



IF IT'S MEANT

to Be

SKYE VON TRIESSEN

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Skye Von Triessen

OceanofPDF.com

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ISBN: 979-8-837902-43-7

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DEDICATION

To every young female who often feels lost and lonely in a world that can be filled with hatred and you are treated unfairly for expressing who you are or for just being a female. Remember life is a journey and it is your journey to live as you see fit as long as you are happy. Life is too short to be anything but happy. Love yourself above all else.

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

Chapter Nine

Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Twelve

Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Twenty.

Chapter Twenty-One

Chapter Twenty-Two

Chapter Twenty-Three

Chapter Twenty-Four

[Chapter Twenty-Five](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Six](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Seven](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Eight](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Nine](#)

[Chapter Thirty](#)

[Chapter Thirty-One](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Two](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Three](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Four](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Five](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Six](#)

[AFTERWORD](#)

[ABOUT THE AUTHOR](#)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my dearest friends who have listened to me for years expressing my desire to write a book. You know who you are. I can't thank you enough for always encouraging me to do what I have always believed I was born to do.

To my amazing Editor D. Krieger who received what I would now call a disaster of a manuscript. You didn't run away from the challenge and guided me on an editing journey that has taught me so much about the nuisances of the craft. As I often told you that the writing seemed so much easier than the edits. But you made it fun with your sense of humor and your constant motivation. A BIG thank you!!

To you the reader. I want to thank all of you who will read my books. I can't thank you enough for taking a chance with me and I sincerely hope that my stories bring you some level of comfort in one way or another. For those of you are like me, who often read books for an escape, a moment of peace where you can just get lost in the story of a good book. I hope my books can be that escape for you.

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Chapter One

The hospital nursing station buzzed with chatter. Many doctors and nurses had assembled to meet the new CEO and Chief of Surgery who would be taking over from their disgraced former Chief of Surgery Mike Bheatti. He was fired for misappropriating hospital funds and fraud. Anxiety and tension filled the air. The staff had no idea who would be taking over, whether it was male, female, or what experience they would bring to the table. Alexandra stood silently at the back of the crowd, no one noticing her as they all chatted amongst themselves. She listened keenly to a particular conversation.

She recognized the two women having the conversation from their staff profiles. Dr. Miranda Hayes served as the head of the Cardiology department. Her caramel skin color, hazel eyes, and naturally curly hair appeared even more beautiful in person than her profile photo. The beautiful smile that took over Miranda's face in her photo stood out the most for Alexandra. Her smile reached her eyes, giving Alexandra the impression that she was someone who smiled a lot.

Her companion, Dr. Blake Westmore, served as the complete opposite in her photo. No smile, just an intense set of crystal-clear blue eyes that had stared back at her with an intensity that she felt from looking at her photo. Despite not smiling in her photo, Blake Westmore was one of the most beautiful women Alexandra had ever seen. Her brunette hair, much longer now than in her photo fell in waves down her back. She appeared even more striking in person and that photo didn't do justice to the beauty of the woman. As head of the General Surgery department, Blake held an immaculate record. Her statistics showed that she was one of the best doctors in her field.

With all that happened at the hospital in recent years, the two women became head of their respective departments at a relatively young age in their field. At thirty-something, they'd proved capable of the roles and—more importantly—trustworthy.

“I hope this new chief is not a douchebag like Bheatti,” Blake said, her voice conveying the disdain she probably felt towards their former boss.

“I’m so happy that fucker is no longer here.” Miranda laughed. “Wonder if it’s a male or female replacement?”

“I hope it’s someone very hot and sexy, preferably female. I definitely can’t deal with working with another beer belly baboon.”

Miranda burst into laughter at the facial expression Blake made describing their former boss.

Interesting. She moved from where she stood and made her way to the stairs. The lobby became very quiet as all eyes trained on Alexandra as she ascended to stand at the top of the stairs, a neutral expression on her face. She knew her makeup would hold up under the scrutiny of the people below her. She certainly spent enough hours on it in anticipation of creating a strong, sculpted person who also seemed approachable. The dress fit her form, contouring to every curve and angle while remaining professional. Alexandra planned the outfit down to the paint on her toenails. She needed to make a statement before she opened her mouth. A statement that *said I’m in charge but I’m not a dictator.* But more than anything she wanted to hide the nerves that she tried to keep from surfacing.

She scanned the crowd, her eyes landing on Blake as she locked eyes with her. It was like a stare down between the two of them as she experienced the same intensity that she had felt from Blake’s photo staring back at her in the real. It gave Alexandra pause. No one ever looked at her with so much intensity. Miranda nudged Blake and it was at that moment that she looked away.

“Hi, beautiful. Do you need some help?” Alexandra turned her attention to Bradley Collins, the head of the Orthopedic

department.

Alexandra looked at him, annoyed with his use of the adjective in this setting. “No, I’m fine,” she politely declined, dismissing him by turning her attention back to the audience before her. “Good morning. Thank you all for being here. My name is Dr. Alexandra Edison, and I will be taking over as CEO and Chief of Surgery at Parkwood Memorial.” At her statement, the atmosphere became so very still that you could hear a pin drop. Alexandra paused, giving her staff time to let the information sink in. It was important that she handled the announcement delicately. She needed her staff onboard with the changes. She also wanted to connect with them on a personal level to alleviate any fear of uncertainty about her motives. That’s why she chose to share her personal history with the hospital in her first address to them.

“Parkwood memorial was the first hospital my grandfather started in Seattle and when he passed away almost a year ago, he left the hospital to me. His dying wish was for me to take control of the hospital and bring it back to its glory days. In the past year the hospital has gone through a decline in revenue and is losing its’ reputation as one of the top research hospitals in the country.” Alexandra paused, needing a moment to gather herself as memories of her grandfather whom she loved dearly made her emotional. She missed him very much. A lump formed in her throat as she tried to hold back tears threatening to spill.

“He might have been biased. But he believed that with my innovative thinking and knowledge of advanced medicine, I’ll be the one to bring the hospital back to its glory days where every medical school graduate wanted to be an intern at Parkwood Memorial. His words not mine.” That last part earned her a round of laughter from her staff.

“I won’t be giving a long speech or listing expectations. You are all adults and know what is expected of you in the profession that you have chosen to be a part of. The only thing I want to add is that this hospital means a lot to me, and my family. I am here to take it back to where it used to be as the best hospital to work at, to learn at, and most importantly, to

be treated at. Thank you for your time. Now go save some lives.”

Sudden clapping came from the edge of the gathering.

“Nice speech, Doc.”

Alexandra turned in the direction where the sexy, sultry voice came from, surprised to see Taylor. She smiled at her fiancée who held a bouquet of white roses under her arm as she made her way towards her. Her eyes roamed over Taylor’s body. Very tight jeans hugged her in all the right places. Her long, brunette hair cascaded in waves over her shoulders. She knew she shouldn’t be ogling her so openly, but she couldn’t help it. Alexandra wasn’t surprised by the gasps and whispers that now filled the audience. Taylor Kavanaugh, an award-winning actress who had won numerous awards, was one of Hollywood’s highest-paid actresses. She was well known around the world and loved by many. Taylor joined Alexandra on the stairs, wrapping her arms around her, hugging her tightly. Taylor released Alexandra from the hug, kissing her lightly on the lips before handing her the roses.

