, but I am gross and by the time I arrive, I know it will be almost over. Is the only reason I want to go over so I can try and get a moment with Blake so I can kiss him and thank him for his gifts today. Yes. Does that matter at this moment? No. I continue driving to my place, anticipating when I can deliver that kiss though. I slip into bed after I shower and eat. I open a book on my Kindle to read but sleep takes me instantly.



It is two o'clock on date day and I am a ball of nerves. Blake won't tell me what we are doing so I don't know how to dress and I am stressing about my outfit choice. Which is silly because he has seen me at my absolute most feral back in college. Not to mention he has already seen me naked. But this all feels so different, so official. I sit in my closet and just stare until I finally decide.

I pick a blue mini skirt and a black bodysuit paired with a black pair of ankle boots. It is comfortable yet stylish and sexy. I do take the time to curl my hair. I don't apply much makeup except black winged eyeliner, mascara, and red lipstick. I am trying to channel the calm and collected 1989-era Taylor Swift vibes.

By the time I am dressed and ready I have about ten minutes to spare. I use that time taking a shot for luck and sending a picture of my 'fit to Emerson which she replies with a bunch of fire emojis. When I hear the knock on my door I swear my stomach does a flip. I am a ball of nerves but also excited at the same time.

I open it and my breath catches when I see him holding flowers at my door. Blake is wearing khaki pants and a blue button-up, not leaving much to the imagination when it comes to showing off his tight muscular body. I am still staring when he clears his throat.

“Um sorry. You look great. Come in while I put these in water” I say suddenly grateful I spent the morning cleaning.

“Your apartment is nice,” he says looking around.

“Thank you. So where are we going today?” I ask.

“You will see. By the way, you look gorgeous” he says.

We head out to his truck and I blush when he comes and opens my door for me. He plugs in his phone and pulls up a Taylor Mix station on Spotify.

“We don't have to listen to this for me,” I told him.

“We don't have to but I want to. You like her so the least I can do is let you jam out on the way” he says.

That is what I do. Singing along and laugh as he attempts to sing along with me. This is a detail I never realized he remembered about me, my car karaoke sessions. When we pull up to my favorite little coffee shop I smile.

“You would come here all the time in college and I assumed you would still love it,” he says.

“I do!” I say.

We order our drinks and head outside. He grabs my hand and the little touch has me tingling from head to toe. We walk together, drinking coffee and I can't imagine that today can get any better. That is until he stops at a local bookstore and turns to open the door for me. My smile must reach from ear to ear.

I love bookstores and coffee shops, he is hitting all the marks today.

“Are you still competitive?” he says. I turned to him confused.

“Yes of course why?” I ask.

“You have 3 minutes to browse. Then I will give you 1 minute to grab as much as you can carry. I know you love books and a challenge so I couldn’t think of a more fun first date” he says.

“Oh my God, this is amazing,” I say then surprise us both when I kiss him.

“Sorry, I got so excited!” I tell him, stepping back. He pulls me back into him and lowers his lips to mine before saying “Never apologize for kissing me.” Then he kisses me with so much passion, I feel hot and my heart is beating out of my chest. I almost forgot we are in public. We take a step back and he kisses my temple and then says “GO”.

I want to be mad. I wasn’t ready but I am still drunk on that kiss. Plus it wouldn’t be a challenge if I had time to settle my mind. When we finish the competition I end up with 18 new books. The shop owner is excited too because she is a hockey fan and Blake took a picture with her. We grab a quick bite to eat at a food truck before we head back to my apartment.

Blake walked me to the door, like a gentleman, plus the book bags were heavy and I needed his muscles. Neither of us has said goodbye yet. I am leaning on my kitchen counter when Blake takes a step forward. The air seems to get like ten degrees hotter. When he is close enough I wrap my arms around his neck and look into his eyes. He lowers his head a little. My heart is pounding so loud that I am sure he can hear it. I can feel the flush of pink on my cheeks.

Once our lips meet it’s like nothing else in the world exists and our bodies melt together as one. I can feel the tingling down to my pussy when he finally picks me up and sets me on the counter. I start to reach for the buttons on his shirt and I

can feel him hardening against me. When he finally breaks our kiss, both of us catch our breath and he presses a kiss to my temple.

He pulls back enough to look at me and say “Obviously I want this too, but I really want us to take our time. I had a great time today, princess”.

He heads out the door turning to say “Would you mind locking the door behind me, please? I’d feel better knowing you’re safe when I’m not here with you.”

“I’m always here alone, chill” I laugh.

“You’re my girl now, I’ll never be chill about anything with you again. You mean way too much to me, princess.” He says before walking out the door.

Chapter Eighteen

BLAKE

Walking away from Lucy was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. Because of course, I want to do more than kiss her, but I need to prove to her that she means more than that to me. I'm trying to build something real with her. I head straight for the shower when I get home. I strip off my clothes and step into the shower, letting the hot water run down my body while I rub my hand up and down my already hard cock. I'm this turned on just thinking about how good it would feel to have Lucy under me, feeling her tight wet pussy squeezing around me while I pound into her relentlessly. I picture her bent over holding the headboard with one of my hands wrapped around her hair and the other holding her hip. Slamming into her from behind as she explodes with my name alone on her lips. A few more pumps of my hand and I am dripping my release down my hand while I moan her name.

I go to bed feeling restless and dreaming of Lucy in my bed. When I get up, I get ready to head to the arena for my first day back at practice. I am prepared for a long few weeks ahead physically and mentally. Luke catches me in the locker room and I can feel his eyes on me as I'm looking at my phone.

"What?" I ask him.

"Nothing just wondering who you are talking to that has you smiling like an absolute goon," he says trying to grab for my phone.

“No one I was looking at a picture calm down,” I tell him which isn’t a lie. It’s a selfie I took of Lucy and me yesterday at the bookstore.

He doesn’t look convinced but he does head out onto the ice so I know I’m out of the woods for now. I lock my phone before I put it in my locker and head out behind him. It’s a grueling practice followed by time with the team doctor doing EKGs to be sure everything is still looking good. Our schedule is crazy for the next two weeks so I text Lucy to plan some dates around her job, my practice, and games.



Two weeks later

As I prepare for our first home game, I sit on the bench thinking about Lucy. We have had a few dates over the last two weeks. All of them end with both of us ready to rip the other’s clothes off, but I think it should wait until we are at least ready to go public with our relationship. That will be the moment I know Lucy is ready to be serious. I don’t exactly know when she will be at that point.

Family dinner last week was interesting with Lucy and I exchanging lustful looks trying not to get caught. The lingering touches when we have the chance under the table. But my favorite was Lucy pulling me into the bathroom for a quick makeout session and then listening to her try and explain why her makeup was all smeared when she came out. I winked at her and rolled my sleeves when she did that and I swear you could see the pink spread across her face.

Skating onto the ice, all I can think about is how excited I am to see her tonight in the stands. That bubble is quickly burst when the first lap I do she wasn’t there to tap gloves. My friends just shrug their shoulders looking around genuinely confused too. I ask Luke and Zane neither of them knows where she is either.

My heart skips a beat when I skate back by to say bye before heading off the ice so the other team can warm up. I see her coming down the stairs looking breathtaking. I know that

everyone else sees her too because I suddenly hear them yelling and hitting the glass in cheer.

I skate closer and place my hand on the glass, she taps it. In that moment I know I will do anything in my power to have her here with my last name across her back for life. I head off the ice expecting to hear some questions from Zane and Luke.

“Before you ask, she is single, I am just trying to win her over and her being here seems like a good start,” I tell them.

Both of them pull me into a quick bro hug tapping my back.

“We are happy for you and really hope it works out,” Zane says.

“I won’t tell you not to hurt her because I think you learned your lesson, but be careful, I’ve got my eye on you.” Luke jokes.

We ended up winning the game 2-0 with one of those goals being mine. I play my ass off not only to impress my girl but to show the league I am back, after my injury. I had an outpouring of support but people have been nervous for me to be back on the ice tonight. I just showed them that Stuntz is back at it, all is well here in Tampa. We are coming for the Cup this year!

After the game, walking into the tunnel and seeing everyone waiting makes me smile. I give Lucy a hug being mindful of the watching eyes. I know she still wants this to be a secret until she is ready.

“Congratulations on the win!” she says.

“Thank you, and thanks for coming,” I tell her.

I lean my head down and murmur “I have never been as turned on as I am seeing you with my last name across your back” against Lucy’s hair. I feel her stiffen momentarily.

“I am going to skip celebrations tonight. With it being my first game back I am exhausted.” I lie.

I say my goodbyes and head to the parking lot. I hear light footsteps getting closer.

“I told them I had to work in the morning,” Lucy yells from behind me.

I smile and she runs and jumps into my arms.

“Take me home?” she asks before kissing me.

The tension in the air is electric on the drive to her place. When we get to Lucy’s apartment I try to get control of my dick before we go inside. I know that everything is about to change.

The front door isn’t even locked yet by the time she is in my arms with my lips on her. I lean her against the front door locking it.

“Where to?” I murmur between kisses.

“Bedroom,” she says, breathlessly.

I carry her and set her down on the bed. Kneeling in front of her I slide her vans off. Then reach for her leggings sliding them down slowly. The room is quiet and you can feel the sexual tension coming off of us in waves. I start to kiss my way up her legs. My breath catches seeing the white lace thong she has on.

“Are you attached to this?” I ask.

“No,” she says like a question.

“Good,” I say, kissing her upper thigh then rip the lace right off.

I spread her legs and slide my jersey up her belly so I can have a perfect view of her pink pussy. I can see she is already glistening. I run one finger between her lips and then bring it to my tongue, licking the sweet taste off my fingers. Her eyes are locked on mine, mesmerized.

“I haven’t been able to stop thinking about what you taste like. I didn’t savor you enough last time and I won’t make that mistake again. I am going to lick every drop on your wet pussy” I tell her before I place her legs on my shoulders.

I take my time, adding my thumb to her clit and rubbing it in small circles. She takes a handful of my hair trying to shove

my face deeper into her. I eat her like it's my last meal. Even after she climaxes with my name on her lips I keep licking and sucking her clit as she wriggles from the sensation. I want to make sure she gets every moment of pleasure she deserves.

I stand up and head to the bathroom grabbing a washcloth and wetting it. I come back into her bedroom and clean her up gently. Then I pick her up, setting her in my lap. When she reaches for the bottom of my jersey trying to undress me as well, I stop her.

"No, tonight was just about you," I tell her kissing her temple.

"What! Why?" She says trying to climb out of my lap but I hold her in place

"I don't want our first night sleeping together as a couple to be after I am exhausted from a game" I explain.

She knows it's a legit excuse and she doesn't complain. I hold her for a little longer before she goes and changes into pajamas.

"So is that what we are a couple?" she asks as she lies in my arms.

"We are," I tell her.

Once she is almost asleep I kiss her goodnight, "Lock the door after me, princess," I tell her. She sleepily follows me to the door and I wait until I hear the lock turn before I head home and straight to my shower. Giving myself blue balls wasn't what I had planned on tonight, but I also am sore and tired and I want to be on my A game when we sleep together the first time she deserves the best re-do of all time.

Chapter Nineteen

LUCY

I wake up to ten texts from Emerson telling me she is on her way over to debrief. I laugh and tell her to bring coffee and rush to get in the shower because based on her texts she is probably already on her way. I try not to think about last night, and Blake's hands all over my body as I wash myself because I know I am going to get hot all over again. I wash my hair and get out putting on one of my old hockey shirts or should I say one of Blake's old shirts. I shoot Blake a picture of me in just his shirt and a pair of black lace panties that peek out underneath. Knowing he is at practice and he won't see that until later, I head to the living room after putting on pants.

Ten minutes later Emerson is on the couch with coffee and muffins, waiting impatiently for me to give her all the details of last night.

"MA'AM he did what" she squeals, fanning herself and I laugh.

"You need to lock him down forever. He ate you out like you were fucking dessert and then stayed with you until you were almost asleep" she repeats.

"I know I know. Girl the things he can do with his tongue. He didn't even come up for air while I orgasmed. Then he waited outside the door until I locked up" I tell her, blushing. I am not sure if it's from the conversation or because I am getting turned on thinking of Blake.

I tell her about the panty ripping and she almost dies right there on my couch.

“He is like one of those book boyfriends you love so much,” she says.

“Is it sad I want to show up on his porch and demand he fucks me” I laugh.

“No girl. Get yours” she giggles.

“If he wasn’t at practice I would ” I told her.

We hang out for a while longer before she leaves to go visit her sister. I decided to get comfy on the couch with a book. I am right in the middle of the scene when the enemies are about to become lovers when my phone rings. I debate not answering but I see it’s Blake.

“Hello,” I say my voice sounding raspier than normal

“Hey, princess. Are you good?” he asks, concerned.

“Yeah sorry just reading” I clear my throat “How was practice?”

“It was good, I have a feeling you are feeling now what I felt when I opened that picture you sent me. Would you like to explain to your brother why I got a boner looking at my phone right before I went to shower?” he chuckles.

“Oops” is all I say. But I knew exactly what I was doing when I sent it.

“Do you like hearing that you turned me on? Or that I am so goddamn horny right now I can’t think straight.” he groans into the phone.

“Y...yes” I barely get it out, getting horny myself.

“Do you like to hear that when I showered last night and this morning I beat off thinking of your delicious pussy. Thinking of how good it will feel when it’s wrapped around my cock” he says.

“Mhm,” I murmured.

“I am going home to shower and think of you some more, but I will see you tonight at dinner,” he says before hanging up.

Fuck I forgot about dinner tonight. Now I have to look at Blake knowing he wants me as badly as I want him.



I beat Blake over to Zane and Fiona's house, so I get some extra time with Hadley. She loves him and tends to stick to him like glue, so this extra time with her is perfect. She has gotten so big and it is bittersweet seeing her turn into a curious toddler.

When Blake walks in, all I can think of is him on his knees in front of me last night. He greets me quietly with a hello and winks. I can feel the heat race across my entire body. I wait for everyone to be distracted before talking to Blake openly.

"Missed you today," I tell him with a smile.

"Missed you too. I was thinking, we both have Tuesday and Wednesday free. Want to head to Anamaria Island for a staycation?" he asks, standing close to me.

"Um, yeah, sure, that would be fun," I say.

"Perfect, I will pick you up Tuesday morning after practice and we will head down," he smiles.

I just smile back. My stomach is doing somersaults. I am putty in this man's hand, he makes all coherent thoughts leave my head as soon as he starts talking. He better be end game or I am in for a world of hurt is all I think looking over at him. Catching me staring he squeezes my hand and then kisses my cheek quickly, before anyone can see. Who would've thought I would be the girl over here simping over forehead, temple, and cheek kisses. But I sure am. They make me feel so secure in our relationship, even if it is a secret.

Saying bye to everyone I smile as Blake offers to walk me to my truck. He opens my door and picks me up, setting me in the seat. He looks around to see if anyone else has come outside then steps closer, settling himself between my legs. Leaning in slowly kissing my collarbone first. It sends goosebumps across my skin. As he makes his way up to my ear my skin flushes with anticipation. By the time he reaches my lips every nerve in my body is tingling waiting to feel his

lips touch mine. When they do everything feels like it falls perfectly in place. I smile and lose myself in the kiss.



Emerson comes over on Monday after work to help me pack for the staycation. We sound like school girls giggling over what I should wear to sleep as if I'll even have pajamas on long. After much discussion, we land on a pretty dark blue silk nightgown that stops mid-thigh with lace trim. I make sure I pack two swimsuits and an outfit for dinner. Although Em says I shouldn't expect to leave the hotel at all which makes me turn the color of a tomato.

It's weird because we have slept together before. I don't know why I am so nervous. Maybe it's because this time we aren't drunk college kids. Or maybe it's because this time we are both on the same page about how we feel about each other. I am excited and nervous all at the same time.

"What?" I say realizing she asked me something and I have no idea what it was.

"I was saying it's crazy you two have been dating for almost a month and you still haven't slept together. You have been on more than three dates. I am not sure how you guys have waited so long. Everyone can feel the tension radiating off you two" she says.

"Oh, I hadn't even realized how long it's been," I say. I think back to when his accident was and she is right it was almost four weeks ago.

"I think we knew each other so well. We have just fallen into a relationship and didn't worry about the time or amount of dates that passed." I say.

"Or hear me out. He planned this for a one-month thing. Maybe he plans to finally admit he loves you" she says.

"No to both of those. I think. Oh God, what if it is this special thing and I have no idea what we are celebrating and I look like a bad girlfriend" I say starting to panic.

“Most importantly what are you going to say if he says he loves you?” she says.

“He has said he loved me before,” I say. Not a lie we said it all the time in college.

“Not what I meant and you know it. At some point, he is going to admit he’s in love with you. What are you going to say back?” she asks.

“I don’t know. I am in love with him, I don’t think I ever fully fell out of love. But it’s like telling him is giving him power I am not ready to relinquish ” I say contemplating how I will feel.

“Understandable,” she says then moves back to judging what I am packing.

Once she leaves I shower and shave every inch of skin. Layering on lotion so my skin is as soft as can be. I braid my hair to sleep so tomorrow I can wear it in easy waves. My bag is packed with my sexiest nightgown, and I am smooth all over, and I hope like hell I get laid this weekend. It takes forever to fall asleep, I feel like a kid trying to fall asleep on Christmas Eve. I exhaust myself reading one of the books he bought me at the bookstore until I finally fall asleep.

Chapter Twenty

BLAKE

After practice, I head home to shower and pack. Once I am sure I didn't forget anything I head to pick up Lucy. The walk up to her house feels like prom night when you go to the door to meet your date with the hotel key in your pocket. We both know what tonight will bring but we are both still nervous and full of anticipation.

When she opens the door she looks beautiful with her hair in waves and very minimal makeup. She has on a green sundress that shows off her figure and heels that make her legs look amazing. I step inside closing the door behind me.

"You look stunning," I say leaning in to kiss her.

We get wrapped up in the kiss with her pressed into the wall. I have one arm above her bracing myself while enjoying every moment of her lips on mine.

"If we don't stop we are never going to leave," she says.

I wink and agree. Grabbing her bag she locks up and we head down to my Range Rover. When I open her door I sneak a quick hug in before she climbs in. It's hard to keep my hands off her after not having her for so long. If seeing her riding shotgun in my SUV makes me love sick I can only imagine how I will feel after tonight.

We spend the ride listening to a mix of Noah Kahan and Taylor Swift who shouldn't mix well but somehow do. I place my hand on her thigh noting how soft her skin feels under my rough hands, calloused from years of holding a hockey stick.

When we are almost to the hotel I absentmindedly rub circles on her inner thigh with my thumb. I feel her legs spread just a little giving me more space. I take it as an invitation and slide my hand up to just below the hem of her dress. I know another inch and we are both screwed. So I keep control and don't move any further. I can see her skin flush across her chest as she fidgets nervously with her scrunchie.

We pull up to the hotel and I take a minute to adjust myself in my shorts before I walk over to her door. She giggles when I walk over knowing what I was doing. I drop a kiss on her forehead and take her bag. The check in process is quick but it feels like forever with Lucy standing beside me in that little dress.

When we get in the elevator she looks over at me like she has a secret.

“Have something you want to share with the class?” I ask her, smiling.

“Yes I do actually,” she says before moving closer to me and grabbing my hand. She slides my hand up her dress over her hip. My breath hitches in my chest when I realize she isn't wearing any panties in that dress. I am instantly hard. I quickly turn her so her back is against my chest.

“Do you like feeling how hard you make me? Princess, you are lucky I didn't find out on the drive or we wouldn't have made it here” I groaned into her ear.

“Oops,” she says before slightly rubbing her ass against me.

I am about to flip that dress up right here in this elevator but it dings letting us know we are on our floor. I adjust myself in my pants and Lucy chuckles as she walks out the door. I follow her to our room and have a slight shake in my hand when I scan the keycard. Anticipation is getting to me. But all that disappears the moment we are inside and the door closes.

I drop our bags at the door and Lucy has her arms around my neck kissing me before they hit the floor. I lift her up and she wraps her legs around me as I pin her to the wall.

Suddenly my dick seems to remember she has no panties on because all the blood rushes south. Lucy grinds herself trying to create the friction she needs and I know she can feel how hard I am for her.

“Dress off” I command as I set her on the bed and remove my own shirt.

I can hear her trying to catch her breath as she slides her dress over her head. I take a moment to just stare at her. Committing every inch of her to memory.

“Look at those perky tits just begging to be sucked on,” I say as I lower my head to one of her nipples. I use my tongue to trace a few circles before sucking on it just a little. One of my hands cups the other and begins to rub her nipple lightly between my two fingers. I hear a soft moan escape her lips.

“Please. More,” she says quietly.

I switch sides making sure to give equal attention to both of her perfect tits. I reach between us with my free hand and slide my fingers through her wet arousal. She spreads her legs more inviting me in.

“Blake I need more please” she begs.

“What do you want? Be specific, so I know how to please you baby” I tell her, dropping my lips to hers without moving my hand from between her legs.

“Do you want to come on my mouth, fingers, or cock?” I ask her.

“Um... all of them,” she says and blushes.

I don't need to be told twice and lower myself between her legs. Hiking her legs over my shoulders I place one hand on her stomach and use the other to finger her. Starting with one finger I slowly slide in and out before lowering my mouth to her clit. Licking lightly and sucking just enough to have her grabbing my hair and moaning. I slide a second finger in curling them just a little to hit the right spot.

I continue teasing her clit with my tongue and fucking her with my fingers until I can feel her tightening around me. She

starts to tighten her hold on my hair as her breaths get more shallow.

“I’m coming. Fuck Blake yessss” she moans loudly.

I continue to alternate between light licking and sucking while she rides out her orgasm. I make sure I lick up every drop of her. As she sits up on her forearms and catches her breath I drop my pants.

It does wonders for my ego seeing her eyes widen as she takes in my cock.

“That fit last time? Fuck, it’s thicker than I remember” she whispers.

I chuckle before saying “I will go in slow, princess.”

I grab a condom from my pocket, slowly rolling it down my already sensitive length. It’s been a month of tension and cold showers and we are finally here. I take my cock in my hand guiding it to her entrance slowly sinking in, inch by inch. Hopefully, I can last because she is so tight and feels so good.

She spreads her legs more giving me more space for my wide frame. I begin to pound into her and she moves her hips against me. I can feel myself getting closer and begin to thrust harder and faster.

“I’m close, don’t stop,” she moans.

“Be a good girl and come on my cock, princess,” I murmured into her hair as she sits up arching her back slightly.

I am right on the edge when she uses her pussy to squeeze as she runs her nails down my back. I explode. I can feel her lose herself and follow right behind me. With our foreheads touching we both try to slow our breathing. I kiss her nose jumping up to go get a warm washcloth to clean her up.

Once we are cleaned up Lucy lays her head on my chest and I wrap my arms around her. It’s here in this moment with her hair wild across the pillow and the blissful smile across her face that I know without a doubt I am in love with this girl.

We ordered room service because we worked up a freaking appetite. Lucy insists we put on a movie which we don't even finish before we both fall asleep.

I wake up from my nap with Lucy's back pressed against me. My arm is draped over her and our legs are all tangled together. I could get used to waking up with her in my arms. It feels like happiness like I am home. I am all smiles when I feel her starting to stir awake.

Apparently, my cock likes it too because her movement has me hard and ready to go another round. Lucy groans before pushing back and starting to make small circles around me with her ass. I move so I can kiss her neck a few times and I hear her moan lightly.

I get up grabbing a condom and we have a different kind of sex than we did earlier. This round feels slow and full of emotion like there is no urgency and the only focus is both of us enjoying every moment. She comes looking at me with her beautiful honey brown eyes and I swear I can see stars in them as I reach my own climax.

"Why have we waited so long to do that again?" she says her head on my chest as she absentmindedly draws with her finger on my chest.

"We wanted to be sure we were in a stable place emotionally first," I say kissing her head.

"Right. How mature of us?" she says her tone dripping in sarcasm. I can't help but laugh.

"Luckily we have forever to make up for it," I say nonchalantly then we go back to the movie we fell asleep to.

Chapter Twenty-One

LUCY

“You are breathtaking,” Blake says with a shy smile.

I am wearing a white dress that hits right at the knee. I do a little spin and smile up at him.

“We can always skip dinner and go straight to dessert” Blake murmurs, pulling me against him. I giggle trying to get away.

“We have reservations,” I smile and playfully swat at his hand.

“Fine. But just know I would be perfectly happy staying in this bed with you” he says.

Grabbing my hand he leads me to the lobby to get our Uber to the restaurant. Everything feels so magical with him. On the drive over my mind drifts to thoughts of how I can't believe after all this time we are here, together. I lean my head on his shoulder and smile.

We arrived at a cute little beach restaurant hand in hand. Our table is outside, overlooking the water with cute little lights hung up.

“This place is amazing. The lights and the sound of the waves are perfect, I love it here!” I gush to Blake.

“The view is definitely amazing,” he says, looking only at me. I can feel myself blushing.

“Thank you for this little getaway,” I tell him as I look at the menu.

The waiter comes and takes our order and we sit quietly just enjoying the moment. It's special when two people understand each other and can sit in a comfortable silence. Once our drinks arrive Blake reaches across the table placing his hand gently on mine.

"Tell me about work. I feel like I am so behind in your life. What's nursing like? I want to know all of it." Blake asks before giving me a smile.

I spend most of dinner telling him all about work. My craziest, saddest, funniest patient stories. I tell him the ER is kind of like a hockey game. You go into work having a general idea of your day but it can change at any moment. Some moments feel like the final minutes in a playoff game, everything is on the line and everyone is fighting to save a life. Are they the same? No. But it's the best way to explain those high stress moments where everything is on the line.

He listens attentively. He asks questions and seems to genuinely care about my career. I tell him about how hard it can be mentally to have patients yelling at you all the time, or families yelling at you. What it's like to lose a patient, especially a child. Nursing is hard but sometimes people don't realize just how hard.

"So does your ADHD make it harder?" he asks.

"Honestly, not in the ER, because I thrive in the chaos. The constant change and cycling of patients is perfect for me mentally. It's harder to get bored when things are going a hundred miles an hour the entire shift." I tell him.

He remembers how much I struggled with my ADHD in college. Sometimes he would come over and study on his own so I could get my apartment cleaned. It's called body doubling, and I am not sure why that works but it does for me. It's so nice to have someone understand that sometimes my brain just works differently.

By the time dinner was done, I realized that I talked about myself almost the entire time.

“I am so sorry. We only talked about me all night.” I say quietly as we walk out front to wait on the Uber.

“Babe, it’s fine. I wanted to listen. I asked hoping you would let me into the parts of your life that I missed.” He pulls me into a hug resting his chin on the top of my head as we wait for our Uber back to the hotel.

Arriving back to the hotel I can feel the anticipation sparking between us. Both of us are ready to get back into our room, and back into bed together. There are other people waiting for the elevator with us so I decide to mess with Blake a little. I get on my tiptoes and whisper in his ear.

“I bought this dress purely for the moment you take it off me. Oh, and there’s nothing under it.” I give him the sweetest smile before stepping into the elevator as soon as the doors open. He steps behind me, pulling me against him, with his hands on my hips.

“Are you proud of yourself? For making me hard in public,” he growls into my ear.

I can feel him against me and rub myself against him just a little. His breath catches in his throat and he starts to cough. I just give an innocent smile to the others in the elevator.

“Are you okay honey?” I ask him and giggle a little.

“Mhm. I am fine, thank you, princess,” he says.

When we get to our floor, I take off in a run to the door laughing. I can’t remember the last time I laughed like this. Blake catches me quickly and tosses me over his shoulder, hand holding my dress down. We are both in a fit of laughter by the time we reach our door.

Once inside, Blake gives my ass a hard smack and I yelp.

“That is for being a tease,” he says.

He slowly lowers me down allowing his hands to slide my dress up. By the time I am on the ground, he is pulling the dress right over my head. He takes a second and his eyes slowly rake over my body. I step closer to him reaching for his pant button.

“You don’t have to,” he says quietly.

“I know but I want to,” I say as I lower myself to my knees in front of him. I push his pants down then slowly slide his boxers down. His cock springs free hard and ready to go. I wrap my hand around it, but it’s too big for my hand to wrap around fully.

I guide him into my mouth, slowly bobbing my head and taking him in further each time. I can feel him throbbing in my mouth. I look up through my lashes to see his face as I take him all the way to the back of my throat. He groans and wraps a hand through my hair taking control of the speed and depth. I moan around his cock and move a hand to cup his balls. I give them a gentle squeeze and feel Blake’s thrusts getting more urgent.

“Yes princess, you are taking my cock like such a good girl. Don’t stop” he says.

“I am about to come,” he grunts, moving to let me move. I stay sucking until I am sure I have swallowed every drop of him.

When I stand up with a smile he looks at me hungrily. Picking me up and tossing me on the bed lightly. Leaning over me, one arm on each side of my head, he slowly kisses from my collarbone up my neck. Alternating between kissing and suckling. Once he reaches the sensitive spot behind my ear, I moan, desperate for his touch.

He chuckles under his breath as I wiggle underneath him. Once his lips are finally on mine I slightly part them inviting him in. My hands are in his hair as I kiss him like he is personally responsible for the air in my lungs.

“Please” I beg rolling my hips into him.

“Let me get a condom,” he says.

“Ok, but you don’t have to. I have an IUD and I am clean” I say quietly.

“I was just tested for the team. I am clean.” he tells me
“Are you sure?”

“Yeah I have never not used one but I am sure,” I tell him.

He reaches down and guides himself into me while looking at me.

“Fuck you are so wet. It feels so good,” he groans, sliding himself all the way in.

The urgency seems to have disappeared, the movements now slow and purposeful.

“You are perfect. We fit perfectly like you are meant for me,” he murmurs in my ear.

This is what I imagine is the description of *making love*. Reaching between us Blake slowly begins making little circles on my clit. Fuck it feels incredible. I moan loudly into his shoulder.

“Be loud for me baby. I want the whole world to know this pussy is mine,” he says smiling down at me. I am almost there, my breaths come in shorter bursts.

“Come for me, Luc. Come all over my cock.” he says as he continues the circles.

I come loudly with Blake’s name on my lips.

“Good girl,” he whispers, kissing my collarbone.

His thrusts start to get faster and harder. He sits up putting one leg over his shoulder. It feels incredible. He is so deep and I am getting close again.

“Not yet, I want us to come together,” he says, picking up speed.

With each thrust, my pussy clenches aching to release around him. I grab at the sheets beside me.

“Blake please I am right there, Don’t stop.” I moan louder than I meant to.

He continues his deep thrusts and then looks at me.

“Come for me princess,” he demands.

And I do.

I can feel his cock pulsing as my pussy squeezes. Both of us letting go together was amazing.

“I am going to get something to clean us up,” Blake tells me.

When he comes back and cleans us up. I go to the bathroom and take off my makeup and get ready for bed. I step out in the nightgown I had picked out with Emerson. Blake has his back to me. When he turns around he stops in his tracks and stares.

“My god you are breathtaking Lucy.” he moves quickly picking me up and kissing me.

“Thank you,” I say quietly.

“How am I supposed to sleep with you next to me, in that?” He says before moving his lips back to mine. I giggle a little feeling the blush race across my skin.

He sets me on the bed and then climbs in next to me in just his boxers like that’s not distracting. I place my head on his chest and trace random things with my fingers as he runs his hand up and down my back softly.

“Can I ask you something?” I ask him

“Of course,” he says.

“Why now? What changed?” I question keeping my eyes locked on my own hands, afraid to meet his gaze. He is silent for a few moments making me nervous.

“I realized that life would never be worth living without you. I couldn’t stand by and watch you begin a life with someone who wasn’t me. I would give everything up to be with you. Hockey used to be my dream but now it’s you. It all means nothing without you by my side.” he tells me.

“Oh.” I quietly replied.

“I want to wake up to your face. I want to celebrate every win and commiserate every loss by your side. I want a family, the house, the kids, the dog, all of it, with you.” he informs me.

Tears slowly roll down my cheeks. He pulls me closer, kissing my head in the process.

“I won’t say it because I know you aren’t ready to hear it yet. But you and I, we are forever. I will spend the rest of my life showing you that,” he murmurs into my hair.

“Every midnight, forever,” I whisper.

“Yes baby, every midnight, forever,” he repeats.

Chapter Twenty-Two

BLAKE

Driving back to Tampa is bittersweet but I am glad for the time we shared here. Our relationship has reached a new level now, and I hope going home doesn't wash that away. I place my hand on her thigh as we pull onto the interstate and drive home. I can't stop sneaking looks at her as I drive. I love watching her sing her heart out to her Taylor playlist and dance in her seat. I never want to stop seeing her this happy. My heart aches knowing the role I played in making her so sad the past two years.

"So I have back-to-back away games but we will be back on Friday afternoon. So I will be home for Sunday dinner if you can make it." I tell her knowing sometimes she picks up extra shifts.

"I have to work but maybe you can come by after. I know you have a home game on Monday. I made sure I am off so I can go," she tells me.

The rest of the drive is a mixture of us both singing terribly. Everything about this feels right. I haven't felt this kind of happiness in a very long time. Probably since our team won the championship in college, but even that doesn't compare to this.

When we pull up to Lucy's apartment I grab her bag and walk her up to her door. Once we are inside I set her bag down. Picking her up and setting her on the counter I put myself between her legs. Looking at her perfect sweet lips I lower my mouth to hers. I slide one hand into her hand holding

her to me. The other is resting on her hip, my fingers sliding just under her shirt touching her soft skin lightly.

“If we don’t stop now I will never get to the arena in time princess,” I murmured against her lips.

“Who needs practice?” she says, pulling back slightly.

I start to kiss down her jaw and along her neck, stopping at her collarbone.

“I wish it wasn’t mandatory, but we fly out in the morning. I will see you when I get back.” I tell her.

“I will miss you, hockey boy,” she says.

“I will miss you too!” I kiss her again before heading out the door.

“Lock up Luc!” I remind her then head to my SUV

On the drive to the arena, I am reminded of all the times in college she would call me hockey boy. Back then it was a funny nickname, but now it feels like it means so much more. Everything means so much more when I’m with her.

I guess I owe Zane an apology for all the times Luke and I made fun of him for being love sick for Fiona. I walk into the arena with my own love-sick smile on my face, ready to get back from these games so I can see my girl again.



Loading onto the plane after back-to-back wins on the road is incredible. Everyone is hyped and ready to get home. I want to see Lucy, the few phone conversations we had and our sporadic texts weren’t enough to hold me over.

Blake: Boarding the plane now. I will text you when we land. Miss you beautiful.

Zane takes a seat next to me and Luke sits across the aisle.

“Who are you texting?” Luke says, trying to sneak a peek at my phone.

“A friend,” I say to them, turning the screen off.

“Your only friends are here or in our group chat,” Zane responds.

“Ha ha, very funny.” I roll my eyes at them.

“Any news about Lucy? Have you talked to her?” Zane asks.

“We have talked a little. Nothing to report back just yet,” I say, respecting her wishes.

“Well, hopefully, the two of you can give things a real chance,” Zane mentions.

“If you hurt her I will kill you,” Luke tells me.

“Comforting.” I deadpanned at him.

We all laugh before putting on our headphones and going about our own business. I fell asleep listening to my playlist Lucy made me for my away games. The playlist has all different genres on it but I try to pay attention to each song because I know how Lucy’s brain works and each song has a meaning. As long as I have known her she has always communicated better with music and song lyrics than words.



“Hi, I am looking for Lucy Campbell,” I told the receptionist.

She gives me a weird look but picks up her radio and says something I can’t hear before telling me to take a seat. I head over to a seat far away from other people to wait. I am scrolling on my phone when I hear my name.

“Blake!?” she says looking at me confused.

“Hi! I know you are working. I just wanted to drop off a cup of coffee for you on my way home.” I tell her handing her the large coffee I was holding.

“Thank you. This is just what I needed,” she says leaning in to hug me.

“Still on for dinner tonight?” I ask her hugging her against me.

“Will you be mad if I pass tonight? Maybe we can have breakfast on Sunday morning? It’s been a long day and I work tomorrow too.” she says nervously.

“Of course babe. Text me later! Have a good rest of your shift.” I tell her before kissing her soft lips.

“Bye! Thanks for the coffee.” She tells me already turning to head back to work.



Mateo: I’m excited to play you guys next weekend

Luke: Excited to lose?

Zane: We won’t rub the loss in too much

Blake: We will only skate 3 victory laps around you.

Luke: Do you think his parents will come to congratulate us?

Zane: Probably they are Tampa fans first.

Mateo: Why do I even talk to you fuckers? I hope your stupid asses lose Monday

Blake: No you don’t. You always root for us. You miss us too much to cheer against us.

Mateo: I am rolling my eyes at you all



My condo feels so different now. When I told everyone a few months ago it was time I started to think about settling down, I really didn’t consider someone moving into my home right away. Now all I can think about is how soon is too soon to

convince Lucy to move in with me. I want to feel her here every time I come home. The candles she burns, the blankets she always has on her couches and reading chair, the little piles of mess she calls her doom piles. I want all of that here with her.

While I am unpacking I think about whether I should send Lucy flowers or something. I don't know if she would actually enjoy them though. I know she loves plants but doesn't have any because she tends to forget they exist. About a year ago she came to a family dinner and complained that she bought like fifteen plants and they all died because she forgot to water them.

I finally decide on getting her dinner lined up to be delivered when she gets home from work today.

Blake: Hey gorgeous. I know you should be getting off soon. Dinner will be delivered to your house around 7:30. Now you can take cooking and cleaning off your plate for tonight. Read a book and relax.

Lucy: That is so thoughtful of you. You didn't have to do this.

Blake: I know but I wanted to. I wanted to help make your day simpler however I can.

Lucy: Thank you. The coffee was more than enough. But thank you!

Getting comfortable in bed I give Imogen a call. I talk to her about hockey and update her on Lucy and me. We discussed our bookstore trip and the night we spent away. I tell her all my feelings. I tell her how I love Lucy but I can't tell her because I'm worried it will scare her. It is nice to get it off my chest to someone since Lucy isn't ready to tell our friend group which includes my two best friends, so the people I can tell are very limited. Imogen tells me that she is going to come visit in two weeks for Thanksgiving. I am excited because although she has met Lucy before, this will be different.

Losing my parents at sixteen was difficult and I miss them so much and talking to Imogen makes me realize how desperately I wish they were still here. I want so badly to call them and tell them that I met the love of my life. Tell them that I messed up but I am getting a second chance. Sadness fills my chest as I send Lucy a goodnight text and head to sleep.

Blake: Good night princess. I will text you after practice tomorrow! Hope tomorrow is a better shift.

Chapter Twenty-Three

LUCY

I woke up late and am now rushing to get ready for breakfast with Blake. I dig through the pile of discarded clothes on my chair looking for an outfit. Finding a pair of jeans I sigh in relief when I also see a blue crop top underneath that will look perfect together. I throw on my outfit and slide on my vans. My hair is still in braids from last night after my shower. They held up nicely overnight, so I decide to leave them in. I finish getting ready right as Blake arrives.

We decided to walk over to a cute brunch spot. It is quite popular but we are able to get a table without waiting too long. We place our orders and I can't help but notice that Blake is nothing but smiles today.

"You seem happy, what's going on?" I ask.

"Nothing. I just finally get to see my girl, and it feels like it's been forever," he admits.

"It has only been 4 days," I laugh but reach for his hand across the table suddenly wanting to feel his touch.

"How was work?" he asks me gently, rubbing his thumb across my hand.

"Long. We are short staffed and it seems like everyone in Tampa came to visit." I tell him.

We spend some time talking about hockey and my work before the topic switches to us again.

“I was talking to Imogen and she is coming to town on Thanksgiving. I would love to get lunch the three of us, if you have time.” Blake asks.

“Of course, I am working on Thanksgiving but I am off Friday, so we could get food maybe at Armature Works, the food hall will give us lots of choices. I haven’t seen her in a while. It would be nice to catch up. I assume you told her about us?” I ask.

“I did. She knows not to mention it though,” Blake tells me.

“Thank you. Let’s just get through this holiday then we can start telling everyone else before Christmas,” I say with a smile.

“Also I was thinking we could take a trip this summer, in the off season, just the two of us,” he informs me.

“Wow, thinking awfully far in advance are we?” I tell him with a smile to let him know I am kidding.