Taylor turned facing the crowd. “She’s not as intimidating as she sounds, and she doesn’t bite. So why are you all looking so tense?” she questioned, resulting in a round of laughter from their audience.

“Baby, what are you doing here? I wasn’t expecting you until this weekend,” Alexandra inquired in a very soft voice. Not as stern as she had sounded introducing herself to her staff as she gently grasp Taylor’s chin to bring her attention to her.

Taylor looked at her and said, “I couldn’t let you go through your first day alone, and besides I really miss you”.

For a moment they forgot their audience as they stared into each others’ eyes. The sexual tension between them grew palpable. Someone in the crowd cleared their throat, reminding them of the fact that they weren’t alone.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I might as well do a formal introduction. This is my fiancée, Taylor. I must apologize for her intrusion,” Alexandra explained with humor in her tone.

Taylor made a wounded sound as she placed her hands over her heart. “Intrusion! I’m deeply hurt, my love,” she responded in a playful tone.

At the sight of their banter, everyone in the lobby laughed.

“Thanks again for your time, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you. I hope I don’t turn out to be a total douchebag like my predecessor, according to the opinions of a few of you,” Alexandra said, looking directly at Blake. At that moment Blake and Miranda must have realized that she overheard their conversation. They looked at each other then back at Alexandra. Miranda’s face registered surprise but Blake’s expression remained inscrutable.

Alexandra left the stairs and headed to her office with Taylor. As soon as the door closed behind them, Taylor grabbed Alexandra by the waist, gently shoving her against the door while kissing her deeply and passionately. Alexandra returned the kiss with as much passion and intensity.

“I miss you so much,” Taylor whispered as she broke the kiss and started trailing kisses down Alexandra’s neck.

“I miss you more.” Alexandra moaned, tilting her head to the side, granting Taylor more access to her neck.

Taylor moved her hands down from Alexandra’s waist and towards the bottom of her tightly-fitted dress. She slipped her hands between her thighs, moving up towards her now aching center. She slowly pushed Alexandra’s underwear to the side, slipping two fingers inside. Alexandra groaned deeply, moving her hips, desiring more friction on that very sensitive nub between her thighs.

“Baby, we have to...” But before Alexandra could say stop, Taylor dropped to her knees in front of her, pulling down her underwear. Taylor looked up at Alexandra with pure carnal desire and love as she placed her lips there. Alexandra closed her eyes, savoring every feeling and sensation.

This was who they were. Their relationship had always been one filled with passion and sexual desire. Like all relationships they had issues, but sex wasn’t one of them, and

Taylor knew exactly how to satisfy her needs. Alexandra started breathing heavily as pleasure consumed her body. She could feel her orgasm building as Taylor slipped two fingers inside and sucked harder on her clit. Alexandra almost screamed, but then remembered that she was at work. Her staff could probably hear her, so she covered her mouth with one hand and held on to Taylor for support as her orgasm ripped through her entire body. Taylor rose to her feet and kissed her passionately.

“Now I can’t return the favor,” Alexandra whispered as she pulled away from Taylor. “I have a staff meeting with my department heads in five minutes”.

“My department heads,” Taylor repeated, looking at Alexandra with concern on her face. “You are already owning them?”

Alexandra sighed softly. “Well, I’m their boss and I’m responsible for them,” she responded, adjusting her dress as she moved towards her desk to fetch her makeup from her bag. Taylor followed, her body language communicating her unhappiness with Alexandra’s response.

“Have you decided how long you will be staying?” Taylor questioned, further voicing her concerns.

“Babe, it’s my first day and I’m not up to date with everything that needs fixing and how long it will take. I thought you were okay with me moving here,” Alexandra responded as she gently rubbed Taylor’s cheeks with the back of her hand.

“I am but, I’m still trying to wrap my head around you being here and me in L.A. So, a time span as to when you would be returning home would help to calm my anxiety,” Taylor admitted in a somber tone.

“I promise I will try to wrap things up here as soon as possible and be back home in no time. I really have to go. Are you going to wait for me? I’m not sure how long this meeting will be.”

Taylor shook her head. “No, I’ll head to the penthouse and get some rest. It was a long flight.’

“Ok. I’ll call you when I get a chance.” Alexandra pulled Taylor into a hug before heading to the door.

Chatter filled the hospital boardroom as the department heads waited nervously for Alexandra. They didn’t know what to expect from her impromptu request to have a meeting now. Blake’s mind wandered elsewhere, failing to pay attention to what Miranda said beside her. Earlier, Miranda quickly performed a Google search on Alexandra. While Miranda did her research, Blake’s eyes fixated on Alexandra and for some strange inexplicable reason, she experienced jealousy of what was happening between Alexandra and Taylor. She was shocked when Alexandra leveled her gaze on her, making it clear that she had overheard their conversation earlier. She prided herself as the master of not showing her emotions and held Alexandra’s gaze without so much as batting an eyelash at her statement. She was not looking forward to this meeting, but not for the same reason as the rest of her colleagues.

“Not only is she beautiful and brilliant, but she is also a freaking billionaire,” Miranda announced to the room, sharing her research.

“At just thirty-two years old, she is one of the most successful neurologists and heart surgeons in the country, and has won numerous awards for her achievements at such a young age. She is a prodigy with one of the highest IQs in the world. She is from a family of doctors and her family owns numerous hospitals,” Miranda continued to recite from Wikipedia.

“Are you listening to anything I’m saying?” she asked Blake, nudging her with her elbow.

“Yes, I heard you,” Blake turned her attention to Miranda.

“She has been featured in so many medical magazines and articles. The reason why we didn’t recognize her initially by name was because she is now using solely just her father’s surname Edison. Instead of the double surname of *Edison Devereaux* which announces that she is a part of the famous Devereaux medical family who owns this hospital,” Miranda explained, still scrolling through Wikipedia, trying to find out as much as possible about their new boss.

“I hope she isn’t just another rich snob who thinks because her family owns this place she can come here and make our lives a living hell,” Blake murmured.

“All I know is that she is one hot surgeon. Sucks that she is a lesbian,” Bradley added.

“Not like she would ever look in your direction, Bradley, even if she was straight.” Blake rolled her eyes at her colleague. Everyone started laughing.

Suddenly the doors opened, and Alexandra stepped through with not a hair out of place, ending the laughter in the room. She took a seat at the head of the boardroom table and crossed her legs. She cocked her head to one side, looking at her staff.

“Don’t stop laughing on my account, it makes me think that you were joking about me,” she stated. No one answered. “Well, aren’t you going to share the joke?” Alexandra persisted, looking around the room.

“It’s nothing worth sharing, Chief,” Bradley offered after the silence became uncomfortable.

“I’m sure only a person who is losing their mind laughs at nothing, and you are the head of the Orthopedic department, so there is no way you could be losing your mind and be sitting here.” Alexandra eased forward, clasping her hands under her chin while looking at Bradley with a straight face. Bradley shifted in his chair uncomfortably.

Alexandra looked straight ahead at Blake and Miranda. “Dr. Westmore? Dr. Hayes? I’m sure the head of my Cardiology and General Surgery departments aren’t also laughing at

nothing,” Alexandra pushed, waiting patiently for them to respond.

“I was just telling Bradley that even if you weren’t a lesbian, he would still not have a chance of dating you,” Blake responded nonchalantly.

Miranda swung her head towards Blake, shock written all over her face. She obviously didn’t expect Blake to respond much less with the truth.

“I guess you are right, because I tend to be attracted to brunettes,” Alexandra replied, staring into Blake’s eyes.

All eyes focused on them, obviously shocked at Blake’s answer and even more shocked that Alexandra didn’t take it as seriously as they probably would have expected. Miranda elbowed Blake softly.

“What? She asked a question,” Blake stated, her eyes still on Alexandra.

“Sorry, Dr. Edison,” Miranda apologized.

“No need to apologize for your colleague. I appreciate her honesty,” Alexandra responded with a smile on her face.

“Now that’s enough of an icebreaker. Let’s get down to business. You are the heads of your departments and certain responsibilities are associated with your role. I’m not here to micromanage as that is not my management style. Even though I’m the CEO, I still want to spend as much time as possible in the operating room. Therefore, I’m trusting each and every one of you to run the department as you see fit, aligning with the overall goals of the hospital, which is to be the best and most efficient. I want proper budgets and proper allocations of funds. I want research being done and most importantly, I need you to teach as this is also a teaching hospital. Not just interns but also each other. We are never too good at what we do to learn something new each day,” Alexandra informed them, her gaze occasionally landing on Blake during her speech.

The meeting went on for about an hour. They discussed everything from budget to research and upcoming surgeries.

Blake was impressed with how much Alexandra knew about the hospital, and that she actually knew what she was doing and really did seem to care about the hospital.

“Before we wrap up; do you have any questions for me?” Alexander inquired, scanning the faces of her staff.

They all agreed, “No”.

Blake was the last person to get up from the table. She busied herself checking her phone, not realizing that she and Alexandra were the only ones remaining in the boardroom. She looked up to see Alexandra staring at her with a smile on her face. Without saying a word, Blake headed for the door. Just as she was about to open the door, she could feel Alexandra come up behind her. Blake turned to face Alexandra. They were standing a mere distance apart. They locked eyes without saying a word. Blake scanned every feature of Alexandra’s face captivated by just how beautiful she was. She looked at her slightly parted lips which were covered with a light shade of pink lipstick. They stood so close to each other that she could feel Alexandra’s breath on her face.

“Dr. Westmore, are you going to get the door?” Alexandra inquired, still smiling at her.

Blake cleared her throat and turned to open the door, stepping aside to let Alexandra pass her. As Alexandra stepped around Blake, she turned around and said, “I hope I’m a hot enough chief for you.”

Before Blake could respond, Alexandra walked away. Blake stood for a moment watching her walk away, trying her best not to focus on the way Alexandra’s hips swayed in her dress. Those were not the thoughts she wanted to be having about their new boss who was unavailable. *Engaged to a movie star; no less.* She sighed and headed in the direction of the nurses’ station.

“What took you so long?” Miranda asked, turning to face Blake as she joined her at the nurses’ station.

“The chief overheard all of our conversation earlier,” Blake answered nonchalantly.

Miranda looked at Blake puzzled. “What conversation?”

“The one we had earlier where I said I hope the new chief is hot and not a douche,” Blake replied, trying to get access to one of her patient’s files.

“What?” Miranda squeaked with shock.

Blake shrugged. “Yeah. She said she hopes she is a hot enough chief for me.”

Miranda grabbed Blake by the arm and pulled her towards an on-call room. “Give me the full account of what happened. I don’t see how you can be so calm about this. This is our new boss,” Miranda stated incredulously as soon as the door locked behind them.

Blake rolled her eyes as she sat on the bed. She gave Miranda details of her encounter with Alexandra.

“So, did she say it in a flirtatious way?” Miranda asked with a smirk on her face.

“No! Why would she be flirting with me? She is happily engaged to a freaking movie star,” Blake threw her hands up in the air, annoyed with Miranda’s question.

“That doesn’t mean anything, after all, you are a brunette, exactly her type.” Miranda joined Blake on the bed, unwilling to drop the conversation.

“I beg to differ. Have you seen the woman’s fiancée? Plus, I’m not a multi-millionaire who is world-famous. So, yea, definitely not her type,” Blake argued.

“I’m sure she is not with Taylor because of her money and status, or she is that shallow,” Miranda responded, resting her head on Blake’s shoulder.

“Well, I don’t care who she likes or whether or not she was flirting as long as she doesn’t get in the way of me doing my job. Speaking of which, I need a consult on a surgery I have tomorrow.” Blake got up off the bed, pulling Miranda with her towards the door. As much as she tried to hide it, her voice still

carried an edge to it. An edge she didn't understand. Warring feelings encompassed her over her new boss, and until she could figure herself out, she made the decision to steer clear of Doctor Edison. Afterall, in a hospital this busy, that should be easy enough. Right?

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Chapter Two

Blake waited on the elevator, so lost in thought that she didn't see Alexandra approaching.

"Dr. Westmore, heading home?" Alexandra asked, stopping beside her.

"Yup," Blake replied with a nod, wishing she could turn and take the stairs to avoid riding the elevator with Alexandra.

They waited in uncomfortable silence for the elevator. Blake could feel Alexandra's eyes boring a hole in the side of her head, but she refused to turn and face her. She knew she probably came off as being rude, but she just didn't care. *Does the elevator usually take this long?* The elevator doors opened, and she stepped inside ahead of Alexandra, moving to stand at the back. Alexandra followed, moving to stand beside her even though just the two of them occupied the elevator which left a lot of space for her to stand elsewhere.

"Good save today during that laparoscopic cholecystectomy. You lost your patient for a moment there. Amazing come back."

Blake swung her head around to look at her, surprised to learn that Alexandra had watched her surgery. Her gaze landed on a pair of dark blue eyes that made her feel vulnerable with the way Alexandra looked at her like she could see through her and unearth all her deepest, darkest desires.

"Thank you," Blake replied, not knowing what else to say.

"You are welcome," Alexandra said as the elevator doors opened, and she stepped through, leaving Blake to watch her walk away.

Blake couldn't put a finger on why, exactly, Alexandra made her uncomfortable. Especially when she stood so close that the scent of her perfume invaded Blake's senses. How did

she manage to smell that good after working in a hospital all day? It didn't seem right that someone could be that gorgeous, that intoxicating, that— She shook her head to clear the thoughts and followed Alexandra towards the main exit.

Miranda stood outside, her gaze rivetted on the door, and she brightened a little when Blake came to stand beside her. They watched a black Mercedes Benz S63 AMG pull up at Alexandra's feet. The chauffeur, dressed in a suit and tie without a single hair out of place, helped Alexandra in before returning to his place at the wheel. The tinted windows kept them from seeing their boss, but somehow, Blake felt like Alexandra watched her from the safety of her ride.

“Of course, she has a driver,” Blake muttered.

Miranda turned to her, expression puzzled. “Why are you so hostile towards the chief?”

Blake began heading toward their favorite after-work chill spot. She issued a non-committal shrug, unwilling to explain how she felt to her best friend. Hell, she couldn't even explain it to herself. The brisk walk across the street helped clear her head a little, but the funky mood remained.

Palmettos, an upscale lounge and bar, that somehow managed to weave together modern and nostalgia in a remarkable way came in to view. When she came here after a long day, she could let her stress slip away in the atmosphere. Tonight, it wouldn't be enough. They took a seat at the bar before Blake grinned at Miranda.

“Here comes your boyfriend,” she teased.