“Yes, because I already told you, this is a forever thing. I will spend the rest of my life proving to you just how much I mean those words. If I could, I would rush off to Vegas to marry you then come home and move you right into my place. But, I think that would be a little quick,” he chuckles.

I am stunned at his confession. I smile because I don’t even know how to respond. But before I can I hear a familiar voice.

“Lucy! Blake!” Charlie says.

“Shit” I whisper. “Hey Charlie,” I said to her.

“Nice to see you both getting along,” she says, eyeing us suspiciously.

“We are... um...” I stammer looking to Blake for help.

“Charlie don’t tell anyone you saw us please, Lucy isn’t quite ready to go public with it yet.” Blake smiles.

“Right. We are definitely a nosey bunch. Don’t worry, I won’t tell anyone. See you both tonight.” Charlie chuckles

before walking away.

We pay our bill and then walk hand in hand back to my apartment.

“If I come up I won’t want to leave to get ready for dinner tonight,” Blake tells me.

“Would that be such a bad thing?” I whisper leaning up to kiss him.

“Maybe not,” he says huskily, kissing me back tenderly. “But I do need to run a few errands before dinner. I will see you soon, maybe we can sneak away tonight for a few minutes.”

“Sneaking stolen kisses sounds fun, I’ll just read until dinner then.”

He kisses me again before waiting for me to go inside as I close the door I hear him say

“Lock the door, Luc!”

He always does that, since college, always the protector in that way. It’s nice having the constant reminder that someone worries about me. Things with Blake feel so natural, even though it has only been a little over a month. I should have been afraid when I heard him joke about getting married and moving in together, but instead, I wanted to just say book the flight and hire the movers.

It’s not until I get a text that I realize the time.

Blake: You might want to put the book down.

Blake: Figured you might have lost track of time.

I jump up and get ready. Throwing on a cute black dress that accentuates my curves perfectly. I strap on my favorite pair of wedges and take my braids down, and it falls into pretty waves. I put some effort into my makeup today making sure my eyes pop. I apply a lip stain that is dark pink and compliments my skin.

I know that my plan worked when I walk into Fiona's house and Blake's jaw drops subtly, eyes roaming all over my body. I greet everyone giving a nod and a simple hello to Blake before taking my seat at the table. Blake sits down next to me earning an eye roll from Luke. I tense slightly.

"Relax, princess. They know I am trying to win you over. It won't seem that strange if I'm sitting by you." Blake whispers into my ear.

I don't turn to look at him instead I look at Charlie who is across from me obviously enjoying this moment.

"Are you enjoying taunting me? How am I supposed to keep my hands off you all night," he whispers then turns back taking a sip of his drink.

"I am not sure what you mean by taunting you. I simply decided to dress a little nicer than normal," I take a drink too before turning back to the conversation at the table.

We all talked about our week. I let everyone know I am working on Thanksgiving much to the dismay of my siblings who hate me missing holidays but understand it comes with the territory. I am excited to have Christmas with them this year though.

I feel a hand on my knee and startle a bit.

"Yoo-hoo Earth to Lucy!" Luke says.

"Sorry, I got lost in my thoughts," I say "What was the question?"

"I was just asking how you are doing since Wyatt and you broke up?" Luke repeats. In my peripheral vision, I see Blake's hand that's not on my thigh tighten into a fist before relaxing again.

I place a hand on his hand on my thigh giving it a light squeeze of reassurance.

"I am good. It was for the best. Wyatt deserved better, deserved someone who returned his feelings just as strongly." I say.

“Well, I know breakups aren’t easy even if they are amicable. Let us know if you need anything.” Charlie says reassuringly.

“I will. How are you? Are you going with that guy on a date?” I ask her.

“Yeah, I am. He is taking me out downtown. I am wearing that cute pink dress we got a few months ago.” She smiles.

“That will be perfect. It’s sexy and will look hot as fuck on you!” I wink at her.

“Thanks. I am nervous, but I am ready to put myself out there,” she admits.

I look over at Luke, like Blake was, he is also oblivious to the fact that Charlie has had a crush on him since joining our friend group in college. But over the past few years, she has been dating around, trying to find a good guy. I hope she is able to find someone who treats her like the amazing treasure she is.

While everyone moves to the living room to have a drink, Zane takes Hadley to bed. I use this moment to sneak off to the bathroom. When I come out and turn the corner into the hallway I run smack into Blake.

“Waiting for me?” I ask quietly.

“Just hoping for a moment with my girl,” he tells me, lowering his lips to my neck. Planting multiple little kisses.

“Mmm... more” I murmur. Then he backs me against the wall wedging his thigh between my legs causing my dress to slide up.

His soft lips finally reach mine. My lips part for him granting him access. One hand on my thigh sliding slowly up under my dress. My hand is locked in his hair and the other is cupping his cheek. Lost in the moment, we kiss forgetting where we actually are right now.

We hear footsteps getting closer and jump apart. Zane rounds the corner, eyes huge, looking between us. Both of us

are catching our breath, I am straightening my dress, and Blake is fixing his hair.

“Hey guys we were looking for you,” he says with a smirk.

“Oh, I was just using the bathroom and ran into Blake on the way out,” I explain.

“Right. I was waiting to use the bathroom, and when she came out we bumped into each other,” Blake says.

“Anyways we should all head out there before people start asking any questions, but Blake, I would wipe your face, you have the weirdest red smudge on your lips,” Zane says with a wink.

I blush, knowing that Zane knows. Blake grabs my hand, giving it a squeeze before heading into the bathroom. I walk with Zane to the living room.

“For the record, Wyatt was nice but he won’t challenge you and love you the way Blake will. I hope this works out for you. I will keep it quiet until you are ready, but don’t make me hide this from my wife for long please!” Zane pleads.

Time passes quickly with everyone having drinks and talking. Blake is sitting near me but not on the same sofa. I pull out my phone and shoot off a text.

Lucy: I think we need to tell everyone. Zane can't keep a secret from Fiona for shit, lol.

Blake: Whatever you want to do babe.

I see his response and then without wasting another second, I walk over to the loveseat Blake is on. Everyone stops talking, watching what is unfolding. I refuse to look at anyone but Blake who has a smirk on his face. When I go to sit next to him he pulls me so I sit on his lap.

“About time, princess,” he says, then kisses my cheek.

“Better late than never they say.” I lean my head on his shoulder with my feet draped over him. Finally getting the courage, I look up to the group of my family and friends who

all have varying looks of surprise and happiness on their faces. Everyone starts talking and asking questions at the same time.

“I am glad you two have gotten your senses together,” Celisa says smiling.

“That is who you have been texting? Smiling like a fool at texts from my sister? Ew,” Luke laughs.

“Are you guys official? How long have you been talking? It was after Wyatt, correct?” Fiona says.

“Don’t insinuate that your sister would cheat on Wyatt, Fiona. They were broken up before we ever started anything.” Blake says with a touch of anger in his voice before I can respond.

“Watch it, Blake,” Zane says with a warning.

“I won’t allow people to talk to her like she did anything wrong.” Blake spits back.

“Blake, calm down. It is fine. Yes, we are official. We have been together for over a month. And yes, we started dating after Wyatt and I were over.” I reply calmly, knowing Fiona has the best intentions.

“Sorry Fi,” Blake apologizes.

“It’s ok, you were defending her. I will never be mad at that.” Fiona replies.

With the truth out Blake and I are able to hold hands and act like a normal couple. The weight that lifts off my chest is noticeable. We have always been a close group so secrets feel unnatural to keep from each other. As the night comes to an end the topic of the guys’ next game comes up. I am excited to go to my first game as Blake Stuntz’s girlfriend. It will be special for both of us.

Chapter Twenty-Four

BLAKE

I feel on top of the world! Lucy is here sitting on my lap with her head on my shoulder in front of our family and friends. I have never really been a “show off your girl” kind of guy, mainly because I wasn’t a relationship guy, and also because it feels very cave-man-esque. But with Lucy, I want to scream from the top of a building that she is mine. I want to hold her close out in public so the world knows that I am dating the most beautiful woman in the world.

“Lucy, come help me grab the cookies please,” Fiona asks.

I hold her against me when she tries to get up.

“I will be right back honey,” she says with a chuckle and I unwrap my arms from around her.

I grab my drink and take a long sip, choosing to ignore all the eyes staring at me.

“So... I will kill you, and make it look like an accident if you hurt her, but I am happy for you both,” Luke says and I give him a nod.

“Thanks, man. I am sorry I didn’t tell you but Lucy wanted to wait a bit while we got used to the idea of being in a relationship.” I tell everyone.

“We understand. All feels right in the world with the two of you getting along again. I love my cousin, no matter what, but she wasn’t the same without you by her side.” Celisa admits.

“Well, it’s a good thing she will be by my side for the long haul then,” I informed them.

“Oh we know, We all saw the proclamation you made in the group chat. By the way, you can never call me a simp or mock me for being lovesick for my wife, ever, again.” Zane laughs.

“Yeah, I know,” I chuckle.

“Talking about me?” Lucy asks, waltzing over with a tray of cookies cookies. She sets it down on the table grabbing one for each of us before sitting back down on my lap.

“Maybe just a little,” I say, kissing her cheek.

It’s funny because we all used to make fun of Fiona for sitting on Zane’s lap. How the tables have turned. As the conversation turns back to plans for the game and where everyone wants to pregame I get lost in my own thoughts.

Tomorrow, Lucy will be standing at the glass in my jersey, not for the first time of course, but this time it means so much more. I plan to surprise her at the game to show her how much it means to me. In order to pull it off smoothly I’ll need to talk to Fiona so she can help.

“Up for a sleepover after the game? I want you in my bed with just my jersey on and I want to fuck you from behind so I can see my name across your back.” I murmur very quietly in her ear.

Lucy’s entire body stills and I can see her skin turning just a touch of pink like she does when she is embarrassed or aroused.

“My place or yours?” I quietly ask her.

“Yours.” She says in a whisper.

As the night comes to an end and we all say our goodbyes. I walk Lucy to her truck parked by my SUV. I backed her into the door of the truck before lowering my lips to hers. I kiss her with so much passion it feels like it warms up around us. It feels like we are melting into each other.

When she lets out a small moan my hand finds its way up her dress. I move her thong to the side. Sliding a finger through the wetness between her thighs.

“Wet for me baby?” I moan into her lips.

I know we are blocked by both our vehicles but I still glance up to be sure we are alone. Once I am sure no one else is outside I slip two fingers into her. She begins to ride my fingers, trying to get the friction she craves.

“Go ahead princess, take what you need,” I murmured before dropping my lips to her exposed neck. She rides my fingers as I alternate between kissing her supple lips and her collarbone.

“I’m almost there, Blake, please,” she moans.

“Shh baby we have to be quiet,” I whisper then use my palm to give her clit some extra attention.

I wrap my free hand through her hair and kiss her, drowning out the sounds of her orgasm. I remove my hand from under her dress and kiss her forehead before opening her car door for her.

“Drive safe babe, let me know when you get home,” I tell her.

“Wait, what about you?” she says looking down at my pants which are doing a poor job of hiding my hard cock.

“I am fine, I can take care of this at home. I am making up for last time with the orgasms I give you now.” I say with a wink, heading to my vehicle.

When I get home, I find my own release in the shower with Lucy’s face in my mind. Once I am dried off and dressed I survey the state of my apartment. I put a new pair of sheets on the dresser so I can change them in the morning. I also make a mental note that I don’t have nearly enough blankets in this house for her comfort.

I decide to do a Target delivery order of things to make her more comfortable here. I ordered a blanket for the couch and one for the loveseat in my office. I add a few candles that

supposedly smell like Christmas trees, her favorite scent. I grab a case of Dr. Pepper, some hot Cheetos, and some strawberries, so she has her favorite snacks. I finish the order with a toothbrush, fuzzy socks, and a hairbrush. It will be delivered in the morning, giving me plenty of time to put it all away before I have to leave for the arena. I hope this makes her feel at home here too.

Feeling pleased with myself, I decide to pack my bag for the game tomorrow. Then get in bed and shoot a text to Fiona reminding her of the plan for tomorrow.



I arrive at the arena right on time. I got the Target order put away and changed the sheets before I left my condo and I am actually really proud of myself for my efficiency. I take a moment to text Lucy and then Fiona.

Blake: Good morning, beautiful. Not sure if you are awake yet. But I sent you money on Apple Pay for coffee this morning. Enjoy!

Then texting Fiona

Blake: Tell me I am not dumb for ordering a bunch of Lucy's favorite things from Target today so she feels totally at home when she comes over.

Fiona: Seriously, don't you remember the multiple trips to Target and ridiculous amounts of money Zane spent when I moved in? You are fine.

Blake: I forgot about that. He really should have bought Target stock back when you moved in.

Fiona: Anyways, lol. Everything is planned for today. I would like it to be noted that you took another note from Zane and I's book. We publicly announced our relationship status on social media too.

Blake: That was because the two of you weren't speaking because of some ridiculous fight you were in. lol. But yes I will admit you guys did influence my plan.

I bring my focus back to getting ready for the game. The team watched some last minute film with the coaches and then I had to I check in with the team doctors and head trainer to be sure I am good to play. Everyone is still shook from the hit I took earlier in the season. I grab a snack, then join Luke and Zane with the social media team. We are required to do a certain amount of media, but because of Fiona, we seem to get roped into more than the rest of the players.

It was her dream to work for Tampa Thunder as the social media director. However, she took it to the next level and started her own marketing firm and the Tampa Thunder is a client of hers now. Celisa is in charge of this particular account and she doesn't play when it comes to keeping the team relevant.

We finally get some downtime before it's time to dress for the game. Luke and Zane come to sit with me in the locker room.

"Hey, ready for the game?" I ask them.

"Yes. Are you ready for the media storm you are about to rain upon yourself?" Zane asks.

"Yup," I answer.

"The things people do for love. Who purposely brings this shit onto themselves?" Luke asks.

"Aren't you in the media like every other week with a different girl?" I remind him.

"That's different, I am not posting it myself." He defends.

"Right, so claiming the love of your life openly is dumb but being with a different girl every week is totally cool?" I say with a laugh.

"Whatever," Luke replies, rolling his eyes.

“Time to suit up,” Coach tells us.

I am dressed in record time. I think it’s the nerves not from the game that will be fine, but knowing Lucy is going to be here for the first time as my official girlfriend. We head to the ice lining up for pregame warmups. When it’s my turn to step on the ice I am full of anxious nerves, until I skate to our family area. Stopping at the glass and seeing Lucy in my jersey, it’s like all is right in the world.

I linger my hand against hers through the glass, like she is single-handedly giving me the power to play this game. I wink and blow her a kiss, before putting my glove on and skating back to the bench area.

When the game begins I clear my head of anything but hockey. I may be obsessed with the girl in the stands but I also love my sport. I win the puck drop pushing down the ice and looking for an opening in goal. I take a chance and when the buzzer goes off confirming the goal. I do a victory lap pointing right at Lucy before joining my team back on the line. She must have seen my Instagram because she is smiling so wide her eyes seem almost closed.

The jumbotron replays me scoring the goal and skating to point to Lucy, I already know Celisa is on her phone to post that to the team socials. She is nothing if not fast and diligent with her job.

Chapter Twenty-Five

LUCY

After the boys circle the ice and I have a moment with Blake I turn to talk to everyone while we wait for the game. My phone pings and I ignore it but it is quickly followed by multiple notifications. Fiona has a shit eating grin on her face and I give her a questioning glance before pulling my phone out.

I see Blake's text from the pregame but don't respond since he is already on the ice. Then I see fuck ton of Instagram notifications and instantly know Fiona did something.

@BlakeStuntz13 tagged you in a photo.

I clicked on the post and it was a photo from a few minutes ago. It's Blake and I, taken from behind me in the stands, you see my back with this name across, and our hands touching through the glass. You can see him looking at me like I hung the moon. It is a perfect moment.

The caption is 'Every Midnight, Forever.' making tears well in my eyes. A caption that he obviously picked himself, knowing it would mean everything to me.

"You did this?" I ask Fiona.

"I just took the photo and posted it, the post and caption was his idea," she tells me.

I realized at that moment that this was his way of making up for the night he was posted with the girl outside the club. He wanted to claim me publicly, make us official himself, before anyone could twist things or do it themselves.

He is getting laid tonight, for sure. A few minutes into the game he scored a goal skating by me and pointing afterwards. Which of course gets played on the jumbotron and I give a shy smile in embarrassment. All eyes are on me and I get a little overstimulated, so I take a second to run to the concession stand, to get away, and grab a drink.

The rest of the game speeds by, and Tampa wins three to two. We head down to meet the guys in the tunnel and my heart feels so full. I desperately want to tell him I love him like I know he is waiting on me, but I am just not ready yet. I don't have much time to focus on that thought before players start to leave the locker room.

When I see Blake walk out of the tunnel I run towards him, jumping into his arms wrapping my legs around him, practically toppling us over as he barely keeps us up. I immediately grab his face, and kiss him, with all the emotions I've been holding in all game, hoping he can feel how happy I am in this moment.

"Hey princess," he whispers against my mouth.

"Hi," I replied breathlessly.

Throats clear behind us and we both chuckle before he sets me down. He grabs my hand keeping me close by him. Before we walk up to our group and catch up for a minute before we say our goodbyes. Still hand in hand, we walk to his SUV and, he opens my door, kissing me again before I get in. Luckily the drive to his condo is short because the longer his hand rests on my upper thigh the wetter I get anticipating what's to come.

I have been to Blake's place before but this visit will be my first sleepover. When we go inside and on our way to the bedroom I stop dead in my tracks in the living room.

"Is this all for me?" I ask, stunned.

"Yeah, I wanted you to be comfortable here, so I just grabbed a few things," he says nonchalantly.

I don't think he understands what that did to my heart. Knowing he took the time to get me comfort items for his

house. If that doesn't show me how serious he is then I don't know what will.

"You just earned yourself the best blow job of your life," I tell him.

I move towards him but before I can get on my knees he moves to the couch pulling his pants down before sitting. I sink to my knees in front of him. I take him in my hand working him slowly, my tongue darts out slightly wetting my lips. I guide him into my mouth inch by inch.

Blake moans when his cock hits the back of my throat making me gag a little. I don't give him a chance to pull out. I keep bobbing my head up and down taking as much as I can. His hand wraps in my hair taking control of my pace. Taking him deeper with each thrust I moan a little.

"Are you going to be a good girl and swallow my cum?" Blake asks his voice husky.

"Mhm," I try to say around his cock but it comes out as more of a moan.

That must have been confirmation enough because he begins fucking my mouth even faster I can feel his cock pulse between my lips before I feel the thick warm streams of his release hit the back of my throat. I swallow every drop before I pull back, releasing his cock from my mouth.

I am soaking wet by this point and ready for Blake, I waste no time standing up and stripping my pants and underwear off as he watches. He must see how wet I am because he reaches forward running a finger through my slickness then sucks it off his finger. I am so turned on that it's making me weak in the knees as I try to take the jersey off next.

"Leave it on," he says standing up he gently grabs me moving me to the armrest of the couch.

"Right now I want to fuck my woman, as she wears my name, looking out over my city" he growls in my ear.

It's then that I realize that the couch has a perfect view looking out over the city up on the nineteenth floor. Before I can ask if the glass is tinted he bends me over and slams his

thick cock into me from behind. Each thrust is deeper and faster. And being exposed like this in front of the window is turning me on even more.

“Who does this pussy belong to princess?” he asks between thrusts.

“You,” I ask, surprisingly turned on by territorial Blake.

“That’s right baby, Me. You were made for me,” he says.

He holds one of my hips in one hand, using the other to reach around to give my clit some attention.

“I am so close baby, please.” I moan.

“Not yet, Luc” he responds.

He thrusts faster and deeper and I am ready to explode.

“Claim me, Blake. Your last name is already across my back. You posted us for the world to see. Now claim my pussy. Fill me with your come.” I murmur about to orgasm.

“Fuck Lucy, Now, come on my cock baby,” he moans as we both climax together.

He picks me up carrying me to his bedroom, carefully laying me on the bed.

“I love seeing our come mixed together dripping from your pussy,” he moans before walking to the bathroom. Returning with a washcloth and cleaning me up, he is nothing if not attentive.

I crawl up onto the pillows making myself comfortable, exhausted. Blake climbs in just wearing boxers, and pulls me against him gently. I move to roll to face him, but he stops me.