“What?” Her friend glanced around before spotting Trevor, the owner of the bar, heading their way.

The man appeared pleasant enough to look at. Dark, shoulder-length hair framed deep blue eyes and a chiseled jawline. Both arms sported various tattoos that merged together in intricate sleeves, and while he carried a bad boy appearance, his personality revealed the inner good guy each time they interacted with him. Blake couldn't understand why

on Earth Miranda never rose to take up the various hints and compliments the man threw her way.

“Hello, ladies. What can I get for you?” he asked with a genuine smile and his eyes lingering on Miranda for a moment.

“I’ll have a whiskey on the rocks,” Blake responded. The urge to drown out her chaotic thoughts seized her, and she considered making it a double. Triple, even.

Miranda shot her a concerned look before placing her order. Once Trevor walked away, she reached across the table and laid a hand on Blake’s. “That’s an awfully heavy drink for you. Are you okay?”

Blake sighed. She definitely wasn’t going to share the lusty confusion that invaded her whenever their *engaged boss* crossed paths with her. “It’s nothing.”

“Mmhm. I can tell.” Miranda raised a brow, causing her to chuckle.

“I guess I’m just anxious about the changes at work. The new boss... The hospital’s stability...” she hedged, hoping her friend didn’t poke too much into her answer.

“You worry too much. Everything will be fine. Worst-case scenario, we can find jobs elsewhere because we rock.” Miranda grinned, brimming with optimism that Blake couldn’t relate to.

“Yeah, I guess so.”

They fell silent as Trevor placed their drinks down. “Do we want any appetizers tonight?”

“Why don’t you order for us? You know what I like anyway,” Blake told Miranda as she got up from the bar. “I’m going to the bathroom a minute.”

She left her friend talking with Trevor as she wove her way between people. Out of the corner of her eye, she caught sight of Bradley. *Oh great. I can bet he is going to talk about Alexandra.* Before he saw her, she ducked behind a group who

stood socializing near the bathroom entrance, then headed into the quiet room.

A few deep breaths helped quiet the discontent in her heart, but not the thoughts in her head. A headache threatened at the corners of her mind, and she splashed a little cold water from the pipe on her face. *Get it together, girl. Everything will be okay. Why did she make me feel so nervous?*

Fortunately, no one else came into the bathroom as she stared down her reflection, willing herself to get her head back in the game. Her life revolved around surgeries. Saving people. Making a difference. And none of that hinged on whether she found her boss attractive. Hell, in a couple of months, Alexandra wouldn't even be there anymore. She'd be shackled up somewhere in Hollywood living the grand life with her famous fiancée, Seattle forgotten. Mind settled and conscience appeased, she made her way back to the bar where Miranda waited. She groaned internally as soon as she took in the form sitting in her spot.

“Hey, Westmore. What do you think about the new chief?” Bradley asked as soon as she stepped close enough for him to notice her.

Blake rolled her eyes upon hearing his words, and she choked back the sharp retort she wanted to throw at him. “I don't think anything. As long as she doesn't prevent me from performing surgeries and she saves the hospital, that's all I care about. Otherwise, I don't care.”

Before Bradley could respond, a few more of their colleagues came over to join them and of course the conversation focused on their new boss. Blake was no longer in the mood to hang out at Palmettos. The current atmosphere no longer provided the relaxation she hoped for. She made her way around the group towards Miranda. She leaned in close to her friend.

“I'm going to head home. If that's okay with you. I think I need my bed more than anything else right now,” she whispered in Miranda's ear.

Miranda looked at her concerned. “Do you want me to come with you?”

Blake shook her head. “No, stay and have fun. Text me when you get home.” She gave Miranda a quick kiss on the cheek.

“Have a good evening, guys. I’ll see you all tomorrow,” she informed her colleagues as she gathered her things.

Listening to her colleagues talk about Alexandra was not what she needed at the moment. She needed to go home and get some rest. Lives depended on her clear head and good judgement, and right now she didn’t feel like she had either.

Why did everyone always have to bring up the woman? They got a new boss; so what? Either she’d be better than the chief she replaced, or she wouldn’t. Beyond admiring her as a talented surgeon and person of authority, Blake didn’t care about Alexandra. Not one bit.

She kept telling herself that until she fell asleep in bed, alone and full of an emptiness she didn’t quite know how to fill.

Chapter Three

“How was your surgery?” Miranda asked Blake as they changed out of their scrubs in the doctors’ changing room. They were called in to perform emergency surgeries on their Sunday off.

“It was touch and go for a minute, but the kid pulled through. He should make a full recovery.”

“That’s good. I know I was supposed to make you dinner tonight, but do you mind if we get takeout. I’m exhausted. I really wish we didn’t have to come in today,” Miranda explained before heading towards the door.

“Sure, I feel like I could fall asleep right here myself.” Blake followed Miranda through the door. As they approached the nurses’ station chatter filled the area. Members of staff eyes trained on the television on the wall.

“Hey what’s going on?” Miranda asked Bradley whose eyes were fixed to the television screen.

“The chief is walking the red carpet at the Oscars with Taylor.”

At that moment, Blake looked up to see Alexandra on the screen holding hands with Taylor as a reporter approached. Alexandra the epitome of beauty, looked flawless in her gown. Both women complimented each other in a way that seemed so natural.

“Congrats on the nomination!” the reporter announced.

“Thank you,” Taylor responded, her voice filled with pride.

“I must say you two look amazing, and of course congrats on the engagement. When is the big day?”

Taylor looked at Alexandra, smiling and kissed her lightly on the lips before turning back to the reporter. “It will be soon.”

I can't wait to make her Mrs. Kavanaugh."

As Taylor spoke with the reporter, Blake's eyes fixated on Alexandra. She still couldn't believe that Alexandra was their boss and couldn't understand why she felt the way she felt about her. She couldn't deny her attraction to her new boss, but no one could fault her for that because at this point more than half the staff found her attractive. Both male and female staff practically swoon in her presence. What confused Blake was the jealousy she felt whenever she saw Alexandra and Taylor together. How can she be jealous of their relationship? It annoyed her even more not knowing exactly why she felt jealous. Was she jealous of what they have?

"Do you think she will invite us to the wedding?" Bradley asked, breaking Blake's chain of thought.

"I'm sure it will be a star-studded event and you are definitely not a star, Bradley," Miranda quipped, rolling her eyes at him.

"I've seen enough of this. Let's go, Miranda." Blake instructed, moving through the small crowd towards the exit.

"Why does talking about the chief always put you in a funk?" Miranda inquired as she caught up with Blake outside the hospital.

Blake looked at her, confused. "Who says talking about Dr. Edison puts me in a funk?"

"I do. You always get irritated whenever anyone brings up her name." Miranda narrowed her eyes at her.

"Well, I don't know what you are talking about." Blake shrugged and headed towards the parking lot.

Miranda followed without continuing the conversation. Miranda knew her well enough to know when she didn't want to discuss something.

"I think it's best you stay over at my place tonight seeing that we have to come in early tomorrow, and we are both exhausted. We'll have dinner and go to bed," Blake suggested as they approached her car.

“I totally agree. I don’t even think I have the energy to eat, much less to make the journey to my house. I should order our food from now that way we won’t have to wait too long once we get home.”

They traveled in silence to Blake’s apartment. Miranda spent the short journey napping while Blake lost in her thoughts tried not to think about Alexandra. Once home they quickly showered. It didn’t take long for the food to arrive and they ate while the television ran in the background. Luckily for Blake Miranda didn’t bring up Alexandra again.

As Blake settled into bed that night, she considered what Miranda had said earlier about her being irritated whenever anyone brought up Alexandra’s name. It’s not that she was irritated. She just didn’t want to be talking about Alexandra all the time, and it seemed like everyone at the hospital fell under her spell. She saw Alexandra as just another rich person who probably viewed the hospital as another pet project to keep them occupied until they decided that they were bored and moved on to something else. What were the chances of Alexandra really staying to rebuild the hospital despite the sentimental significance of the place? With all that had happened at the hospital in recent years, she just wasn’t willing to trust Alexandra as quickly as everyone else. She knew she was being a bit judgmental, but she couldn’t help it.

Plus, with her attraction to the woman, the less she spoke about her and to her, the better it would be. At the crux of it all the fact that Alexandra made her nervous and unsure of herself irritated and annoyed her the most. She didn’t know why exactly, but that was how she felt whenever in her presence. She needed to do a better job at hiding her feelings if Miranda could see through her so easily. Then again, Miranda knew her better than anyone. She excelled at masking her emotions and now more than ever she needed to utilize that particular skill to ensure that she hid her attraction to her boss. Either until it faded or when Alexandra returned to L.A. *Being attracted to her is pointless.* Nothing else mattered as long as she saved the hospital.

Blake sighed, willing sleep to take over. She needed to get some much-needed sleep for the week ahead of her. Luckily for her sleep came quickly, but unfortunately, she couldn't rid her mind of thoughts of Alexandra. That night she had dreams that she shouldn't be having about her boss.

Blake stared at the surgery board, shocked to see Alexandra currently listed in surgery. She wondered when she got back from L.A. to have been in surgery since eight a.m. that morning seeing that she was just on the red carpet at the Oscars the evening before.

"She must be exhausted," Blake said aloud.

"Who must be exhausted?" Miranda came to stand beside her as she perused the surgery board.

"The chief; she has been in surgery from early this morning."

"Really! I thought she would still be in L.A.," Miranda replied in a surprised tone. "We should go watch!"

Before Blake could respond, Miranda began pulling her towards the elevators. They entered the gallery, realizing it was packed. Luckily for them, two interns were heading out as they entered, vacating their seats. Just as Blake sat down, Alexandra looked up into the gallery and they locked eyes. Suddenly the vital monitors started beeping indicating a problem with the patient.

"Dr. Edison, his pressure is dropping," the scrub nurse shouted.

"We have to stop that bleed or else he might have permanent brain damage," stated the assisting resident.

Everyone watched as Alexandra fixed the patient's brain bleed with composure and speed.

"Her technique and precision are amazing," gushed the young intern sitting beside Blake.

"That's why she has won all those awards. I mean she is a prodigy with one of the highest IQs in the world, but If I get to be half as good as her, I'll be a damn good neurosurgeon," stated another.

Blake listened to the interns talk about Alexandra's achievements with so much admiration and couldn't blame them for respecting the woman. She had done her own research and found herself just as impressed with all Alexandra achieved at such a young age. She had an amazing survival rate and had performed surgeries that many in her field would have been skeptical of doing or wouldn't have even tried.

"Hey, I have to go follow up on my patient," Miranda told Blake thirty minutes later while getting up from beside her.

"I'm going to stay for a bit," Blake responded, feeling the need to see why Alexandra was said to be the best. By the time the surgery was completed Blake was the only one sitting in the gallery.

Alexandra looked up from her patient to survey the gallery. To her surprise, Blake sat alone, watching her intently. She couldn't read Blake's facial expression. She took her eyes off Blake for a minute to speak with the scrub nurse. When her eyes reverted to the gallery, Blake no longer sat there. Alexandra stared at the spot Blake vacated. *What was that? I've never been distracted like that before during surgery.* For a brief moment, the sight of Dr. Blake Westmore staring at her from the gallery distracted her. If she wasn't good at what she

did, maybe she would have lost her patient because of that distraction.

Alexandra left the operating room and headed towards her office. Just as she entered the elevator, and the door was about to close, someone stopped the door with their hand. The doors reopened and Miranda stepped into the elevator.

“Hi, Dr. Edison.” She greeted Alexandra with a smile.

“Please call me Alexandra. I hate when colleagues call me doctor. It’s just too much formality constantly,” Alexandra replied returning Miranda’s smile.

“Ok, Alexandra it is then. How are you finding it here so far? I know the weather that is the complete opposite of L.A. will take some getting used to.”

Alexandra looked at Miranda with a warm expression, glad that she was thoughtful enough to find out how she was settling in. “It’s been quite interesting. I actually don’t mind the weather. I like when it rains, especially when I’m home, and I can sit by the window and listen to it. For some reason, it relaxes me. Growing up, I wish it had rained more in L.A.”

“I grew up here so in some ways I know how you feel,” Miranda informed her with a warm smile.

“Do you like working here?”

Miranda’s smile widened. “I absolutely love it here. It was always my dream to be a surgeon here, and I get to work with my best friend, which is a bonus.” Miranda’s tone communicated the truth behind her words.

“Ah, I’m going to assume that your best friend is Blake.”

“Yes, that’s right. That’s my girl. Love her to the moon and the back,” Miranda replied with a lot of pride and love in her voice. It was obvious she was very proud of her friendship with Blake.

“I don’t think she likes me very much.” Alexandra knew trying to get information from Miranda about Blake’s behavior towards her was a long a shot.

Miranda looked at Alexandra with a baffled expression. “Why do you think that?”

“Just a feeling.” Alexandra shrugged casually in an effort to downplay her interest in the conversation.

“I can understand why you might feel like that, but it’s just the way Blake is built. It takes time for her to warm up to people. But once you get to know her, if she allows you to know the real her, she is one of the nicest people you will ever meet.” Miranda’s voiced dripped with compassion for her best friend.

“Well, she is lucky to have a friend like you defending her honor,” Alexandra replied as the elevator doors opened and she got off.

As soon as Alexandra walked into her office, her phone rang. She looked at the screen smiling. “Hi, my love.”

“I miss you,” responded Taylor who remained at their home in L.A. “How was the surgery?”

“It went smoother than I expected. How was the table read?” Alexandra inquired knowing Taylor was very excited about her new project.

“Amazing! It’s really going to be an amazing movie and the crew seems pleasant. I’m happy that most of the scenes will be shot here in L.A. Only a few will be done in Amsterdam.”

Alexandra could hear the excitement in her fiancée’s voice. “That’s good to know. I know how much you prefer shooting at home.”

Taylor sighed heavily. “Speaking of home; it’s so lonely here without you. I wish you could honor your grandfather’s wishes from here. I mean, can’t you? You could oversee the hospital operations from here.”

“Babe, you know it’s not that simple. I need to be here to see things and work with the staff to make the place better. I thought you were okay with me being here. We discussed it in length, and you supported me being here for a period of time.” Alexandra paced the length of her office running her hands

through her hair frustrated with the situation and the conflict brewing in her relationship because of it.

“I know, I know, but the reality of you there and me here is worse than I thought it would be. Plus, you don’t know when you will be home.”