“Shhh.. you are tired, sleep. We can finish this in the morning,” he whispers.

I say nothing, I just scoot closer to him. When I am about to fall asleep I feel him kiss my hair softly.

“I love you, Lucy Campbell, I cannot wait for the day you really have my last name,” he murmurs against my hair.

I debate rolling over or moving in some way so he knows I am still awake, but moments later I can hear the soft snores coming from him. I smile because I am in the arms of the man I love, he loves me back and has publicly and privately claimed me. Everything is exactly as I dreamed it would be all those years ago. I came up with the perfect plan to tell him that I love him too, I just need to stay awake for another hour.

It's 11:55 pm, time to enact my plan. Blake has rolled on his back so I move carefully and start planting kisses all over Blake's chest. When I get to his collarbone, I pull back and see the smile on Blake's lips.

"Don't stop now princess. This is the best way I have ever been woken up," he says sleepily.

I start to kiss up his neck, then he surprises me by grabbing me and putting me on top of him.

"Don't get shy now baby" he moans.

I can feel he is already hard, so I grind myself on him a little before reaching down and guiding him to my entrance. I take my time lowering on to him. When he puts his hands on my hips and begins to thrust them. I grab them guiding them above his head and start to bounce on his cock.

"No, I am in control right now," I command.

I make sure each time I lift up, I lower myself slowly, really dragging the movement out. Checking the clock I see it's not quite midnight. I lean down and kiss him lightly.

"Would you like my midnight truth?" I ask quietly, still slowly riding his cock.

"Yes," he groans.

"I am head over heels in love with you Blake Stuntz, every midnight, forever," I say smiling.

He looks stunned before he quickly flips us over dropping a kiss to my lips.

"Hey," I jokingly shouted.

“Sorry princess, you just admitted you are in love with me. I love you so much too and now, I want to make love to you,” he says.

“You love me?” I say with a smile.

“Until my last breath!” he moans.

He made good on his promise to make love to me. Slow, deep, and full of emotion. Both of us whispering I love you back and forth to each other. Each thrust feels like he is trying to prove his love to me.

“Eyes on me Luc, Watch me fill you up. I want to see your face as my come fills your pussy,” he says before thrusting harder until we both come.

After he pulls out and we clean up, I slide on his shirt and climb into bed wrapped in his arms. Saying I love you feels like a weight is off my shoulders. Like my heart has been just waiting to offload that secret. I fall asleep quickly, feeling warm and safe, in Blake’s embrace.

Chapter Twenty-Six

BLAKE

It's been a few weeks since we said I love you for the first time. Since that first sleepover, Lucy always chooses to sleep here. We have both been busy with work but we find time to spend together even if it's just dinner at home after she gets off of a shift.

Sometimes when I have away games and I am going to come home late, Lucy sleeps over. It's nice getting home and having my girl tangled in my sheets. Occasionally, she will even wake up and ride my cock. It's incredibly sexy, having her sleepy smile look over at me, then roll over and crawl onto me. A night or two ago I woke her up with my head between her legs, making sure I had my dessert before bed.

Today is Thanksgiving, and she is working at the hospital, so I am heading to Zane's alone. Before I head to dinner I triple-check check my online order went through correctly, I am surprising Lucy's work crew with food and coffee I am having catered. Emerson texted me how many people are on shift for day and night, so everyone has food. Imogen's flight is landing soon and she will take an Uber and meet me at Zane's.

I get dressed in some slacks and a button-down for the occasion. I want to see Lucy for a few minutes too, if I can. She forgot her Stanley at my house so I also grabbed that on my way out the door to bring to her. I pull my car in the hospital parking lot and I see the catering truck pulling in as well so I text Emerson and she says she will meet me and the catering people at the ambulance bay.

Walking inside this way is a different experience than going through the waiting room. I don't know how Lucy handles it here, there are about a million sounds going on in every direction. Machines are beeping, people are talking, stretchers are being moved, doors are closing, and bells are dinging. Even I am overstimulated.

I see Lucy walking up the hall looking at her computer on wheels and I just smile watching her.

“Are you going to start drooling?” Emerson jokes.

Lucy looks up finally and does a double take like she can't believe I am here. She comes running down the hallway and into my arms.

“What are you doing here? And you look handsome!” Lucy says standing in my embrace.

“I was delivering food and coffee, Emerson sent me a head count, including night shift,” I say.

“That is so thoughtful of you! Thank you.” Lucy says kissing me.

Pulling her phone out she snaps a selfie of us, and one of us with Emerson and Hunter. I have her send them to me too. Say a quick set of hellos to a few of her coworkers then head out. I give her one last kiss before I reluctantly head out the door.

I get in my SUV, turn it on, and check my phone smiling at the pictures Lucy just sent me. The selfies we took and a few new ones of her coworkers enjoying the food and coffee. It brings me joy, making her happy. I posted the picture of just us on my story with the word thankful across it. Then start driving, heading over to Zane's for dinner.

The house is a calm chaos. Hadley is outside playing on her playset with Luke. Fiona is cooking with Charlie, Penny, and Celisa. Zane is vacuuming the house. It's a mystery to me why she is so stressed today when we come over every week. I remember after Hadley, we would take turns coming to help clean to help keep things easy on them.

“How can I help?” I ask entering the kitchen.

“Can you set the table, Please,” Fiona asks, stirring something on the stove.

“No problem,” I respond, grabbing plates and heading to the table.

A few trips later and the table is fully set ready for a holiday feast. I pop outside for a minute to see Hadley before I see what else I can do to help.

“Unc B,” she says in her precious voice.

“Hey pumpkin, how’s my favorite girl?” I ask her.

“I playin’ with Unc Lu,” she smiles.

“Fun, Do you want to take a picture together to send Auntie Lucy?” I ask her pulling out my phone.

“Yes. Yes” she says excitedly, she loves pictures.

I snap the picture and send it over to Lucy, I figure it will make her smile a little. I put Hadley down after giving her a kiss. I feel bad for this girl when she starts dating, between her dad, Luke, Mateo, and I the guys won’t stand a chance.

When I head inside I see Imogen helping in the kitchen. I walk in and give her a big hug.

“I have missed you,” I confess.

“I missed you too, now stop crushing me,” she says.

I smile and move to lean on the counter outside of the kitchen area. Not wanting to be in Fiona’s way. Imogen tells everyone about how life is going for her before she starts asking about everyone else. Zane tells her to wait until dinner so we will actually have something to talk about and we all laugh.

When we finally sit down Charlie lets us know that things are going well with the guy she went on a date with a month ago. I am happy for her. Celisa tells us about a date with a girl she met at a coffee shop that didn’t go so well. We all harass Luke about the girl we saw in the tabloids clinging to his arm this week. Penny talks about her students, and how things are going with her dating life, and then she tells everyone she is

thinking of adopting. She wants to be a mom so badly, I let her know that I will be an Uncle to her kid no matter how she gets them. Followed by everyone giving their support in various ways. Zane is smiling and I know he just loves his sister and wants the world for her. Then all eyes turn to me.

“What?” I say.

“How are things with Lucy?” Celisa asks.

“We are good. A few weeks ago we said “I love you”, so I’d say things are going really well.” I tell them.

“I can’t believe it’s been almost three months,” Charlie says.

“Yeah, I think I am going to ask her to move in this spring,” I say.

“It would make sense, you are always together anyway. Just don’t rush into too many new things at once.” Fiona offers as advice.

“I saw you posted a picture from the hospital with her today,” Charlie says, no questions, just a statement.

“Yes I brought her and her coworkers some food and coffee on my way here,” I explain.

“How sweet of you, Oh Lucy I love you so much I am going to visit you at work,” Luke says in an annoying mocking voice adding kissy sounds for effect.

“Oh thanks, Blake it’s so wonderful I love you lets go makeout in a closet like on *Grey’s Anatomy*” Zane follows up with another mocking voice.

“How mature of both of you,” I chuckle, rolling my eyes.

Everyone laughs at them mocking me. I laugh too because they are right in some ways. We are like a couple of love-sick teenagers who cannot keep their hands off of each other. The rest of dinner is uneventful but the food is amazing. After dessert, I help clean up the kitchen, before I cuddle Hadley on the couch while we watch one of her favorite shows. I check my phone and then move to get up.

“Heading home so soon,” Zane asks.

“No Lucy is here, I was going to meet her at her car,” I respond.

When her truck comes to a stop out front I walk over and open her door. I move to kiss her when she turns towards me. We lose ourselves in making out when we hear “Ooh Blake yes I love your lips.” We turn and see Luke pretending to make out with his hand.

“You are awfully annoying, mark my words, soon enough this will be you,” I laugh, lifting Lucy and placing her beside me, and shutting the truck door.

“Happy Thanksgiving Lucy!” Luke says, pulling her into a hug.

“Hi Luke, giving Blake a hard time today?” she asks.

“Yup,” Luke answers.

“Good. He needs to be kept on his toes.” Lucy laughs lightly.

“Wait, what? I thought you were on my side?” I ask.

She just laughs, grabs my hand, and leads me inside. I gladly follow her because I would follow this girl to the end of the Earth if she asked. She immediately makes plans with Imogen for breakfast tomorrow. Then makes plans for Celisa to go shopping with her and Emerson.

“Sleeping over tonight?” I ask quietly once she is done greeting everyone.

“Yes I packed a bag just in case,” she tells me.

“You should just keep some scrubs and some regular clothes at my house, just in case.” I playfully nudge her arm.

“I already do. Check the dresser on the left side of your closet,” she says.

I never use that dresser. The condo came with a dresser built-in on each side of the closet. I actually feel happier knowing she felt comfortable enough to leave clothes over without us talking about it than if she had agreed when I

asked. It makes me feel like I am not imagining that even though we have only been dating for a few months that we are actually serious.

The rest of the night is low-key and relaxing. Almost all my favorite people are in one room, if only Mateo was here too. A little while later we all say our goodbyes. Saving Imogen an Uber I drive her to her hotel and then head to my condo. By the time I get there, Lucy is showered and asleep in my bed. This view is something I will never grow tired of. How lucky am I to be spending my Thanksgiving in a relationship with the most amazing woman I have ever known? The gift that is will never be lost on me. I walk into my closet and open the drawers she was talking about earlier and see her clothes nicely folded and even a few pairs of shoes, and I smile. Walking back into the room I strip down to my boxers and get in bed, falling asleep quickly with my girl tucked into my side.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

LUCY

Surprisingly I woke up before Blake, but I was asleep before he got home last night. Yesterday was better than I could have expected. Blake bringing food to work was the best surprise and it was amazing. It brought so much happiness to the unit. I loved getting to see him, even if it was for just a few minutes before he headed to dinner. Report was quick so I got to join him at Fiona's for a little bit too before the family dinner was over. Getting that time with all of my favorite people is of immeasurable importance to me.

I made plans to get breakfast with Imogen today, so I carefully slide out of bed, heading to the dresser in the closet to grab an outfit. Picking a white bodysuit, with a cute flannel shirt on top, paired with my black skinny jeans and vans I feel effortlessly cute and ready for the day. Two braids and some mascara and my look is complete.

"Blake, honey, I am leaving to meet Imogen. I will see you later when you get back from practice." I whisper and kiss him.

'Bye babe, drive safe, my card is on the counter,' he mumbles before falling back asleep.

On my way out the door, I noticed he really left his card out for me. He should know better though, I won't use it. I get in my truck and text Imogen that I am on my way to pick her up. We are having breakfast in Hyde Park. Then she is going with one of her friends somewhere for the day. I am going to stay in the area because Hyde Park has the cutest markets, and

it's Black Friday so hopefully this area won't be super busy. Emerson and Celisa are going to meet me here to shop after breakfast.

Pulling up to the hotel I immediately spot Imogen, I unlock the door and she hops in. She leans forward, turning up the radio a little.

“What are we listening to today?” Imogen says.

Paramore's *Still Into You* plays in the background.

“In a romantic mood are we?” she says.

“We are, thanks to your cousin. Now enough about me, how are you? When are you joining us in Tampa?” I ask her.

“We always could tell your mood by the music you were playing. As of now, I am not coming to Tampa. I know Blake wants me to but I am just not at a point where I want to move.” she informs me.

“That's okay, I understand. I can hope though. We will welcome you with open arms if you do decide to join us one day though.” I told her.

We spent the rest of the quick drive doing car karaoke. I have always enjoyed time with Imogen when she comes to town. She is carefree and just loves to be happy. It's like being around a constant ray of sunshine. We head into Goody's for their amazing pancakes, thankfully there isn't a long wait, because I am starving.

We order our food as soon as we get seated, we frequent here so often that we know exactly what we want.

“So, are you going to marry Blake?” Imogen asks, and I choke on my Dr. Pepper.

“Um wow, we have only been together a few months. But I would probably guess that at some point we will get married. I can't see myself with anyone else.” I answer.

“Good. He needs someone like you. Strong, smart, confident, and beautiful. Plus we get along so well so it's a win for me too.” she chuckles.

“I will be sure to keep you in mind if he ever proposes,” I tell her.

“When, not if,” she says with a smile.

I shake my head and go back to eating my food. We ended breakfast on such a high, it was nice to have some girl time and just gossip and chat. I am sad when her friend pulls up outside to pick her up but I hope I will see her one more time before she leaves. I wait outside by the fountain for Emerson and Celisa to get here.

Emerson arrives first in a pair of cute jeans rolled at the ankle, paired with a black tank top, and black ankle boots.

“You look hot,” I say.

“If you are going to attempt to set me up with Celisa, I should at least put some effort in,” she replies.

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” I told her.

“Right, you invite your only two bi friends out Christmas shopping, just the three of us when Fiona and Charlie would have loved to shop too,” she says, giving me a knowing look.

“Ok, fine, but in my defense you would be so cute together.” I smile.

She rolls her eyes and sits next to me as we wait for Celisa. I don't miss the subtle way they check each other out when Celisa arrives. She also looks gorgeous in a green long-sleeve romper that shows off her toned legs and ass. I am starting to think I wasn't as subtle as I thought.

“Thanks for coming with me! Hyde Park markets are my favorite and I have lots of shopping to do!” I tell them.

“No problem, Let's just start over here and work our way around,” Emerson says pointing to a table with adorable glass cups. We follow her over to take a closer look.

“I am going to grab a cup for Fiona and Zane. They are into fancy coffee cups,” Celisa says.

“My shop is @bergamot_sunshine on Instagram, thank you for shopping,” the shop owner tells us.

We spend the rest of the afternoon like this, shopping at as many small businesses as possible to check people off our Christmas lists. I notice Em and Celisa tend to stick close together talking quietly to each other as we browse. It makes me happy because they both deserve to be happy and I think they would make a perfect couple.

On our way out the door, I find the cutest teacher planner that I quickly scoop up for Penny. Usually, we all contribute to her wishlist but since Blake bought everything we are all left scrambling. I could never be Penny, stuck in that classroom with 22 screaming kids, making barely any money. No thanks, but as her loved ones we support her with coffee gift cards, amazon wishlist buys, and bottles of wine.

“The only gift I haven’t gotten is Blake, I am at a loss on what to even get him,” I confess.

“Make him a sex coupon book!” Celisa tells me and I laugh.

“No... Well maybe. But I need an open-in-public gift idea,” I reply.

“Get him a new stick or new skates,” Emerson offers to be helpful.

“That’s a good idea, I can go to the pro shop and grab him something. Then maybe keep the coupons as a private gift.” I wink.

We all head to the parking garage and say our goodbyes. I load all my bags into my truck, taking note that Celisa is standing with Emerson chatting still. I decide to stop being a creep and get in my truck and let them do their thing in peace. I head back over to Blake’s reminding myself to remember I have all these bags I need to take inside my house when I head home after work tomorrow. I promised Blake I would stay tonight, but I have to be up early for work.

I pull into the parking garage of Blake’s building and park next to his SUV. I shut off the truck and head over to the elevator. On my way up to his floor my mind wanders thinking about how normal this feels. How this is just a regular day like

I basically live here. I have a slight uneasiness in my stomach questioning if we are moving too fast together, and it might be fast but it all feels so natural.

But when I open the door to see Blake making space for my books on his bookshelf, my heart flutters. This man is going out of his way to share his space with me, he ignores the random piles of things, we lovingly call them doom piles, that I have everywhere. Blake is showing me in his own way that I am welcome here as much as I want.

I set my keys on the counter loudly, so he hears me come inside. Then make my way to the living room where he is organizing. I take my time scanning his shirtless body, you can make out every muscle in his arms and back. The tight gray sweatpants aren't making it any easier not to stare when he turns around.

“See something you like?” Blake says breaking me out of my trance.

“I see a lot I like,” I wink.

“What do you want, Luc?” he says voice growing more husky.

“You,” I answer.

“Strip. Now.” Blake demands. Fuck the commanding tone in his voice make me tingle everywhere.

I do as he says stripping and then I sit down on the couch watching him.

“Tell me what you want me to do to you,” he says.

“I want your mouth on my pussy, I want to come on your tongue,” I say breathlessly.

What he does next makes my jaw drop. Blake Stuntz drops to his knees and then crawls to me. Sliding his tongue in my wet slit without a word. I don't know what turned me on more, his mouth on my clit or the fact that I brought this man to his knees and he crawled to me.

Blake eats my pussy hungrily, licking up her drop of come after I orgasm. As I catch my breath, he stands up, towering

over me on the couch.

“The only woman I will get on my knees for is you,” he confesses.

He slides his sweatpants down, stepping out of them and I reach out to grab his cock.

“No ma’am you aren’t in control anymore princess, now get on your knees and suck my dick like a good girl,” he growls.

I can feel arousal growing as I move to my knees and begin to suck him off.

“That’s right baby, just like that, your lips feel so good wrapped around my cock,” he moans.

I give a muffled moan as I continue sucking, his hand guiding my head to the pace and deepness he wants, hitting the back of my throat repeatedly. When Blake is about to come, I remove him from my mouth, continuing to work him with my hand. He explodes across my breasts.

“As much as I love when you swallow, I enjoy seeing you painted in my come just as much,” he says lowering to kiss me.

“Take me to the shower to clean up?” I ask him with a wink.

Without answering he is hauling me into his arms, setting me on the bathroom counter while he waits for the water to get warm. He peppers me with little kisses in between smiling his handsome smile at me. Blake then proceeds to help me get clean then fucks me deep and slow against the wall of the shower, making me orgasm three times. We spend the rest of the evening cuddled on the couch and I feel pure happiness in my heart.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

BLAKE

Christmas Eve.

“Do you want to go get cocoa and a snack, Hadley?” I ask, holding Hadley while Zane and Fiona get a beer. We come out to the riverwalk every Christmas Eve, it used to be for beers and live music, but now it’s seeing Santa and hanging out in fake snow with Hadley. I already bought her a penguin stuffed animal, a new shirt, and a souvenir Santa cup. This little girl has me wrapped around her finger, and I will happily spoil her.

“She can’t have hot cocoa and cotton candy before bed, Blake!” Fiona says annoyed.

“What Hadley wants, she gets, sorry I don’t make the rules.” I laugh while kissing Hadley’s cheek.

“You are infuriating,” Fiona says walking toward the parking lot.

I just smile knowing Fiona loves how much I love her daughter, and Hadley giggles the whole walk to their car. I buckle Hadley into her car seat while Fiona talks to Charlie about the final details for tomorrow’s Christmas dinner at Fiona’s. I turn around saying my goodbyes, Lucy will be home soon and I want to pick up food for dinner for us.

On my drive to the Mexican place Lucy loves, I get lost in my thoughts. I find myself imagining hosting holidays in our home, having our own littles playing with Hadley, and making our own traditions. There are things that I never really thought

about much before getting with Lucy. Now I want all those things and more. When I decided I was ready to settle down, and made that announcement at family dinner, it was more in terms of stopping dating around and just dating one person. I didn't expect to be ready to lock down my girlfriend of almost four months, but I am.

When I walk inside Lucy is in pajamas singing to Taylor Swift, and dancing with a wine glass in hand. I pull out my phone and get a video, never wanting to forget this moment, she looks so relaxed and happy. I want to post it on my Instagram stories, but she may kill me.

"Hey Luc, I brought tacos," I hold up the bag and head over to the table.

"You sure do know the way to my heart, I saw you restocked the Cheetos and Dr. Pepper too." she smiles, my god, that smile could bring me to my knees.