“Taylor, it’s just like when you have to go away to do your movie scenes. It’s just that this time around I’m the one who has to leave. Babe, please understand that I need to do this my way and I really need you to support me.” Alexandra needed Taylor to see her point of view. She missed Taylor just as much and missed home, but she needed to be in Seattle.

“It’s not the same thing, Alexandra. I leave because of contractual obligations. You are choosing to be in Seattle,” Taylor argued.

“You have never been a selfish person, Taylor. Please don’t start now. I have always supported you and I need you to do the same for me with this. I know it’s hard because I miss you terribly, so I understand what you are feeling.” Alexandra hated that her being in Seattle created tension in their relationship.

“I’m sorry. It’s just a lot harder than I thought it would be, being on the other side. I mean you are right; you have always been supportive of my career which involves travelling a lot sometimes,” Taylor apologized. “Maybe it’s just being here alone in our home that has me on edge. I’m so used to coming home to you.”

“I understand, love, and that’s why I’ve been counting down the days until you get here on Sunday. I promise to show you exactly how much I miss you and make up for all this anguish I am causing you,” Alexandra replied in a tone that conveyed to Taylor the plans she had for her.

“Oh yeah? Would you mind giving me a little preview on the phone?”

“Anticipation is key, baby, and if I tell you now that would just spoil the fun. Plus, I really like when you are wound so

tightly that one touch of my tongue makes you lose your mind.”

“Hmmm. And I do love the things you do with that tongue of yours.”

Alexandra smiled, relieved that the conversation had taken a turn for the better. “Baby, I know you do, and I promise I will make the wait worth it. However, I need to go. I need to prepare for a meeting. I’ll call you when I get home.”

She sighed heavily after hanging up the phone. The last thing she needed was for her move to Seattle to be a problem in her relationship. Moving to Seattle from Los Angeles created a big change for her. She made many compromises, the biggest of which weighed on her relationship with Taylor. They’d always been supportive of each other, but Taylor wasn’t too thrilled about her being over a thousand miles from her. Yes, they spent time apart because of Taylor’s job when she was filming in other countries, but Los Angeles had always been home. But she needed to do this. Her grandfather left her a lot from his estate, and all he asked was that she took special care of Parkwood Memorial, and the only way she could think of doing that was moving to Seattle to get the hospital back on track. She didn’t know how long it would take, but she had to try—it was her grandfather’s dying wish.

Alexandra headed towards the boardroom for the weekly meeting with the heads of each department. She couldn’t believe a month passed since she started at Parkwood, and it had been quite an interesting month. She was still getting to know her staff and working hard to rebuild the hospital’s image. She opened the door to the boardroom, and everyone stopped talking. She moved to stand at the back of her seat, looking at her staff, annoyed that after a month of working together they seemed to still be on edge around her as if they were afraid of her. She knew she had been busy since she arrived and hadn’t found a chance to socialize much with them.

“What is it about me that you don’t like, or do I scare you?” Alexandra’s question made the room even quieter as they all looked at her, shocked written on their faces. “Come on now.

Do you really fear me that much you can't answer my question?"

Bradley cleared his throat and nervously said, "It's not that we fear you, Chief, but we don't know you and you are a bit intimidating."

Alexandra burst out laughing at his comment. "I've been called many things in this life, but intimidating was never one of them. So, I'm shocked that I intimidate a group of surgeons who are some of the most confident I have ever worked with. But you are right. You don't know me and that's partly my fault as I have been very busy since I've been here and haven't interacted with you much outside of this room or the operating room."

"That's true," Bradley murmured.

Alexandra realized that everyone looked at her except Blake, who stared down at the table. "Ok, well, I guess I have to do something about that. You are all invited to dinner at my place on Saturday evening at eight p.m. I'd really appreciate if everyone could attend."

At Alexandra's announcement, Blake raised her head to see Alexandra looking directly at her. Everyone appeared shocked at her invitation except for Blake who kept her facial expression neutral. "I'll send you an email with my address and please let me know if you have any allergies."

Chapter Four

Blake left the boardroom first when the meeting ended. As she headed towards the elevators, Miranda caught up with her. “I can’t believe Alexandra invited us to dinner at her place. Definitely wasn’t expecting that,” she said as they waited for the elevator.

“Well, I hope you have fun.” The elevator doors opened and they stepped in.

“Wait, what! Aren’t you coming?” Miranda turned facing Blake in the elevator as soon as the doors closed, her face a picture of shock and confusion.

“Nope,” Blake answered indifferently.

“She asked that we all attend so she will be expecting you to be there.”

“Well, she can’t expect anything of me outside of these hospital walls, so I won’t be attending. I don’t need to know her outside of these walls to work with her. I am just fine with the way things are now.” Blake’s words sounded irrational to her own ears but she just didn’t care.

“No wonder she thinks that you don’t like her!”

Blake’s eyes widened. “What do you mean by that? Did she say something to you? And when did you two have a conversation about me?”

Miranda held up both hands to halt her barrage of questions. “Hey calm down. Jeez. We didn’t have a conversation about you. You just happened to come up in a conversation we were having, where I bragged about you being my best friend.”

“And when did you two have this little conversation, and how is it that this is the first I am hearing about it?” Blake continued, hurling one question after another at Miranda.

“It was a few weeks ago and I didn’t think anything of it or maybe I knew you would react like this, so I decided not to say anything.”

Blake rolled her eyes at her friend. “Well, I guess with this new development I’ll have to make an appearance since she already thinks that I don’t like her.” The elevator doors opened, and she stepped out. Miranda followed behind her, shaking her head in bewilderment at Blake’s reaction towards anything that concerned Alexandra.

The week flew by very fast. Blake hoped time would have slowed down prolonging the inevitable. It was now Saturday, and the reality of spending at least the next two hours at Alexandra’s home filled her with dread.

She had sent them her address earlier. And of course, she resided in the penthouse at one of the most luxurious skyscrapers in the city which apparently her family owned. All this information came to Blake courtesy of Miranda, who of course had to do her research to be prepared for the dinner. Unlike Blake, she seemed quite excited about the evening.

“Which dress should I wear?” Miranda grinned from ear to ear, holding up two dresses for Blake to choose from.

“I don’t see why you are so excited about this dinner.” Blake pointed to the dark green dress that she knew her best friend probably had her mind set on despite asking her opinion.

“It’s the one I like the most also,” Miranda grinned, throwing the other dress on the bed beside Blake, who now lay on her back gazing up at the ceiling. “Aren’t you going to find something to wear?” Miranda headed towards the bathroom to start applying her make-up.

“Why? What’s wrong with what I have on? She never said that we had to dress up.” Blake sat up immediately to examine her attire. Blake wore black, tightly fitted jeans that hugged her in all the right places and a white blouse with black patterns which showcased her toned arms.

“Well, if you are not going to change then at least wear this.” Miranda handed Blake a black blazer. Blake looked at Miranda with a frown but took the blazer from her. “Wonder what her place will look like,” Miranda said as she continued getting dressed.

“Guarantee it’s stylish and clean just like her.” Blake got up from the bed to try on the blazer.

“I know, right? She is always so clean and well put together. Not a hair out of place. We should get going as Bradley wants us to pick him up on the way there.”

Twenty minutes later they arrived at Bradley’s house. Bradley stood outside waiting on them with a big grin on his face. Blake rolled her eyes at his excitement. *Am I the only one not excited about this damn dinner?*

“Hello, ladies,” Bradley greeted as he settled into the backseat.