"Do you want to talk about your shift?" I ask.

I learned to ask because some shifts are hard and she doesn't want to talk. I have seen her come home silent and cry in the shower when she thinks I can't hear her. I can't imagine what healthcare is like, but I do know she has seen things she will never forget and has things that will haunt her forever. I would do anything to take that burden from her, but I can't.

"It was good. We actually had plenty of staff today, thankfully, and the citizens of Tampa seemed to keep their emergencies limited," she tells me.

"Good I am glad. I am really happy I got *you* for Christmas this year! Your presence is the best present I could have asked for." I chuckle.

"That was fucking corny," she laughs.

"As corny as midnight moments?" I ask.

"That's hard to answer because midnight moments are special now. But what you said just now was just cringy." she smiles, trying not to laugh as I pretend to be appalled.

She picks up the dishes, and I follow her helping clean up our little mess from dinner. Once everything is put away and the dishes are clean, we head to the bedroom.

“I am going to go shower princess,” I let her know.

“Okay babe, I am going to read.” She tells me as she crawls into bed.

By the time I step out of the shower, get my boxers on, and head into the room she is out cold. I make sure her phone is plugged in, because it’s her alarm clock, then climb into bed careful not to wake her. I drop a kiss on top of her head and roll back to my side of the bed. I love how routine things are between us. She sleeps over three to four times a week so we have gotten used to each other’s sleep habits and schedule.

I think I am going to officially ask her to move in. Not during the holidays but soon because there is no point in her paying rent if she is here all the time. Our team is killing it this season and will most likely be heading to the playoffs. It would be ideal if I can convince her to move in before the playoffs when my schedule becomes a chaotic mess, it would be nice having her here with me when I am home. I fall asleep thinking about how to go about asking her to move in without making it seem like an impulsive decision.



“Merry Christmas Handsome!” is all I hear before I feel her warm wet lips wrap around my cock.

“Fuck! Luc! Santa is really spoiling me this year,” I moan.

She responds with a slight chuckle that makes her tighten around my cock, and fuck it feels amazing. She continues to suck, sometimes lifting up enough that it’s only the tip in her mouth and she does a few quick flicks of her tongue on the sensitive head, before taking my entire length to the back of her throat quickly. A few rounds of that and I am orgasming down her throat. She takes every drop, wipes her lip, then snuggles back up next to me.

“Good morning, hockey boy,” she says quietly.

“Morning Beautiful. I would love to repay you for that gift.” I say before I adjust myself on the pillow.

“Take off everything below the waist,” I commanded. I watch her shimmy her underwear and shorts off. Then I reach over and gently move her.

“Sit, ride my face baby, take what you need,” I tell her.

She hovers over my face, so I wrap my hands around her thighs pulling her down.

“I said sit. Now grab the headboard and ride,” I murmur with her pussy on my mouth.

She begins to ride my face as I lick and suck on her clit, moving one hand from her thigh. I reach up, rolling a nipple between my fingers. Feeling it pebble up as she moans and grinds into me faster. She climaxes with my name on her lips.

“Good girl,” I say.

“We need to shower and get ready to head to my sister’s,” she says smiling.

In the shower, I bend her over under the water and fuck her into an orgasm head fog, then we both actually wash up and get out. I quickly get dressed then head to load the Range Rover with gifts while she gets ready for the day.

Christmas at the Miller house is casual and relaxed. Everyone spoils Hadley with way too many toys. She loves the attention so much, I feel bad for her future husband who will need to deal with how spoiled we have made her.

I gave Lucy a Stanley cup with chapstick, a claw clip, and a Bean Bar gift card inside. I also gave her a new jersey, new scrubs, and a new book. Did I go over our budget? Yes. Did I love seeing her excitement so it made it worth every dollar? Fuck yes.

She got me a new hockey stick, a gift card for Slapshots Bar, a new ball cap, and my own Stanley cup.

“A Stanley Cup? Really?” I laugh.

“Keep laughing but you will see how amazing they are and it will become your emotional support water bottle too,” Lucy explains.

“What the fuck is an emotional support water bottle?” Luke says.

“Use the Stanley I got you for your birthday and you will find out,” Fiona interjects, rolling her eyes as she laughs.

“Well thank you, babe, I love everything,” I tell her.

“There is one more gift, it’s on the dresser at home,” she tells me with a wink.

“Ok we need to get going,” I say pretending to get up as Lucy laughs.

My heart, that is the most beautiful sound.

The rest of the day flies by uneventfully. Once the gift exchange is over, we all decorate cookies, per tradition, and then we play board games until dinner. After dinner, Lucy and I help clean up the kitchen so Fiona can relax with Zane and Hadley.

“I love how happy they are, it’s crazy how far they have come,” Lucy says quietly.

“I am happy for them, I hope our happily ever after is next,” I say kissing her temple.

“It is, don’t you see it already in motion?” Lucy smiles.

“I do,” I tell her.

We clean in comfortable silence after that. While I load our gifts into the car, Lucy starts saying goodbye, then I go make my rounds saying bye to everyone. It’s nice having everyone together but damn goodbyes take forever, and I am desperate to get home. I want to see the gift on the dresser.

It takes all my control to drive the speed limit back to my place. Lucy is singing Christmas songs beside me, ignoring my questions about what my other gift is. We park and unload the gifts, thankfully with the two of us, it’s only one trip. I set

everything on the kitchen table and then speed walk to the bedroom with Lucy laughing behind me.

Lined up on the dresser is a whip, a package that says its ropes that discreetly attach to your bed, and a sex coupon book. It is homemade and full of things from blowjobs in the car to sex on the balcony to a night with whip cream and chocolate sauce. I am looking at every single coupon when I hear Lucy clear her throat.

When I look up she is naked using one hand to touch her clit.

“I don’t know if you are interested, but those ropes are already installed,” she tells me.

“Get on the bed.” I move toward the bed stripping quickly.

Lucy lays down and I kiss her deeply with one hand cupping her cheek. Then I reach up strapping each hand into a strap.

“Let’s just tie your hands up tonight. I like when you wrap your legs around me as I pound into your tight pussy,” I inform her.

As if on cue she begins to grind against me as I hover over her. I move away dropping my lips to one of her nipples, giving it a good suck, feeling it harden against my mouth. I feel Lucy try and pull her hands to touch me. When I switch to the other nipple she moans, and I can feel her tilting her hips trying to get the friction she is desperate for.

If there is one thing about Lucy she loves to wrap her hands in my hair holding my mouth to her pussy while I eat her out so this should be fun.

“Be right back” I say jumping up and running to the kitchen when I come back I keep my hand behind me.

“Hey, what the fuck,” Lucy says frustrated.

I don’t say anything, I just smile. Then I move my hand from behind me quickly placing it on her clit.

“Ahhh. Fuck” she yells.

“Relax,” I tell her rubbing the ice cube in my hand around her most sensitive area.

I alternate between the ice cube and my warm mouth on her clit, while Lucy moans and pulls against the ties. I don't stop until she orgasms twice.

“You needed something to cool you down a little,” I say winking before I move up the bed kissing her.

I proceed to fuck her like it's the last time I will ever get to put my cock in her tight pussy. After we both come, I undo the ties, and Lucy goes to clean up.

When she gets back in bed we fall asleep quickly with her tucked into my side, exactly where she belongs.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

LUCY

New Years Eve

“Party time bitches,” Emerson yells as she climbs into my truck. We are leaving our shift to go get ready at my house then go to the New Year’s Eve party at Luke’s house. I already set out my outfit, and I wore my hair in braids so I have one less thing to do. Emerson brought her stuff to change into in a bag, so she is ready too. We are both off tomorrow so we plan to sleep at Blake’s since he lives in Luke’s building and no one wants to worry about driving or getting an Uber.

Inside we both take quick showers without washing our hair, thank God for dry shampoo!

“Are you going to put on some music?” Em asks.

“Yes hold on,” I grab my speaker turning on my ‘bad bitch’ playlist on Spotify.

We spend the next forty five minutes getting party ready. I am wearing a short, tight, midnight blue, sequin dress that I paired with my silver heels. I finish the look with a classic red lip, a cat eye sharp enough to kill a man, and my hair flowing in gorgeous waves.

“Wow, you are dressed to impress tonight!” Em says fanning herself dramatically.

“Actually I dressed to be undressed,” I wink at her doing a little spin to show off how the dress sits on my curves.

“You look over the top hot tonight too,” I say admiring how amazing my best friend looks. She decided on a white dress that’s tight and low cut, paired with silver strappy heels. With her hair pin straight, a smokey eye, and a simple pink lip stain, she is stunning.

“Thanks, I tried,” she winks at me.

We gather our stuff and head over to Blake’s. When we arrive he is already at Luke’s so I get Emerson set up in the guest room. Once she has her bags in the room, we stop in the kitchen taking a shot of tequila, and then get on the elevator heading up 2 floors to Luke’s.

The condo is decorated perfectly with balloons, streamers, and 2023 signs everywhere. Luke even hired bartenders and caterers. He went all out, but I honestly expect nothing less from the king of parties himself.

It doesn’t take long before I spot Zane, Fiona, Luke, Celisa, and Charlie sitting in the living room spread out between the two couches and love seat talking. Emerson and I grab some champagne and make our way over. When we walk up the conversation stops and all eyes are on us. Blake’s mouth hangs slightly open as he slowly scans his eyes over me, taking in every inch, before he stands up and pulls me into a kiss, then moves me to sit on his lap with a smile.

“You are fucking stunning!” Blake compliments me.

“You don’t clean up too bad yourself,” I tell him. His black slacks and black button down with rolled sleeves both accentuate his muscular body perfectly. I might have been caught staring myself if he hadn’t stood up and kissed me.

Everyone compliments Emerson and me, and then the conversation turns back to everyone’s week, and what is going on in the hockey world. After a few more drinks, all of us girls get up to dance. We are all pretty tipsy, giggling and grinding on each other. The guys stand off to the edge of the makeshift dance floor, drinking, and talking to some of their teammates who came tonight. I notice Emerson and Celisa getting extra cozy on the dance floor together and I smile.

A little before midnight I feel someone step up behind me placing their hands on my hips, at first I thought it was Blake, but it doesn't feel right. By the time I turn around, Blake is shoving the guy and yelling at him. Zane and Luke try to separate the two of them as best as they can.

"Don't touch my girl," Blake says, voice dripping with anger.

"I don't see a sign on her saying she's yours," the guy laughs.

Blake goes to shove him again and Zane is telling the guy he needs to leave.

"Yeah, I am not leaving over some bitch," he responds.

"Oh shit," Fiona says drunk next to me.

Luke lets go and Blake slams his fist straight into the guy's nose. I should be upset but honestly watching my man defend my honor turns me on. Zane grabs Blake trying to stop him from completely wrecking this guy's face.

"Get the fuck out of my house," Luke says.

"Seriously dude, You are kicking me out because I touched his chick." the guy says.

"That chick you groped on and called a bitch is my sister, so yeah, get the fuck out," Luke responds.

Once the guy is out the door, Blake comes over and hugs me, kissing my temple and whispering he is sorry.

"It's okay you were defending me," I say with a reassuring smile.

"I know you can defend yourself, and you don't need my protection but sometimes I can't help it," he says.

"Babe, it is ok. I understand. Thank you," I say then I get on my tiptoes pulling him closer to me so I can whisper in his ear.

"Plus it was super hot, my panties are soaked," I whisper.

“Ok we are going to head out,” Blake says grabbing my hand.

“No, we are not, we are staying at least until the ball drops, hockey boy,” throwing that last part in with a wink knowing it will stir him up even more. Then I give him a kiss and go dance some more.

Blake steps away to talk to a teammate for a minute and I decide to mess with him some more.

Lucy: I forgot to mention, I have nothing on under this dress.

I watch as he pulls his phone out reading my message, face turning red, as he tries to focus on his conversation shooting his eyes over at me.

Lucy: I can feel the slickness on my thighs from how turned on you made me.

Blake: Stop before I throw you over my shoulder and carry you out of here in front of everyone.

Lucy: Should I keep these heels on while you bend me over and fuck me tonight?

I can see Blake choke on his drink a little as he reads my message.

Lucky for both of us the countdown to midnight is about to begin.

“We are leaving immediately after this, I can’t wait any longer,” Blake tells me pulling my back flush to his chest.

“Do you feel what you have done to me?” He says holding me against him I can feel his hard cock on my back.

I giggle and squirm against him just a little.

“Ten, Nine,” we hear the countdown begin and I turn to him.

“Three, two,” I say before Blake cuts me off with a kiss. He kisses me through the countdown and many seconds into the new year.

“I wanted to end and begin the year with your lips on mine, I love you princess.” He murmurs holding me close.

“Oh shit,” Blake says, then turns me slightly to see what he is looking at.

“Yes!” I say when I realize he is turning me to see Celisa and Emerson making out in the corner of the party.

“Okay time to go,” he grabs my hand and begins hauling ass to the door.

“Emerson, we are leaving you have a key, bye,” I yell out as Blake drags me carefully behind him.

The minute we step into the elevator he picks me up and I wrap my legs around him as he presses me against the wall. His lips on mine, I feel his tongue touch my lips, I part then slightly granting him the access he was trying to get. My hands tangle in his hair as I desperately grind my body against him trying to get the friction I need from him.

I am so lost in our kiss, and probably the champagne, that it barely registers that Blake has carried me to the condo and into the bedroom. We walked through the halls with my ass almost hanging out but I was too busy kissing every inch of him that I could reach to care.

Blake sets me gently down on the bedroom floor.

“Strip. Leave the heels on.” Blake commands leaning on the door frame.

My body tingles at the tone of his voice.

“Unzip me?” I ask turning my back to him.

He unzips me quietly, the dress pooling around my feet.

“Go bend over the bed,” he tells me then smacks my ass hard but it feels so good that a moan escapes me.

I move to the bed like he asked and I feel him follow behind me. He slides his finger through my wet slit, running it

up and down before deciding to slip inside. When he has a good rhythm he inserts a second finger, thrusting in and out of me while I stand bent over in my heels. When my breathing becomes shallow he stops completely.

“Don’t stop, Blake please,” I beg.

“Stay just like that,” he tells me, then I hear the unzipping and rustling of fabric. I turn my head to see him undressing the rest of the way.

I moan when he smacks my ass again, he wastes no time thrusting himself into me. I am so wet that he has no problem sliding right in. With the heels, I am in the perfect position for him to fuck me without having to bend awkwardly.

I come three times before he finally orgasms filling me up. I move to go to the bathroom.

“Go wash your makeup off, but I want to go to sleep knowing my come is dripping out of you,” he says.

As a nurse, I know better, but fuck something in his voice has me agreeing. Once my makeup is washed off and my teeth are brushed, I climb into bed ringing in the new year with the love of my life. I have never been more grateful.

I wake up around six am, throw on Blake’s shirt, and head to the kitchen for a drink when I see none other than Celisa slipping out of the guest room as Emerson kisses her bye.

“Hmm. Fancy seeing you here,” I say cocking an eyebrow at them.

“Lucy,” Celisa says.

“My lips are sealed, I am going back to bed, Happy New Year ladies!” I say taking my water back to the bedroom with me. Cuddling up into the arms of my first, and hopefully last love.

Chapter Thirty

BLAKE

Valentines Day

I am so glad that Lucy is off tonight, we have both been so busy since New Year's. With hockey getting closer to the end of the regular season I have been traveling and training like crazy. I wanted to take her out to a nice dinner tonight, but she voiced she really wants to stay in. She has been picking up extra shifts every week, trying to pay off her truck and student loans. I offered to help but she refused, she is too independent to accept money she didn't earn herself.

I did plan a nice home cooked meal with some wine, and I set the table with some candles. I am going to ask her to move in officially today. We have been together for around six months and I think that is plenty of time, especially since she is here half the week anyway. I also bought her a book, a plant because she loves them she just can't keep them alive, and a necklace with a simple emerald stone.

She should be here shortly so I finish setting the table and cooking dinner, then run to get dressed. I'm wearing black slacks, and a dark blue button up. I'll wait to roll the sleeves until she is here because I selfishly love the flare in her eyes while she watches me do it. I am so drunk in love with this girl. I don't know how I could have been stupid enough to not make her mine years ago.

I am going to propose at the end of the season, win or lose. I don't want to waste another minute without her as my wife. I would ask her now, but I know asking her to move in is

enough for now. She doesn't do well with a lot of change at one time, so I am not going to shake things up too much.

I hear the key turn in the lock, and when she walks in I am speechless. Her hair is perfectly straight and she has barely any makeup on. I love that she lets her natural beauty shine through. Her dress is to her ankles, and it's a dark midnight blue with sparkles subtly throughout. I don't miss that we both seem to gravitate to blues, especially midnight blue. Like that color will single handedly keep our love ignited.

"Lucy, you look amazing, you are the most beautiful woman in the entire world," I tell her.

"You look great too, Dinner smells amazing!" she says setting her stuff on the entryway table.

"I can't believe I am lucky enough to be in love with such a gorgeous, smart, kind, incredible woman," I confess.

We head to the table and eat talking about our weeks since we haven't seen each other in 4 days because we had two out of state games. Once dinner is complete, I get up and clear our plates. Together we load the dishwasher, wipe down the tables, and blow out the decorative candles on the table. I am so impatient to give her the things I bought her, so I grab her hand and lead her to the living room to sit with me on the couch.

"Present time?" I ask her.

"Sounds good, me first though," she says. Getting up and grabbing a large box handing it to me. I unwrap it finding a new carry on and set of headphones.

"I also sent you a new playlist," she tells me.

"Thank you babe, it's perfect!" I smile and then grab the book and necklace first.

"This book just came out! Thank you so much!" she exclaims before moving to the necklace box.

"Oh my, Blake, it's stunning, I love emeralds. This is so timeless yet attention catching." she gushes.

“Will you put it on me?” she says softly before turning her back to me and lifting her hair to the side.

“Beautiful, like you.” I kiss her shoulder then get up to get the other gift.

“One more gift,” I tell her.

“Oh my, it’s a fiddle leaf! I love these! You do know I kill plants right?” She asks me.

“Well if it’s here I can water it for you,” I answer smiling.

“That makes sense! I can leave it here, the lighting is better here anyways,” she smiles back at me.

She moves to sit in my lap sweetly with her head against my chest. I feel so content in this moment.

“So I was thinking, I want you to move in. You already spend half the week here so financially it would make sense. You can put that rent money towards your student loans and pay them off faster. But selfishly, I want to be able to come home to you every night, I want to take this next step together.” I tell her.

She leans back, angling her body toward me to talk. I gently grab her chin and pull her in for a kiss, before she has a chance to turn me down.

“Blake, things are new, and yes, I am here a lot, but moving in together is a big commitment,” she answers.

“I love you and you love me, I plan on staying with you forever. This is just the next logical step.” I tell her.

“Please give me some time to think, that’s a big change and commitment. I am not saying no, I am just asking for time,” she tells me.

“Ok, just know I am all in, I am committed, every midnight, forever,” I tell her then pull her into a kiss.

I proceed to worship her body all night with my tongue, fingers, and cock. I show her how committed I am to her. We spend the night christening every surface of the condo together

and then she falls asleep in my arms with a soft smile on her face.



Blake: It's been a week. Is it too soon to bring it up to her again?

Blake: Maybe I should get her a Target gift card to buy stuff for the condo like you did for Fiona, Zane.

Zane: Well that was different. But also you have only seen her once since you asked since we have been traveling. Why don't you give her some time?

Blake: A week is time.

Luke: Why are you in such a rush to have her in your space? Have you seen her apartment it's an unorganized mess.

Blake: Be nice. I just want to take this next step, I'm ready to spend every day and night with her.

Luke:□ you are both so love sick. It better not be contagious. You won't catch me simping after some girl.

Zane: Um excuse me, those "girls" are your sisters' asshole.

Luke: I stand by the fact you are both whipped. That could never be me.

Zane: We will see Luke, never say never.



St. Patrick's Day

Fiona and Zane are having family dinner tonight while Mateo is in town even though it's not Sunday. Even Penny made it tonight, everyone except Lucy, who is working, is here. She is sleeping at her house tonight because drinking holidays fill the ER with loud drunk people who made stupid choices. It is overwhelming for her so she just wants to go home to complete silence and sleep. It hurt my feelings a little but I understand the need for alone time to decompress.

Everyone is having an amazing time drinking green beer and snacking on some green dyed cookies Penny made. We are all hanging out in the living room when we hear the front door open and close. No one worries assuming Lucy came to join us for a little bit. But when Emerson walks around the corner first, my stomach does a flip, filled with dread.

"No offense Emerson but why are you in my house? Also, how did you get into my house?" Zane asks.

"Emerson, for the love of god what is wrong?" I ask frustrated.

"Lucy had a patient tonight who came in extremely intoxicated. When she went to place an IV he pushed her into the wall, and proceeded to punch her a few times. It looks bad, and it's going to get worse. I came with her so I could give a warning before she walks in." Emerson tells us calmly.

"WHAT! Where is she?" I yell.

"Calm down. She will be in shortly. She has a minor concussion so she is going to stay at your place tonight Blake." she explains.

"How can you be so calm about this?" Luke demands.

"Nurses get hurt by patients way more often than you think. She wasn't the first and she won't be the last." Emerson tells us with tears in her eyes.

Celisa walks over and rubs her back nicely, I am about to start asking more questions when I hear the door open and close again.

"Calm. Please just stay calm." Emerson warns us again.

I physically jerk back slightly when she walks in, her lip is split, her eye is swollen, almost closed, and she has two stitches on her cheek. I move quickly to her side hugging her and kissing her temple, I notice her grimace when I hug her.

“Where does it hurt? I am so sorry.” I say as calmly as possible.

I wasn’t prepared to see the bruising on her rib cage when she lifted her shirt. My hands curl into fists at my sides.

“Who the fuck did this to you? What is his name?” I demand.

“Calm down, Blake,” Fiona says quietly.

“No fuck that, some guy beat the shit out of her, and all of you are just okay with this? No,” I spit out my voice laced with anger.

“Fuck you, Blake, we aren’t okay with this. Get control of yourself. We are all angry, but we don’t want to stress her out more by being so in her face about it. Lucy, are you pressing charges?” Zane says.

Lucy’s eyes water but she says nothing.

“There are no laws protecting healthcare workers in these circumstances, so no she isn’t suing. Management did say they were going to call tomorrow to talk about paid time off,” Emerson explains.

“I am so sorry princess, Do you want to go back to my place? Or stay here? I can sleep at your house if you want.” I ask her.

“Just take me home, please,” she tells me.

“Of course, Emerson, can you drive her home and I will meet you there. I just need to pick up some things from home.” I turn to look at Emerson.

“No Blake, take me home, to the condo. I planned on telling you I was ready this weekend after your home game.” Lucy says.

“Home. Let’s go home, princess.” I mumble with my lips against her hair.

I’m trying not to let all of these emotions overtake me at once. I have never been a crying kind of guy, but seeing my girl hurt and being able to do absolutely nothing about it absolutely gutted me. I wish I knew who this guy was, I would murder him and smile for my mugshot.

While everyone says bye to Lucy, I step out front to catch my breath. I try to collect myself before she comes out. The door closes, and I turn around blinking tears back expecting to see Lucy but it’s Luke.

“Hey man, what’s up? Does Lucy need me?” I ask sniffing quietly.

“She is fine, I came to check on you. Zane and I have been here before when Justin hurt Fiona, we know what it is like to hurt and feel responsible, but you could never have prevented this, it comes with her job, unfortunately. Don’t shoulder this alone, it’s okay to be sad, scared, and angry. Just remember that she is safe now, and she needs your support tonight more than anything. She may not say a lot, so let her just be. But she wants to go with you because you are her safe place. Remember that.” Luke tells me and pulls me into a hug.

He goes back inside and I wipe the tears that had fallen while Luke was talking, just in time for Lucy to come outside. I help her get loaded up and head to *our* home. I’m grateful she already has most of her stuff there because she has been bringing things over a little at a time. Emerson is going to follow us and leave Lucy’s truck then have Celisa take her home. I know seeing them getting close is making Lucy excited.

Chapter Thirty-One

LUCY

Two weeks later.

It is the first day of April and I am officially all moved into Blake's condo. It really feels no different except all of my things are here. I was already spending all of my time here, anyway, and this just makes sense. Blake won't let me pay any bills so I contribute to groceries. I am going back to work in a few days when my paid time off post the attack in the ER ends. But not having as many bills means I don't need extra shifts to make extra payments anymore, since more of my income is accessible. Which will be a huge help mentally, emergency care can take a toll on you after a while.

Blake is at the arena for practice this morning. There are two weeks of the regular season left before the playoffs. We are playing at home which is exciting because I will actually get to go. My face is completely healed so I feel comfortable coming back to the games. I didn't want to go to the games and risk anyone speculating that the damage was from Blake. Which tabloids tend to do, they take an idea and run with it.

Today I am going to my favorite coffee shop, The Bean Bar, then I am heading to the plant store. Since I have someone to help with watering, in case I forget, I can get more plants. We have so many windows it's perfect for a variety of plants and succulents! I am really excited!

I have been slowly adding my own decorative touches to the house and hanging pictures of us and our friends and family. Blake ordered me some bookshelves to put in his

office so I can have an official place for my own books. He promises our next place will have a spare room that I can turn into my own personal library. Which is a dream come true for any book lover! I did tell him it needs to have a ladder for the shelves, of course.

Lucy: It's plant shopping day!

Luke: Don't kill them all.

Zane: Didn't you kill the last batch of plants?

Fiona: I think that's awesome plants are so good for you.

Celisa: Is Blake going to be in charge of watering them? If not they are dead by month's end.

Lucy: You are all assholes, except Fiona.

Charlie: Hey! I said nothing.

Lucy: and Charlie.

Blake: Don't worry guys, I will be in charge of the watering.

Lucy: You're the best babe 😏 the rest of you are fun suckers. hahaha



It's game day, the last game of the regular season, and I know exactly how I want to wake Blake up this morning. I slip under the covers and take his cock into my mouth. He moans, putting his fingers into my hair, and guiding my head at the pace he wants.

“If we win today, I am going to expect this for every home game day of the playoffs,” he says with a laugh.

“Win the Cup and you can wake up like this every home game morning next season too,” I say with a wink.

Hockey boys and their superstitions. I pull my head back, being sure to hover on the tip, giving it a little extra attention with my tongue, before I go back to taking his whole cock into my throat. He starts to pulse in my mouth, and I feel his release, swallowing every drop.

“Fuck princess, that was a hell of a game day wake up,” he says quietly then pulls me up and kisses me.

“I wanted to wish you good luck, hockey boy,” I told him before tossing my leg over him and resting my head on his chest.

We fall back asleep for just a little bit longer. Blake gets up showering and getting his game day suit on, and fuck does he look hot. I get up and head to the kitchen so I can spend some time with him before he walks out the door. I hop up on the kitchen counter and talk to him while he gets his stuff ready.

He walks over to say goodbye standing between my thighs, he kisses me, tongue grazing my lips and I open allowing him entrance. The shirt I am wearing is riding up my thigh and Blake places his hand slightly underneath. The proximity of his hand to my pussy already has me wet and clenching my thighs together. As we kiss his hand moves higher and I open my legs wider giving him more access, moaning lightly when his hand reaches the very top of my thigh, his thumb grazes across my panties when he moves.

Suddenly Blake moves back heading to the living room as I sit there stunned catching my breath. He returns with a throw pillow he drops onto the floor, and then gets on his knees. Sliding my panties to the side he quickly puts his lips on my clit, like he knew how desperate I was for him. He slides two fingers in curling them slightly as he thrusts them in and out. His tongue swirls around my clit lightly but it feels so good. I am about to come when he sucks just slightly on my clit as his

fingers hit that magic spot that has me seeing stars, and I orgasm with his name on my lips.

He stands up and kisses me.

“Playoffs or not I will always get on my knees and please you.” then gives me another kiss.

“I love you, win for me, ok?” I say with a wink.

“I love you princess. Every midnight, forever,” he says, reminding me of the words we promised each other all those months ago.

I watch him walk out the door, and sit on the counter in silence. I just had this man in his game day suit drop to his knees and eat me like his last meal, before leaving for his hockey game. I am living every romance book girl’s dream right now.

Lucy: Blake just ate me out while I was on the counter before he left for the arena

Emerson: How did you get so lucky?

Lucy: Did I mention he was in his game day suit?

Emerson: Damn bitch got him on his knees in his suit, that’s real pussy power.

Lucy: Bring coffee when you pick me up, please!

Lucy: I have won the relationship lottery for sure.

Emerson: OK, I will see you later!

The arena is buzzing with excitement for tonight’s game. Tampa has already secured their spot in the playoffs, but it doesn’t make this game any less important. We take our seats and I hear my phone ping with a notification. I pull my phone

out, and open Instagram seeing a picture of me sleeping on Blake's chest with the caption 'pregame bliss'.

"That man has it bad," Fiona laughs.

I shake my head and realize that I have barely posted anything about us. Not because I haven't wanted to but I just don't post very often. I decide why not post tonight. I found a picture that Emerson took of us a few games ago, I had just jumped into his arms post game. It's cute and I love it. So I post in black and white with the caption "always a champion in my heart".

"Oh you are going to give him an ego before the game, perfect," Celisa laughs.

"Don't worry the ego was there regardless," I chuckle.

I know he saw the post because, in the warm-up skate, he holds his hand over his chest and then places it on the glass.

"I gotta say, that was fucking cute," Charlie tells me.

"He is pretty great." I gush.

At the end of the third period, Blake took a hard hit, knocking him to the ice. When he doesn't immediately stand up, I feel like my stomach is in my throat. Emerson holds my hand as Luke looks up, locking eyes with me. His teammate and best friend is down on the ice, and he still finds a way to check on me.

It feels like forever before we see Blake start to get up with the help of the team doctor who is on the ice with him. Zane skates over immediately, giving us a nod, reassuring us he is ok. I finally relaxed a little. Tampa pulls out the win three to two. I make my way to the tunnels as soon as the game is over.

When Blake comes out the nurse in me begins a quick triage, rapid firing questions at him before he kisses me to shut me up.

"I am fine, I got the wind knocked out of me that is all. They did all the needed testing when we got to the locker

room. I am fine. Turn off your nurse brain and kiss me,” he says with a laugh before kissing me again.

Picking me up and tossing me over his shoulder, he yells out a goodbye to our group of friends and heads to his SUV.

“Put me down caveman,” I laugh.

He doesn't put me down until he has the door open and he gently places me on the seat.

“Fuck me. Here in the backseat. Claim your prize for winning tonight.” I say, nervous about what he will say.

“Get in the back and strip your leggings and underwear off,” he says walking around and getting in on the other side.

“Thank god post game I wore sweatpants,” he says waiting for me to get in.

“Thank god I didn't wear panties.” I wink climbing in the back.

I strip down and he slides his sweats and boxers down.

“Climb on top princess, let my cock be your throne tonight,” he says softly.

“I guess that will make me a queen,” I say with a laugh.

I do as he says, straddling him and reaching to guide him inside. I lower myself slowly inch by inch until he is fully inside me and I start to bounce.

“Fuck you are drenched tonight, does being in public turn you on? Does the chance we might get caught make you wet?” he asks me.

“Yeah,” I admit with a moan.

“Grab onto the seat baby, we gotta be quick before the team wonders why my vehicle is still here,” he tells me.

I grab onto the seat as Blake puts his hands on my hips bouncing me faster on him. He moves one hand to my clit, rubbing small circles.

“This pussy was made for me,” he moans.

“Blake please, don't stop,” I say into his ear.

We both orgasm and I stay on him for a minute before he carefully moves me to the seat.

“Climb back up front, keep your pants off, I want to see my come dripping out of you while I drive us home,” he says.

When we both get situated in our seats and start to drive, Blake reaches over, sliding the jersey I am wearing up my thighs.

“Tilt your body to face me a little more,” he says looking over at the red light.

I move as he says and see his eyes darken fixed on the wetness between my thighs.

“God damn you are sexy,” he says then starts to drive again.

I decide to reach down, rubbing my finger through the wetness, then moving it to my clit. I moan slightly, making Blake look over.

“Good girl, make yourself come for me,” he says.

“I want you to come all over that seat before we get home,” he tells me.

“We are almost home,” I argue.

“Better get started then,” he says, focusing on the road.

Sliding two fingers inside me I curl them just right, using my palm for the friction I need. I am about to come, my breath becoming more shallow. I move my fingers faster.

“Come for me baby,” he says as he pulls into his parking spot.

A few thrusts later I am orgasming on my fingers, then I move towards Blake, sticking my fingers in his mouth.

“Lick them clean for me?” I say with a smirk.

He does just that then I slide my leggings up and we head to the condo hand in hand.

Chapter Thirty-Two

BLAKE

I wake up with Lucy plastered against my chest sleeping still. Last night was our last official game of the regular season, playoffs here we come! Lucy and I celebrated in the backseat of my Range Rover and just continued the celebrations once we were home. It was probably the best sex of my life.

We are off today so Lucy and I are going to watch movies all day and relax. She goes back to work next week and playoffs start in four days. This will be our last real day of normal before things get crazy until the Stanley Cup championships the first week of June. We are hosting the first two games then we are playing away in Seattle for the next two games. Then we alternate back and forth, best out of seven.

Luckily for me, Lucy will be able to come to the first two games at home but I don't know if she can make the other home games. It will depend on her schedule at work. It's crazy to me that I have had her by my side for almost this entire season.

Whenever I think back to that trip, where the truth came out about how Lucy really felt making me realize my feelings for her, I never would have guessed that less than a year later I would be waking up with Lucy on top of me naked. Or that Lucy would be living with me and we would be talking about a future together. I am eternally grateful for that vacation and how it turned my life around.

Lucy rolls over so I use this moment to slide out of bed, pulling the covers back around her. I shut the bedroom door and decide to get the house cleaned up before she wakes up. I love her but she is not the best at staying on top of cleaning. Which is fine. I don't mind meeting her where she is at when it comes to household chores. It's a team effort.

Mateo: Congrats on clinching the playoffs, boys.

Luke: Thanks man, hopefully, next year you will be with us.

Zane: Thank you. Let's hope you get traded to us next season.

Luke: We would kill it having the four of us back together.

Mateo: Hell yeah we would.

Mateo: Blake you there?

Luke: He's too busy following Lucy around like a lost puppy

Mateo: Simp!

Blake: If she wasn't your sister I would tell you what I was busy doing.

Luke: EW.

Mateo: HAHAAHHA

By the time Lucy wakes up the house is cleaned, candles are lit, and coffee is ready. If I have learned anything it's that she needs coffee before I try to communicate with her. It's like she

needs the caffeine to fully function. I bought a nice coffee maker like two days after she moved in so she can make herself fancy lattes and shit in the comfort of her pajamas.

“Morning beautiful!” I tell her, kissing her cheek.

“Morning,” she says grumbling.

“I am going to shower while you have your coffee then we can start our movie marathon,” I tell her then head to the bathroom.

We spent the entire day cuddled on the couch watching romcoms and having snacks. It was just what I needed to decompress heading into the playoffs. We even find some time to have sex a few times during the day. Sex, movies, and snacks, the perfect combination. Laying on the couch with her curled up into my side I think about how Lucy is literal perfection. I am so in love with everything about her.

I look down at Lucy’s phone and see her on a website looking at houses.

“What are you looking at?” I ask.

“Well, I was thinking once you win the cup, we might want to buy a house. I assume we will want to have kids and we will need more space,” she says.

“Hmm. Is this about space for kids or that you want a library room?” I ask her, laughing.

“Fine it’s the library, we are nowhere near ready for kids. But a dog might be nice,” she responds.

“Babe, I will call the realtor and we can start looking after the first round of playoffs are over,” I told her.

“Really?” she asks excitedly.

“Of course. I wanted to get us a house soon too, I was just waiting to bring it up until the playoffs were over.” I confessed to her.

“Can I ask you something ?” she says.

“Of course,” I tell her.

“What if I want to quit my job? Maybe look into getting a telehealth position once I have an office space?” she asked me.

“Then quit, I will 100% support you,” I tell her.

“I haven’t decided. I just realized being off the past month, what terrible work life balance I had, and what that job was doing to my mental health,” she confesses.

“I will support whatever decision you make, always,” I tell her earning me a kiss.

I pick her up and carry her to bed and spend the rest of the evening fucking the most amazing woman I know in every position imaginable.



We just won the second game in the playoffs. Tomorrow we jet off because we play in Seattle the following day. I am exhausted by the time I meet Lucy in the tunnel. We had to hustle for the win tonight. The other team definitely came to win. Every single person on the team is tired, no one is going out. Everyone wants to rest up before travel day tomorrow.

I crash the minute I get out of the shower. When I wake up the next morning, Lucy is in the kitchen drinking coffee folding my clothes into my carry on.

“Do my eyes deceive me or are you doing laundry?” I ask her.

“You were so tired so I just did a quick load of laundry last night and woke up early to be sure your bag was packed for the flight today,” she tells me.

“That is so nice of you babe. Thank you,” I kiss her and smile.

“I have enough time for a quickie if you are interested?” I say with a smile.

She takes off to the bedroom stripping on her way. I fuck her making sure she is satisfied since I won’t be home for five days since we have back to back games.

There are actual tears in her eyes when I leave for the arena a few hours later. I hate that I won't be home for her first shift back at work but she is off the night I get home so I will get to spend some much needed quality time with her.



We came home five days later and we lost our first game and won the second. Tampa is currently three to one in our favor. We need to win two more games to secure our place in the next round. I walk into the house to find Lucy sitting on the couch reading.

“I missed you beautiful,” I tell her. She gets up running and jumping into my arms.

“I missed you, babe,” she tells me.

“Sorry it took so long to get home, we had a captain's meeting with the coach before I could leave.” I let her know.

“Make it up to me?” she says, rubbing herself against me.

“I will always get on my knees for you,” I say lowering her to the ground and pinning her against the wall.

I get on my knees and hike her leg over my shoulder giving me perfect access to her sweet pussy. She has no panties on so I am able to immediately dive in. I haven't been able to taste her days. I eat her pussy like it's been weeks since I've been able to last, I'm this hungry for her and it's only been a few days.

“Blake. Yes. Fuck” she moans hands in my hair keeping my mouth on her.

Once she comes, I stand up sliding my sweats down, I pick her up again, pinning her onto the wall. I reach between us, guiding myself into her.

“Fuck you are so wet and tight princess.” I moan into her hair.

“Please fuck me harder Blake,” she calls out.

I thrust into her harder and faster, she scratches my back while moaning my name, that was it for me. I come instantly

and she follows immediately after. I carry her to the shower so we can both clean up and head to bed. But life had other plans for us.

When we get out of the shower both of our phones are lighting up and pinging with notifications.

Luke: 911. I need everyone over to my apartment now.

“It’s Luke, he said it’s an emergency. Throw on some clothes, let’s go.” I say throwing the closest sweatpants and shirt I can find. We both grab our phones and haul ass up to Luke’s apartment.

Lucy just walks right inside the locked door.

Neither of us are prepared for what we see when we walk in. Luke is standing there holding a newborn baby. I look around and see no one else in the room.

“Who’s baby is that Luke?” I ask shutting the door behind me.

“Oh shit,” Lucy says.

When Luke just stares at us I look to Lucy for answers.

“That’s Luke’s baby. Where is the baby’s mom Luke?” Lucy says.

“She just dropped her off, apparently she doesn’t want to be a parent.” He says almost in tears.

The baby starts to cry and Lucy steps in to help hold the baby while we wait for everyone to arrive. Once everyone is there Luke explains the baby is a girl named Everlee, born two weeks ago, mom is a bartender he had a one-night stand with, the mom apparently doesn’t want to parent so she dropped the baby here and left.

Then it is silent for a bit before Lucy talks.

“Here is what we will do, Zane will go back to their house and grab Hadley’s spare pack-and-play. Fiona and Charlie will run to Walmart for formula, diapers, and essentials for the

night. Blake help Luke contact your coach and see how to proceed with playoffs, health insurance, all of that. Celisa run and grab my medical bag so I can at least give the baby a quick exam.”

No one questions her, we all just break apart and begin our tasks. Coach is pissed saying we both need to come in first thing in the morning, so we can figure out how to proceed. Once everyone is back and the baby is situated and set up we all settle in the living room.

“Thank you guys, I am so sorry. I guess the playoffs are over for me.” Luke says.

“No, we don’t know that. We will figure it out,” I say.