“You’re quite happy.” Miranda glanced at Bradley through the rear-view mirror.

“He’s just thinking about the free food he’ll be consuming,” Blake quipped

“I won’t dispute that, Westmore, but I have other reasons to be excited. I know I’m not the only who is looking forward to this dinner.” Bradley popped his head around the headrest, his eyes bouncing between them.

Blake turned her head to look out the window. Miranda and Bradley continued chatting about the dinner. She did her best to block out the conversation. The closer they came to Alexandra’s penthouse, the more despondent she felt. That feeling only intensified once they were on the elevator ascending to the very last floor in the building.

The elevator door opened to the entrance of Alexandra's penthouse. The view and stylish decorations with modern furnishing in a clean-cut fashion and abstract paintings blew Blake away. The elevator opened onto a large living room with floor-to-ceiling windows. The decor more luxurious than she anticipated.

"I guess this is what money looks like," Bradley commented as he spun around taking in the view.

"Bradley, ladies, thank you for coming."

All three turned to where the voice came from to see Alexandra walking towards them casually dressed in jeans. Her hair pulled back in a loose ponytail, without any make-up on. Blake captivated by her natural beauty stared longer than she intended. *She's even more beautiful without makeup.* Lost in thought she didn't realize that Miranda and Bradley had gone ahead to the dining area, leaving her standing there with Alexandra.

"Blake, are you ok?" Alexandra looked at her with concern.

Blake lifted her head and they locked eyes for a brief moment before she responded with a nod.

"Well, let's go eat," Alexandra instructed, directing Blake to follow her.

As they entered the dining area, everyone already sat at the table chatting. Miranda signaled Blake to come and sit beside her. Alexandra sat at the opposite end of the table from Blake. "Thank you all for coming and I hope that you will enjoy my cooking as much as I enjoyed cooking for you," Alexandra stated welcoming her staff.

"Ah, already we have learned something about you," Bradley commented.

Alexandra smiled. "Yes, Bradley, I enjoy cooking even though I don't get to do it as much as I would love to."

"And I can vouch for her culinary skills as it is one of the many reasons I'm so in love with her."

Everyone turned to see Taylor standing at the entrance to the dining room smiling with Alexandra. She moved across the dining area towards Alexandra and kissed her softly on the lips.

“Hi, baby. Miss me?” Taylor broke the kiss and ran her fingertips down Alexandra’s jaw.

“I thought you weren’t going to be here until tomorrow, babe?” Alexandra rubbed Taylor’s cheeks with the back of her hands.

Blake watched the interaction between the two women, admiring how much affection they showed each other. They obviously weren’t afraid of publicly displaying their affections. They were two people head over heels in love with each other. *Don’t let it bother you.*

“I got them to shoot my scene early this morning so I could be here tonight to support you as you entertain your staff.” Taylor turned to face everyone at the table. “Hope you don’t mind me crashing your dinner?”

“Not at all; you can have my seat,” Bradley offered, getting up from his seat.

“Thank you, but I would much rather sit beside my fiancée.” Taylor turned her attention back to Alexandra. “Babe, I’ll be right back. I’m going to use the bathroom.”

“Ok, love. I’ll get a plate ready for you.”

Alexandra was in the kitchen getting a plate for Taylor when she returned from the bathroom and hugged her from behind while placing light, feathery kisses on her neck. “Babe, we have guests who can see us,” Alexandra whispered, trying to move away from Taylor’s hold.

The kitchen opened into the dining area and their guests were watching their interaction in the kitchen. Taylor spun Alexandra around and kissed her passionately. Alexandra could no longer resist returning the kiss with as much passion. For a brief moment, they forgot about their guests and became lost in the kiss. At the sound of glass hitting glass, Alexandra stopped kissing Taylor, turning her attention to her guests who were scurrying to wipe wine off the table. Alexandra rushed over to Blake who had knocked over a wine bottle and handed her paper towels to assist with the spill. As she handed Blake the paper towels their hands touched. They looked at each other and for a moment. A very brief moment that felt like time stopped.

“Oh well, I guess that’s ruined,” Taylor pointed out.

Alexandra tore her eyes away from Blake’s when Taylor came to stand beside her, placing her hand possessively on Alexandra’s lower back.

“I’ll take these to kitchen.” Blake attempted to get up only to be stopped by Alexandra.

“No, please sit. I’ll take them,” Alexandra offered.

Blake nodded and handed over the paper towels to her, and Alexandra couldn’t help but think that Blake didn’t want to be there.

The rest of the evening went pretty smoothly without any more wine spills. Everyone engaged in conversation except for Blake who appeared mostly engaged in her wine glass. She remained quiet for most of the evening and only contributed to the conversations when directly asked a question.

“This one was quite rude to me when we first met,” Alexandra stated, glancing at Taylor. They smiled lovingly at each other.

“How long have you two been together?” Miranda asked Alexandra.

“Forever, since we were teens. From when we were both sixteen.” Alexandra stared affectionately at Taylor.

“I really don’t know how she has put up with my ass for all these years. I must say I am the luckiest woman alive,” added Taylor. “When we met, I was waitressing at her parent’s country club for the summer while Alexandra played tennis with her stuck-up friends. I wasn’t very nice to her, but my love here wasn’t fazed by my attempt to push her away.”

“When we met, she was so mean to me for no reason. But for some reason the more she pushed me away, the more I was drawn to her. She thought I was just another bratty rich kid,” Alexandra explained.

“But I was wrong as my love is the kindest, most empathetic, and selfless person I’ve ever met.” Taylor kissed Alexandra lightly on the lips. “She has always been my biggest supporter, even when I wanted to give up hope before I got my big breakthrough. She believed I’d be as successful as I am today. She’s just the best friend, partner, and probably the best boss you could ask for her.”

“The jury is still out on the best boss part,” Bradley said laughing. The rest of the guests joined in as well.

The night was about learning as much as possible about her and Alexandra felt pleased with the outcome of the dinner. Happy that her staff appeared to be having a good time.

“It’s getting late, we should probably go,” Blake said to Miranda, prompting Alexandra to turned her head in her direction.

“Thanks for having us over for dinner Dr. Edison,” Miranda said getting up from the table.

“You are welcome. Let me show you out.”

Alexandra followed Blake, Miranda, and Bradley to the elevator. Once in the elevator, Blake turned to face her. She didn’t break eye contact but instead kept her eyes locked to Alexandra’s, which she was not one bit surprised about. The intensity of her gaze held Alexandra captive. *I wish I could see what lies behind those beautiful blue eyes. Wonder what she’s thinking when she looks at me like that?* Alexandra watched as the doors closed and Blake disappeared behind them. As

Alexandra walked back towards the dining area, she couldn't stop thinking about Blake. She didn't say much throughout the dinner and pretty much showed no interest in wanting to know anything about her. When Alexandra got back to the dining area, she realized that the rest of her guests had decided to leave also. She followed them out and wished them a good night.

She returned to the kitchen to see Taylor putting away the dishes in the dishwasher. She stood there for a brief moment admiring her fiancée before sneaking up behind her and hugging her from behind. Taylor spun around to face Alexandra and kissed her passionately.

"Take me to bed," Alexandra whispered against Taylor's lips as she started to massage her breast lightly. They headed up the stairs towards their bedroom. As they went, they discarded their clothes along the way. Practically naked by the time they got to the bedroom.