“I was going to quit my job anyway. I will help with the baby then maybe once school is out Penny would be willing to help too. She usually needs a summer job.” Lucy says.

Things in all of our lives just got a lot more interesting.

Chapter Thirty-Three

LUCY

It's eight am and I am in Luke's apartment with a sleeping baby that is apparently my niece. I wrote up my resignation letter this morning and emailed it to my boss. Due to the circumstances of the assault and Luke's baby, they allowed it to be effective immediately. I plan to move to telehealth once Penny is done with the school year and can nanny full-time.

Luke is obviously terrified, especially in the middle of the playoffs. He has a game tomorrow at home but then he leaves Friday afternoon for his Saturday game and will be back Sunday morning. This schedule will keep up until the Stanley Cup in June like six weeks away or until Tampa loses a playoff round.

Moving to Luke's spare bedroom, which luckily only has a single bed in it, I start to figure out how to make it a nursery. Everyone is at their jobs so it's just me, until Penny gets out of school at two and she heads over. I move the mattress into the hallway out of the way and take the bed frame apart moving it. Sweeping, mopping, and dusting the room so it's nice and clean. I open the windows for some fresh air and suddenly find myself feeling very emotional about what it will be like to have children of my own.

When Everlee starts to cry, I head back to the living room to check on her, she seems to fall right back asleep, thankfully. She had woken up from the Target delivery guy knocking earlier. Which is perfect timing because that means I can start washing clothes and getting things put away.

Fiona being the super mom she is, ordered a dresser, changing table, and crib. Which I am not putting together but I do slide them into the room where they need to be assembled. I don't think I realized how much babies need until I was surrounded by a million bags and boxes today. Trying to decide where to even start is a process in itself.

Fiona: Hey, the Target order should have been delivered.

Lucy: Yeah it's here. There is so much.

Fiona: Babies need a lot of stuff.

Lucy: I see that. I am washing the clothes now. I cleaned the room after I emptied it. Penny will be here later to help.

Fiona: I am going into a meeting then I am going to come help tonight.

Fiona: Are you sure about quitting your job?

Lucy: I wanted to anyway, I want to do telehealth, this was just the shove I needed.

Fiona: Ok if you are sure. I will see you later. Call me if you need help.

Luke calls and checks in around noon and tells me he will be home around five. I get all the clothes washed and folded so when the dresser is assembled we can put them away. I make a diaper cart in the living room so Luke has the essentials close by if he needs them. I get all the bottles washed and put away and I store the formula in the same cabinet for easy bottle making.

Penny arrives at 2:30 and I am so grateful.

“Hi! Thanks for coming!” I tell her.

“No problem, so fill me in on what’s going on,” Penny says.

“Well this is Everlee, according to her mother, she was born on April twentieth,” I say before telling her everything else I know.

“Well let’s start getting the furniture together, grab the swing first so we can set it up, in case she cries. Then you can tell me about you quitting your job to help when Luke can easily afford a nanny.” Penny tells me.

That is what we do, we put her in her mamaroo bouncy thing Fiona bought, once she starts fussing, and we set up all of the furniture. Two hours later, the room has a crib, dresser, and changing table. We put the clothes away and organize the room. We also shove the spare bed into Luke’s office, it’s not like he uses it much anyway.

By the time Luke and Blake get here the entire house is organized, clean, and ready for a baby.

“Thank you both so much, you didn’t have to do all of it,” Luke says.

“Well, Penny was motivated, which motivated me, body doubling at its finest. How did it go today?” I ask.

“Not well, they are sending me information for a lawyer, but management is pissed. I was already being told to settle down with the ladies in the tabloids, and now in the middle of playoffs a baby was dropped off, it’s just not a good look.” Luke tells me, exhaustion filling his voice.

“I am sorry, we will figure it out. I promise.” I give him a hug.

“Lucy let’s head out, Penny is going to help until Fiona and Zane come over,” Blake says.

“I will be back tomorrow by noon so you can get to the arena. Penny will take over so I can go to the game. Then Celisa is doing the night shift tomorrow. I know you will be

here, but with practice and being a new dad we wanted to be sure you have all the support you need.” I tell him.

“Thank you so much I am so grateful,” Luke says, moving to pick up Everlee when she starts to cry but Penny already has her, rocking her quietly in the corner of the room.

“She will be a big help,” I say before turning to leave.

When Blake and I get into our condo, I head straight for the couch exhausted. Setting up all the furniture and the emotions of the past twenty-four hours have me wanting to go right to sleep. I feel like crying, just overwhelmed with feelings so I just stay on the couch.

I wake up to Blake carrying me to our bed, but immediately fall asleep again when my head hits the pillow.

I woke up to my first alarm that I had set that I labeled ‘playoff luck time’. Reading it makes me chuckle a little. I slide over to Blake, trailing kisses down his hip, slowly moving lower, reaching into the opening in his boxers. I pull his cock through the fabric causing Blake to wake up.

“Mmm... good morning princess,” he murmurs.

“Morning handsome,” I say, then put his cock in my mouth.

I take my time taking him inch by inch, while he moans quietly with his eyes closed. I pull back up sucking slightly harder around the tip, making Blake moan my name in response. I continue sucking him, taking him all the way to the back of my throat, letting him control the speed with his hand in my hair holding my head. I reach over and cup his balls slowly squeezing in perfect time with how he is moving my head. I feel him tense before he finally comes spilling his release down my throat.

While he reaches down adjusting himself I climb back up and get comfy against his side falling back asleep.

My alarm wakes me up at nine rolling over to see Blake isn’t in bed, but I see a note.

“

*"Went to get coffee, be back soon,
love you, princess"*

I smile hopping in a quick shower, I feel refreshed and ready for today. I am on baby duty for a few hours between Luke leaving and Penny arriving. I make a bagel and grab my book, getting some pages in before Blake gets back.

"Honey I am home!" Blake yells out coming through the door.

"Always so corny," I laugh getting up to hug him.

"Stay, I have some time to cuddle my girl before I leave," he tells me while bringing our coffees to the couch.

He sits down lifting my legs and setting them across his lap, then hands me my drink.

"What are you reading?" he asks.

"A spicy romance between a billionaire and a small town bakery owner, their love is true and the sex is kinky, my favorite," I tell him with a wink.

"Well I can show you kinky if you want?" he reaches for my coffee, setting it on the table.

I set my book on the table beside the couch and stare at Blake waiting for his next move. He reaches over, sliding my pants and underwear down, I lift up to make it easier. He turns his body angling so my legs are straddling him.

Sliding a finger through my arousal before he inserts it and starts thrusting in and out. He watches me as he slides a second finger in and I moan. The thrusts getting quicker I am about to come with the way his palm is applying the perfect friction on my clit.

"Yes Blake" I moan.

Then he stops, pulling out both fingers. He uses his thumb to rub through my wet slit and getting it wet. Before moving it to my other hole pressing lightly against it then rubbing in a small circle. My breath hitches in my throat realizing what he is about to do. I have never done this before.

“Breathe. I need you to relax so this is enjoyable,” he tells me softly.

“I am nervous,” I tell him.

“Just breathe, it might hurt a little but it will feel good in the end, ok?” he says.

I nod. Then he continues slowly pressing in, then he moves his other hand and starts rubbing my clit. It stings as he slides it in slowly moving his thumb in and out.

“Breathe,” he says again.

Once it is in completely he stays still for a moment letting me adjust, then he starts moving again slowly, the other hand playing with my clit. It all feels incredible and weird.

“Fuck Blake... Yes...” I moan loudly, climaxing. The stimulation in both areas just sent me over the edge, quickly.

“Well it wasn’t as kinky as your book but it was something new for you,” he says, kissing me and then getting up to wash his hands.

“Bondage, car sex, anal play, masturbating in the car while you drive, I feel like we are slowly getting kinkier,” I laugh getting up to clean up and get ready to head to Luke’s. Blake walks with me up to Luke’s deciding to just leave from there.

“I will see you at the game right?” Blake says hugging me.

“Yes babe, I will be there with bells on, well not bells but your jersey,” I tell him.

“Are you Ubering?” he asks.

“No, Celisa is picking me up so I can ride home with you,” I say.

“I love you, every midnight, forever,” Blake tells me kissing me.

“Mmm... keep that up I won’t let you leave, I love you too hockey boy. Go win for me.” I tell him.

Shortly after Blake leaves, Luke is out the door and it's just me and baby E. We hang out until Penny arrives and I have to get ready for the game.

Chapter Thirty-Four

BLAKE

One Month Later

“We won! We are heading to the Stanley Cup championships” I tell Lucy when I call her from the plane.

“I am so proud baby! Get home safe! I love you so much, Blake!” She tells me and I smile.

“Every midnight, forever. Bye, babe.” I hang up and take a seat by Luke.

When I sit down he quickly exits his texts being weird but I smile seeing Everlee’s picture as his background.

“We did it, man. We are heading to the cup!” I say.

“Hell yeah!” he tells me, fist bumping me.

“How is Everlee?” I ask

“Good, she is getting big,” Luke tells me.

“She is so cute,” I tell him.

“So what’s on your mind? It’s not my daughter. I assume it’s my sister.” he asks

“I just wanted to ask you something,” I say before he cuts me off.

“Mom and Dad are still on their year long world tour so I will just tell you yes. You have our blessing to marry her.” Luke says with a smile shaking his head.

“How did you know?” I ask.

“We just won our place in the championship and you still look terrified. There was only one question you could ask.” He says.

Being my best friend he reads me easier than most.

“I wish your parents were here. I want to ask your Dad.” I say.

“Well they love you, they love you both together. He would say yes, But call him if that helps you feel better.” He mentions.

“Have you told them about Everlee?” I ask

“No, their trip has one month left, I don’t need them to rush home. I am already going to have to beg them not to leave early for the Stanley Cup.” Luke says.

“I would do it soon! If I were you, they are going to want to support you and their new grandchild.” I tell him. Then slide my headphones out listening to whatever new playlist Lucy added to my phone.

I shoot off a text to Emerson before we take off.

Blake: Got time to look at some rings.

Emerson: For Lucy, Always.

Emerson: I work tomorrow but I can do it the next day. Are you free on Friday?

Blake: Perfect. I am wanting to ask Saturday night. So we can celebrate at family dinner on Sunday? I want this celebration to be separate from the cup so it's better to do it before I think.

Emerson: Good idea. See you Friday? Then Sunday?

Blake: Meet me in Hyde Park at eleven.

Emerson: Perfect. You are buying coffee.

Blake: You are just as bad as her with the caffeine addiction.

Emerson: It's a nurse thing. Congrats on tonight Blake, you deserve this.

I get home around midnight and find Lucy asleep on the couch. I pick her up, moving her to our bed before I go take a shower. Once I come back to bed I pull her close and think about this weekend, and how I finally am going to put a ring on her finger. I already know the perfect proposal, nothing too over the top, but still unique and special.

I wake up to Lucy's mouth on my cock.

"Good morning princess, it's not a game day," I joke.

"You won for me, so I am giving you your prize," she says before putting her lips back around my cock.

I groan and lace my fingers into her hair, taking over the speed and depth of each thrust into her mouth. This girl has no gag reflex and it is a fucking delight. She takes my whole length without choking, but her eyes do water a little. She cups my balls and gives them a light squeeze making me moan. Her eyes light up knowing she is pleasing me.

"Such a good girl," I growl as she squeezes again.

"Look up at me baby, I want to see your face as I shoot my come down your throat and watch you swallow," I say softly.

She begins sucking harder so I start moving her head faster, I feel my cock tense before exploding, it pulses in her mouth as every last drop slides down her throat.

When she's done she moves over sliding off the other side of the bed.

"Where are you going?" I ask.

"To make coffee," she says.

I get up and follow after her reaching over and taking over making the coffee. As she stands smiling.

“You played yesterday, I didn’t. I can make coffee, you need to rest,” she says leaning up to kiss me.

In terms of days off it’s not bad at all. I make sure to get some laundry done. Lucy has done a great job keeping up with the condo, which I know is hard with her ADHD, but she has been taping to-do lists around the house as reminders for herself. I love seeing them everywhere because they are just so Lucy.

“I missed you when I was gone,” I tell her, kissing her hair.

“I missed you too, I also talked to the realtor and he thinks he found us a house. I told him we could probably go see it Sunday,” she tells me.

It’s funny how we are both looking to move forward in our relationship in different ways. The next week is going to be filled with a proposal, house shopping, and the Stanley Cup championships. I am pumped! But I am most excited to ask Lucy to marry me.

I have been waiting for the right time. Right before the cup is perfect, we are settled in living together and I don’t want the proposal overshadowed by the Cup or worse her thinking I only proposed because of the championships. I want to finish this season with my woman on my arm because win or lose on the ice I still won the biggest prize in life, Lucy.



“Emerson, grab your coffee, and let’s go!” I tell her as she is texting on her phone.

“Sorry, okay let’s go. I am ready!” She says.

“Finally,” I say as we walk out of the coffee shop down the street to the jewelry store.

When we walk in we find the ring section and I am overwhelmed and very out of my element.

“Don’t pick something ugly,” she says.

“Damn it, how’d you know my plan,” I say, rolling my eyes and laughing.

I look at a few different cases of rings before a salesperson comes over to help.

“We are looking for an engagement ring for my best friend, his girl,” Emerson says.

“Ok tell me what you are looking for. Tell me about her. Then we will narrow it down.” the lady tells us.

“Lucy is amazing. She is kind and always helps others. She is the person who will go out of her way to bring you happiness. I broke her heart when we were kids and I know I will spend every day for the rest of our lives proving to her I am worthy of her love. She also doesn’t like flashy, she likes simple and elegant.” I say.

“How sweet,” Emerson says smiling.

I laugh too as the lady starts looking at the cases. I start looking at the cases too.

“That’s the ring.” I confidently announce.

“Oh, Blake, it’s perfect,” Emerson says.

The lady opens the case pulling out a 2-carat oval diamond with a thin gold band surrounded by tiny diamonds.

“Perfect choice. Would you like to place the ring on hold or purchase it today?” she asks.

“Today, thank you.” I pull out my card and make the most important purchase of my entire life, so far.

When we leave I tell Emerson my plan and hug her goodbye thanking her for coming with me.

I pull into the parking garage of the condo, and I message the group chat that has everyone but Lucy telling everyone the plan and what I need help with. Once everyone is clear on the plan I head upstairs. Nervous and anxious for the next twenty four hours.

Lucy is at Luke’s visiting Everlee, giving me ample time to hide the ring box in a safe place. Then pulling out my phone I

make the most terrifying phone call of my life. Lucy's parents love me but that was before I was asking to marry their daughter.

"Hello," Mr. Campbell says.

"Hey Mr. Campbell, it's Blake. How are you?"

"Good, son, How have you been feeling? Congratulations on making it to the championships. We are proud of you," he says.

"Hi, Blake. We are so proud. Your parents would be so happy to see you making your dreams come true." Mrs. Campbell yells in the background.

"Thank you so much. I am lucky to have you both cheering me on. How's the trip going?" I ask nervously.

"Blake honey, you didn't call to ask about our trip. What's up?" Mrs. Campbell asks.

"I um.. Want to ask your permission to ask Lucy to marry me? I promise to love and take care of her for the rest of our lives. Will you give us your blessing?" I ask, my stomach is in my throat waiting for their response.

"Of course, you have our blessing, we already consider you our son." Mrs. Campbell says and I start to tear up.

"We love you, Blake. Yes, we give you our blessing, I love you, son, and I am so proud of how far you have come since college." Mr. Campbell says and the tears fall.

"I love you both too. Thank you." I say sniffing.

After we hang up I think about my parents and all the things they are missing. I think about how amazing Lucy's parents have been to me over the years. I am so blessed to have had them supporting me every step of my career.

Fiona: Mom and Dad called, we all love you and are glad to have you officially join our family.

Luke: Everlee and I will be happy to have you officially in the fam. Love you, bro.

Blake: Thank you both. Love you guys.

Chapter Thirty-Five

LUCY

Saturday mornings are my favorite. There is a little market within walking distance from the condo, and I love grabbing a coffee and window shopping. Blake is at the arena so Emerson came with me. I am looking around hoping to find something cute I can get Blake as a pre housewarming gift. I notice a super cute booth with coasters for sale and I grab a set of four that are Tampa Thunder themed. It's a subtle nod to the team and also something that will actually be used.

“Hey, do you have time to get a manicure? My cuticles are horrible and I could use a little self care.” Emerson asks.

I check my phone to see if Blake has texted saying he was heading home but he hasn't yet.

“Yeah, I have time,” I say.

“Perfect, we can stop at the place by your condo and see if they can squeeze us in,” Emerson suggests.

“Sounds good,” I say sipping my coffee thinking about if I should buy more cute cups from the booth with the glass cups I shopped at last time I was here.

“Is it too much self care if I treat myself to a haircut and blowout this week?” Emerson asks.

“Girl no! You deserve it! Will Blake kill me if I bring home another glass cup?” I laugh.

“Probably, but honestly you do you girl,” she says.

“I grab two mugs with lightning bolts in the Tampa Thunder colors. I am obsessed.” I say.

I pay then we walk over to the nail salon. Luckily they happened to have an opening. Emerson was right, we needed this, I haven't gotten a manicure in forever. I picked a gorgeous midnight blue, it matches the blue in the Thunder jerseys as a subtle hint to Blake during Stanley Cup week. Emerson got a gorgeous deep purple that looks so regal.

After nails, we stop for salads at a local cafe and she catches me up on all the ER gossip. I do miss my coworkers and all the excitement of those days, but getting this time with Everlee and being able to help Luke out when Penny can't is amazing. Penny got out of school for the summer a week ago so she has basically taken over most of the days. She is an angel on earth.

“So you and Celisa?” I ask.

“We are just talking, nothing official happening at the moment,” she says.

“You have been talking since Thanksgiving and it is now June. When are you both planning to make things official? Next Christmas?” I ask her jokingly.

“Honestly I am nervous to bring it up,” she says softly.

“Once we get through the Cup, take her out and talk to her. I know she's going crazy working with the team right now.” I tell her with a smile.

We finish with our salads and then go our separate ways for the day. She seems a little off today, I need to check in with her tomorrow and see if she wants to get together on her next day off. Or maybe I should talk to Celisa for her, that might make things worse though.

I wonder if she is being weird because Celisa is my cousin and Emerson doesn't want to upset me. I need to clarify that she is my best friend and can tell me anything when I see her again. I am so lost in my thoughts as I walk into the house, that when Blake says Hi I jump.

“Sorry babe, I thought you heard or saw me,” he says.

“I was just in my own head,” I tell him. Sometimes I disassociate and I won’t hear people talking right to me when I am looking at them.

“No worries, how was your day?” he asks

I tell him about the market and show him my two purchases. He actually loves them both, and their subtle nod to the team. I also tell him about Emerson being weird.

“How was she weird?” he asks.

“I can’t tell you, but we are best friends. I can tell when there is a weird vibe in the air.” I say.

“Well maybe it’s an off day, I am sure things are fine. Call her tomorrow and see how she’s doing.” He offers as advice.

“Yeah, I will do that,” I say then go kiss him.

“Your nails are cute. Nice color babe,” he says and kisses my hand.

I go sit on the couch and he follows sitting on the other side stretching out.

“So don’t make fun of me,” he says.

“For what?” I ask confused.

“There is supposed to be a meteor shower tonight around midnight, I was wondering if you would get up and watch it with me? I know it’s lame but they don’t happen often and I have never gotten to see one,” he says so sweetly, like he’s nervous.

“Yeah of course, wake me up and I will go up with you,” I tell him.

“Thanks,” he says.

Blake falls asleep on the couch so I decide to do some reading and apply for some telehealth positions. I wake him up around eight and we order pizza, eating now so we can head to bed and actually wake up for this meteor shower.



“Hey babe, wake up, it’s time to head to the roof,” Blake says getting dressed.

“I would put on actual clothes, in case other people have the same idea.” He advises.

“Right, will you just throw me something to put on?” I ask.

“Here it’s a dress that’s easy to throw on,” he says.

“I was hoping for comfy pants, but this works.” I laugh.

I put on the dress and put on my strappy sandals by the door. It’s not until we are on the elevator almost to the roof when I realize Blake is brushing my hair with his fingers.

“Is something in my hair?” I ask.

“No sorry I was just playing with it,” he says.

“Okay?” I say turning towards him.

“Wait, why are you dressed nicely?” I ask, realizing he is in black slacks and a nice short sleeve button-up.

“It was what I had set out for the house tour tomorrow,” he tells me.

I don’t have a chance to respond before the elevator dings to indicate we are on the roof. No one is up here, thankfully. It’s dark as we walk over to the center roof area. Blake subtly checks his watch.

Suddenly twinkle lights turn on and there are dark blue flower petals everywhere.

“What the…” I say before Blake drops to one knee and I am speechless.

“Here is tonight’s midnight truth, almost three years ago I made the biggest mistake of my life. I hurt you by being selfish and careless. Now that I have got you back I plan to spend the rest of my life proving to you how much you mean to me.” he pulls out a ring, the perfect ring.

“So Lucy with all of your family’s blessings I ask you, will you do me the honor of becoming my wife? Spend every

midnight, forever with my last name?” holding out the ring he smiles at me.

“YES! YES! Of course,” I say then he slips the ring on my finger.

“I love you princess,” he says then kisses me.

“I love you too,” I say against his lips.

Suddenly there are a bunch of voices and cheering, and I see all my family and friends. My parents are on Facetime on Fiona’s phone, Emerson is here, Imogen is on Zane’s phone, and Penny is holding Everlee with Hadley standing beside her.

“Now you know why I was acting weird,” Emerson says,

“Thank you for making sure my nails were done.” I laugh.

“Of course, also I want you to know he picked that ring himself. He knew immediately what you would want. I was very impressed.” she says.

“I am very lucky,” I say smiling at Blake who is talking to Luke.

“No you are both lucky you both bring out the best in each other,” she tells me.

We say our thank you and goodbyes, letting everyone know we will see them at family dinner. Then we head home and are barely in the door before clothes are flying off. Both of us are desperate to be closer to each other.

Blake sets me on the bed and I slide off my panties. My dress is somewhere on the living room floor. I watch Blake quickly strip his clothes off. I hold up my hand looking at my ring. He watches me with a smile as I look at the ring in the light. I smile at him, overwhelmed with how in love I am with him in this very moment.

“You going to fuck your fiancée or just stand there staring?” I wink at him.

He pulls me by the ankles to the edge of the bed where he is standing. He holds his cock rubbing it slowly up and down

at my entrance. Then quickly thrusts it in and I moan, loudly.

“Blake please, fuck, it feels so good,” I say with my left hand resting on my chest. He looks at the ring and starts fucking me in a way that is almost primal. Like he is claiming me for life right here in this bed. It feels incredible as he fucks me hard and deep.

“My wife. My pussy. My everything.” he growls as he thrusts himself in using one of his hands to rub my clit in soft circles.

“Come for me princess,” he moans.

“Please Blake, I am so close,” I murmured.

He adds more pressure to my clit and I orgasm my pussy pulsating around his cock. He comes shortly after with my name on his lips.

I drift to sleep thinking of how amazing forever sounds with this man.

Chapter Thirty-Six

BLAKE

It has been a week since the proposal and I still feel like I am living in a dream. We are about to go into our fourth game, the second at home, the series is currently two to one. We need the win tonight to tie things up. We are all exhausted from busting our asses on the ice and the travel involved with playing the first two games away. We lost both away games, but we won our home game. So that hopefully means good things for tonight's game.

Lucy started my day out with an amazing blowjob, can't break the streak now home games before she had an interview for a telehealth position. I didn't get to see her before I left, but hopefully, she will text me an update on how it went soon. If not, I will see her tonight. We are also waiting to hear if our offer was accepted on the house Lucy found.

She fell in love with it the minute we pulled up and I would pay whatever they asked to see her eyes light up like that every day. It has five bedrooms, a library with built-in shelves, a huge window, and even a sliding ladder for the bookcase, it has a backyard with a pool, and most importantly it's in Fiona's neighborhood so we will still be close to them.

Luke has been super weird lately, I know finding out he is now a single dad has rocked him to his core but I am worried. Once the championships are over I want to try and help Luke more. Maybe just give him someone to vent to.

It is almost game time, we are dressed, and waiting for our warmup time on the ice.

Lucy: I got the job!

Blake: I was about to put my phone away, I am so proud of you. You are going to do amazing.

Lucy: Also our offer was accepted!

Blake: Are you kidding? That is amazing! I will talk to you tonight, see you out there.

I played my best game the entire season, not only securing us the win but I also scored a hat trick. My first one in my professional career, seeing Lucy going crazy cheering, and hitting the glass fills me with so much pride. Having my fiancée, not only my fiancée, but my absolute best friend, be here on such a big night in my career.

Once we are home I shower and Lucy helps me pack to leave in the morning. We are heading to Colorado again for game five. We will be back in two days but flying in very late. Then in four days is game six at home. We are so close to winning the whole thing!

Tonight's celebration looks a little different, it's packing and planning paint colors for the new house. We climb into bed and instead of passionate sex, we are talking about wedding dates before we fall asleep.

I do wake up to an amazing blow job before I have to head out to the arena to catch the team plane. Lucy is already asleep again by the time I go to leave. I snapped a picture of her with her hair fanned out across the pillows with her left hand sitting so perfectly on my pillow next to her. It is the perfect engagement announcement, she looks so peaceful and beautiful.

I make the image black and white and post it with the caption "Introducing the future Mrs. Blake Stuntz".

I haven't even started my SUV by the time Luke is texting me.

Luke: SIMP

Blake: Fuck off

Zane: The post was nice. Celisa may kill you for fucking up her perfect feed she created all of us for the playoffs though.

Blake: I don't care

When I pull in and park at the arena I get another text notification

Celisa: I know you are in love and shit but I made a perfect content posting plan and you just fucked it up.

Blake: Sorry not sorry.

Celisa: You owe me two extra social media posts for the team page.

Blake: Worth it.

Getting on the plane, I start to second guess my choice to post the picture until my phone vibrates with an incoming text from Lucy. It is a picture of her naked holding my jersey to perfectly block her breasts and pussy. I quickly close the picture, before calling her.

“Babe, you have to warn me, Luke could have been beside me,” I say.

“I wanted you to know how much I appreciate your post,” she giggles softly.

“I am now hard on the plane and there’s nothing I can do about it,” I put my jacket on my lap.

“Oops. I love you, have a safe flight,” she says then hangs up.



We won our game two days ago, tonight is game six, if we win then we win the championship. If we lose we fly back to Colorado for game seven. I got my good luck blow job, I ate Lucy out on the counter, desperate to create as much good juju as I can. I just want to be with my fiance, we are closing on our house tomorrow, and truthfully. I want to be done for the season so I can focus on the house with Lucy.

Lucy left shortly after our morning extracurriculars, she was going to the home inspection and then the home improvement store to find paint samples she likes. We agreed to spend the money to have it professionally painted. We are also going to get all new furniture, something we both are excited to pick out together.

The arena is alive with excitement, we are possibly going to secure the Stanley Cup tonight. I head straight to the trainers to get checked out so I can be cleared for the game. Then I go eat some lunch with a few teammates before watching the tape of our last game to prepare. I don't get much done before Celisa pulls me away for media creation. I am stuck with her for over an hour. By the time we are done, I have to go get ready for warmups.

“We did it boys, this was all we talked about in college, winning the Stanley Cup together,” Zane says.

“Let's secure the Cup first, but I agree we are so close to our dreams coming true.” I agree.

“Fuck yeah. Let's win this bitch!” Luke chants.

“Keep the penalties to a minimum, we need all of us on the ice together,” I say.

Then we head out for warm-ups, each of us having our own versions of the glass tap. It's like we channel our family's love and support through the glass before each game. Lucy looks gorgeous with cute braids and my number painted on her cheek. Like Fiona used to do for Zane in college.

By the third period, we are one to one and both teams are running on fumes. I push forward spotting Luke coming up the side of the ice and I pass the puck he gets it lining up and shooting. The buzzer goes off and we are jumping all over him. The game isn't over but we needed that point to help get us ahead.

One of their players is talking shit with Luke and suddenly fists are flying and gloves are off. Zane and I head over to break it up. When the guy pushes Luke to the ice after his helmet has already fallen off, all control is gone and I slam him down ripping my gloves off and punching as the refs pull us apart. My helmet falls to the ice and the asshole is able to land a final punch to my cheek.

Luke and I both get penalties, on the way to the sin bin, I nod to Lucy so she knows I am ok. I see Luke do the same to Fiona and Lucy so they know their brother is okay.

“Want to talk about what the fuck that was?” I ask, my eyes on the ice.

“You are here too, you know,” he replies.

“Because he pushed you to the ice while your helmet was off,” I defend.

“Well he talked shit about Penny, he saw her with our family group in my number and tried to use her to get under my skin,” he says.

“Well, obviously it worked,” I say.

“Whatever. Fuck him.” He replies, focusing back on the game.

The buzzer sounds announcing we won! We might have spent the last bit of the period in the sin bin, but I got an assist and Luke got a goal. Tampa Thunder are Stanley Cup champions! We all congratulate each other, they give us hats and shirts. We take tons of pictures with the cup and our team. Confetti is flying, people are crying and honestly, my eyes are definitely watering too.

I see Lucy on her way to me and I catch her when she jumps into my arms. I take the hat off my head flipping it

backwards on her head and kissing her. She is crying and kissing me in between telling me how proud she is of me. This is one of the top moments of my life.

After what feels like hours we finally get home. Walking in the door I start pulling off my clothes immediately.

“Strip then climb on the bed on all fours,” I command then spank Lucy’s ass.

I follow her into the bedroom, she is naked, hair in braids, ass in the air.

“I am going to fuck you so hard my number is going to rub off your face,” I tell her.

Climbing onto the bed, I grab my cock, guiding it into her pussy. With one hand on her hip, I thrust hard and fast. Listening as she moans when I use my other hand to pull lightly on her braids. I push her head cheek with the ‘13’ on it into the pillow softly and fuck her harder and faster. By the time we both come, there is barely any paint on the cheek and she’s looking back at me with a satisfied smile on her face.

“Let’s clean up then I want to just hold you and soak in how amazing every part of this day was,” I say before we both clean up and get ready for bed. Lucy cuddles up onto my side and I hold her.

“I love you, Blake,” she says sleepily.

“Every midnight, forever,” I reply before we both let sleep pull us in.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

LUCY

It has been a week since we closed on our house, the walls are freshly painted and our new furniture has been moved in. We are slowly moving the rest of our stuff over but we are officially living here as of yesterday. To celebrate the house, engagement, and the championship we are hosting a barbeque with our inner circle. I am really excited because Zane and Fiona always host and it's fun to get to start splitting that responsibility with them.

I go around making sure everything is toddler proof for Hadley including that the pool gate is up and locked. I set up a pack-and-play in one of my spare rooms so that Everlee has a place to nap if needed. Blake starts getting the food started so it is ready for everyone's arrival.

"I am really happy," I tell Blake as he gets something from the fridge.

"Me too," he replies then walks over spreading my legs to stand between them then kissing me.

"I am really happy now," I murmur against his lips, wrapping my legs around him and tangling my fingers in his hair.

"You know we do have some time before people arrive," he tells me with a wink.

I go to slide down off the counter. But Blake picks me up carrying me to my library where I have a very cute couch in front of my bay window.

“Clothes off, princess,” he growls.

I do just as he says stripping down in the middle of the room, this is one of my fantasies fucking in my library in front of my big window, with the slim chance someone could see in. Like the chances are insanely small but I get a little excited at the risk.

Once we are naked he surprises me by backing me up to the ladder on the bookcase.

“Face me, but hold on with one hand,” he tells me, I am confused but I do it.

He drops to his knees, putting one of my legs over his shoulder, then moves his mouth to my pussy. I can see why I needed to hold on, for balance, the ladder is locked in place but I am only on one leg. As he eats me out I moan arching my back and moving my hand to the back of his head holding him closer.

“Right there. Fuck, Blake. Yes.” I moan orgasming with his mouth still sucking my clit.

“Was that your dream come true my little bookworm?” he asks me.

“Yes,” I answer breathlessly.

Then he moves me to the couch, bending me over the armrest, giving me no warning when he slams into me from behind. He pulls my hair slightly lifting my head back towards him while he thrusts repeatedly, the friction of the couch on my clit, feels incredible. We are both getting close, I can tell by our shallow breaths and the pulsing of his cock and my pussy.

“Yes princess, you take me so well,” he moans between movements.

“My wife, my house, my everything,” he says climaxing then reaching around he lightly rubs my clit, sending me into an orgasm immediately after.

He begins to pepper kisses from my shoulder down my back and I moan lightly.

“We need to clean up now babe, people will be here soon,” he tells me softly.

Heading back into our bedroom with our clothes in our hands, I stop and admire the sign Blake had made as a housewarming gift. In his handwriting, it says ‘Every Midnight, Forever’. I cried when I walked in and saw it for the first time. It was the perfect decoration for our room, so even when he is at an away game I am reminded of the love we have for each other.

I get dressed thinking about the last nine months and how lucky we are that we got a second chance at love. I think about Wyatt for a moment and all the love he gave me while I figured myself out. I ran into him recently and he is happy in a relationship with someone who really loves him. And truthfully, I could not be more elated for him, he deserves that. Blake and I finding our way back to each other will always be a story full of heartbreak, miscommunication, friendship, and love. A true testament to ‘what’s meant to be will always find a way’.

I stop getting tangled in my thoughts, focusing on finishing and getting ready. By the time I walk back into the kitchen Blake is playing my Taylor playlist singing along to *Labyrinth* and I just smile and watch. Thinking about all the times I hoped this would be my future, an amazing man, singing Taylor Swift, cooking in our house, for our closest friends and family. When he sees me he pulls me against him swaying slightly to the music, his arms wrapped around me and his chin resting on my head. The doorbell rings and he puts his thumb on my chin lifting it to kiss me before I walk away to let everyone in.

We give everyone a tour of the house, I make sure to mention every little detail as we go because I love every single inch of our new home.

“I love it, it’s a little big for just the two of you,” Fiona says with a wink.

“Don’t worry after the wedding I plan to stay very busy getting you a niece or nephew,” I say with a laugh.

“That is disgusting, I didn’t need to know that,” Luke says from behind us and we all break out in laughter.

We all head to the outside seating area, I notice Penny and Luke seem weird like they are fighting maybe, but I really don’t want to pry. I am sure they are adjusting to being around each other more often since Luke is home more now but Penny is still helping with Everlee. Celisa walks over a glass of wine for Emerson before sitting beside her with a hand on her knee. All of us notice but say nothing, waiting for them to at some point tell us what is officially going on there.

Dinner is done and we all take our seats at the dinner table. Blake did a great job cooking today. About halfway through dinner, there is a knock on the door, and I see Mateo standing with a smile.

“Hi! Come in, what are you doing here?” I say then lead him to the dining room. Everyone jumping up to greet him and say hello. Blake gets him a plate and he has a seat in the open chair by Charlie. There is definitely tension between them when he sits down, strange.

“So Mateo, what brings you here?” Blake says.

“I asked everyone to hold off until tomorrow because I needed to tell you guys myself,” Mateo says.

“Spit it out,” Luke says.

“I AM OFFICIALLY APART OF THE TAMPA THUNDER!” he yells.

The room breaks into absolute chaos, congratulations and a million questions about when, how, and where he is living, fly around. Once the chaos of that settles we all eat dinner and catch up on our lives. Hadley lays down to sleep in the spare room, and we adults make drinks and go sit in the living room.

When the doorbell rings again, we all look around confused because literally everyone in our friend group is here except Imogen and there is no way she is here.

“My bad I invited Wilson over for drinks he didn’t have anyone to celebrate with in town,” Blake says then heads for

the door.

He has hung out with us a few times so it's not really a big deal. We love including people who need some family in town. After he greets everyone, he takes a seat next to Charlie and bumps his knee against hers with a smile and she smiles.

"Do not start matching making Luc," Blake whispers in my ear.

"They are so cute, and she's finally over her crush on Luke," I say back quietly.

"Did you look at Mateo though?" Blake nods to Mateo who is currently across the room glaring at him with his hands balled into fists as Charlie and Carter talk.

"Interesting," I say taking it all in, I look over and see everyone else doing the same thing as us. Trying to figure out the dynamics between Charlie and Mateo and Charlie and Carter. I know she has been dating but now that I think about it I am not sure who it was. But I would be willing to bet those dates would line up with days the team is in town.

"So how is Everlee, Luke?" I ask, trying to dissipate some of the tension in the room.

"She is doing good, the doctor gave her a clear checkup and said she is on track developmentally," Luke replies.

"She smiles whenever Luke talks to her it is so sweet," Penny follows up.

Those two are obviously fighting. You can see the side glances and intentional movements to keep space between them as they take turns holding the baby. Mateo does something that surprises everyone.

"Penny on your day off do you want to maybe grab lunch together?" Mateo asks, then looks at Charlie quickly, obviously trying to get a reaction. But we get a reaction that no one could have prepared for.

Luke stands up handing the baby to Penny, then steps in front of her eyes darkening, hands tight in fists.

"That's my fucking wife," Luke spits voice full of anger.

All eyes are on Penny and Luke, no one knows what to say.

“It’s true,” she says.

And the room goes so quiet that you could hear a pin drop.

Epilogue

LUCY

One Year Later

I am full of nerves as I stand in the box with all of our family and friends watching the Tampa Thunder compete for the Stanley Cup. Last year's win meant so much but this year Blake is captain. I am so proud of him for leading his team to another championship, win or lose. This year is extra special because Rodriguez was finally able to transfer in. They can win again together like the young college kids they once were. They are all smiling ear to ear as they enter the ice together.

They secure the win in overtime. I am sure they are exhausted since it's almost midnight. But I have a present to give Blake when we head out to congratulate them. I stand off to the edge of the ice waiting for him to spot me. As he skates toward me I hold up a sign I made 'We're pregnant! Hope this is the best midnight truth yet!'

He skates even faster with tears in his eyes and drops a hand to my belly.

"I'm going to be a dad" he yells before kissing me senseless. I giggle against his lips.

Our family and friends are surrounding us now. Everyone is crying and offering congratulations. It's hard to imagine four years ago this was a dream, two years ago a giant clusterfuck, and now it's the life of my dreams.

"This is the happiest moment of my life. I thought winning the cup was the best thing to happen to me next to marrying

you. But this. This is an entirely different happiness” he says with tears in his eyes.

“Great, now I am crying. These emotions are crazy.” I told him.

“How far along are you? How long have you known?” he asks rapid fire.

“I am 8 weeks and I found out 2 weeks ago but I wanted to wait until after the championship was over to keep your head in the game,” I tell him with tears in my eyes.

“I love you princess”

“I love you too, hockey boy. Now take me to get some wings this mama is starving” I chuckle grabbing his hand.

With my husband’s hand in mine, we head home together as parents to be. I smile to myself as I remember how far we have come. All the things we worked through to be together. I have never been happier to have gotten drunk and spilled all my feelings on a vacation in my life. Without that, we never would have gotten our second chance.

We now have two weeks off to have a vacation and relax before I have to go back to work. Things are going well being a telehealth nurse. I love it, it’s not as busy as the ER, and honestly, that’s fine with me. I know Blake will offer to let me quit my job but I don’t think I am quite ready to give up nursing completely just yet. But I am excited to enter parenthood with the man of my dreams.

Interested to find out about how Luke goes from the nation’s top hockey bachelor to single dad in a marriage of convenience in less than a week?

Read book three in the Tampa Thunder series to find out.

Acknowledgments

Huge shoutout to my husband for supporting me during this journey! For listening to me talk out issues with my plot or dialogue.

To my best friends Lindsey and Natalie who have been by my side since I started this. I wouldn't be here without their support. Whether it's reading sections to help with the flow or telling everyone we meet about my book and being my number one fans, they are always there. I am very lucky to have them.

To my editor who has sent a million unhinged voice memos on Instagram as we worked through this book together. I am eternally grateful for you! I hope you get a McDonald's coke to celebrate!

To my beta and alpha readers thank you for reading my work before it was final to help me make sure this book is worthy of readers. I love your support and help in this process.

To every reader who takes their time to read my words, thank you! Thank you for reviewing, sharing your edits, and following me on social media. I love you all and I wouldn't be here without any of you.

Also by Mariah Goodwin

Tampa Thunder Series:

Book 1: Fiona and Zane

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