"I love you so much," Taylor whispered against Alexandra's neck as she unhooked her bra, moving to massage her nipples.

Alexandra moaned with pleasure as Taylor increased the pressure on her nipples. Her entire body shivered as Taylor lavished her nipples with attention. Taylor's lips on her sensitive flesh made her delirious. She laid back on the bed, forcing Taylor to follow her as she wrapped her legs around Taylor's hips. Alexandra flipped Taylor over, straddling her hips, pinning Taylor's hands above her head, and kissing her passionately. She missed Taylor and needed to show her just how much. Taylor let out a sensuous moan that turned her on even more than she already was. Her body vibrated with need as she groaned down hard against Taylor, enjoying the friction against her clit. She could feel how wet she was. Weeks of pent-up desire bubbled to the forefront as Taylor squirmed beneath her, heightening her arousal. Taylor tried to break free of Alexandra's hold to touch her, but Alexandra wouldn't release her.

"Baby, I need to touch you," Taylor begged, breaking the kiss.

“Where do you want to touch me?” Alexandra stared into Taylor’s lust-filled eyes. The emotions in Taylor’s eyes sent a pulse of heat vibrating through her body.

“I need to touch you everywhere, baby.” Alexandra released Taylor’s hands. She slipped her hand down Taylor’s stomach, towards her soaking wet warmth. Taylor cried out from pleasure as Alexandra massaged her clitoris with her fingertips. Alexandra could feel Taylor’s body shaking as she increased the friction on her pulsing flesh. Taylor’s orgasm started, and Alexandra slipped two fingers inside of her. She used the palm of her hand to rub the sensitive nub knowing the effect it would have on Taylor. She massaged Taylor’s vagina walls with her fingers, loving the vibrations she felt as Taylor’s orgasm built and built.

As Taylor wound down from her orgasm, she sat up so that Alexandra straddled her hips with her legs wrapped around her waist. She kissed Alexandra passionately before laying back down on the bed, gripping Alexandra by her butt and moving Alexandra’s body towards her face. Alexandra placed her hands on the headboard balancing herself, sitting on Taylor’s face as Taylor used her tongue to make love to her sensitive flesh. Taylor’s tongue slid inside, eliciting a shudder through her entire body. The taste of her essence made Taylor moaned deep in her throat as she fed on her nether lips like a woman starved. She knew what tasting her did to her fiancée. Taylor never shied away from letting her know how much she absolutely loved going down on her. As Alexandra began to climax, she held on tight to the headboard screaming out Taylor’s name, throwing her head back as a wave of pleasure engulfed her. Her body trembled uncontrollably, her thighs clenching. When Alexandra came down from her orgasm, she slid down into Taylor’s arms, cuddling up next to her and laying her head on her chest. They fell asleep wrapped around each other.

Chapter Five

When Alexandra arrived at work Monday morning, she was very excited about the week ahead. Her mom was coming to Parkwood to perform a ground-breaking surgery with her. She and her mom had the best mother-daughter relationship filled with love and mutual respect. Alexandra adored her mom and was so very proud to be her daughter. People assumed that the reason she chose not to use her mom's surname anymore was because she wanted to be disassociated from her famous mother. Nothing could be further from the truth. Her mom had always been supportive of her. And from a very young age instilled in her the importance of being true to herself and living her life to be truly happy and not living to please the people around her. Because of her beauty, Alexandra was offered many television shows and movies as a teen which she turned down. People assumed that it was because she felt pressured to follow in her mom's footsteps where, in fact, it was never an expectation. She chose to be a surgeon, and when she told her mom it brought tears to her eyes. She told her mom that she was her hero and she wanted to be just like her. As she stood waiting on the elevator, she reminisced about all the previous surgeries she had performed with her mom and how much she had learned from her over the years.

"Dr. Edison."

Alexandra looked up to see Blake standing beside her. "Good morning, Dr. Westmore," Alexandra replied, greeting Blake with a smile.

The elevator arrived and Alexandra gestured for Blake to go ahead of her. Blake moved to the back of the elevator and Alexandra intentionally went to stand directly beside her, just mere inches from touching her. Blake intrigued her and she couldn't understand why the woman showed no interest in getting to know her as her boss or otherwise. The majority of

her staff showed genuine interest in familiarizing themselves with her since arriving. Except for Blake, who often appeared indifferent towards her unless it was necessary for her to act otherwise. She could tell that Blake wanted to move away from her, but knew it would probably be too obvious if she did. *I feel like she's always running away from me. If I made her uncomfortable, she seems the type of person who would say something about it. If it's not discomfort, then what is it?* They rode in silence for two floors before Blake broke the silence.

“Were you able to get the wine stain removed from the table covering?”

Alexandra smiled, internally grateful that for once the woman initiated a conversation. “I threw it out. Even if I washed it, the wine mark would still be visible.”

“Again, I am sorry about ruining it. Hope it had no sentimental value since you had to dispose of it. I am willing to replace it if that’s okay with you.” Blake offered, her tone filled with remorse.

“No need to, it’s just a tablecloth, Blake. How was the rest of your weekend?” It took a moment for Blake to answer her question.

“You really want to know or are you just asking, just for asking sake?” she shot back.

“Of course, I want to know.” Alexandra couldn’t understand why Blake would assume her interest wasn’t genuine.

Blake took a deep breath and said, “It was pretty good. I spent it at home relaxing.”

Alexandra turned to face Blake when she asked, “Alone?” Alexandra could tell that her question shocked Blake, but before she could answer, the elevator doors opened, and they were joined by a group of interns. Blake took the opportunity to step away from her, allowing one of the interns to stand between them.

As they continued the ride up, Blake wondered why Alexandra wanted to know if she had spent the weekend alone. Was it her way of finding out if she was seeing someone, and why would she want to know about her personal life? When the elevator came to a stop and all the interns were getting off, Blake decided to get off with them. She was supposed to get off on the next floor, but she saw it as an escape to not answer Alexandra's question. As Blake walked through the doors, she felt a hand grab hers and a jolt of electricity hit her body. Blake turned to see Alexandra holding on to her hand.

“Aren't you getting off on the next floor, Blake?”

Blake stared at Alexandra's hand holding hers then looked up and said, “I have to make a quick stop on this floor.” Her voice sounded calmer than the turmoil raging inside of her at Alexandra's touch. Blake withdrew her hand from Alexandra's grip and stepped through the elevator doors. She stood there looking at Alexandra as the elevator doors closed, separating them. Blake stared at the elevator doors thinking about Alexandra's questions and why she wanted to know if she spent the weekend alone. *Is she trying to find out if I'm dating someone? You are reading too much into the question. Why would she care if you are seeing someone?* She shook her head and pressed the elevator button, then decided against taking the elevator and headed for the stairs. She still had time before she needed to be in the auditorium.

Chatter filled the auditorium. Blake scanned the auditorium with curiosity. A week ago, she received an email asking her to be here at noon today. Apparently, quite a few others on staff discovered the same email in their inboxes, but their presence didn't help her figure out why they needed to come in the first place.

“Hey, are you ok?” Miranda asked Blake, looking at her friend with concern.

Thoughts of Alexandra consumed Blake's mind since their encounter in the elevator. "Yes, I'm ok. Hope this isn't a waste of my time as I have a major surgery later that I should be prepping for."

"Oh, please; you know you are more than prepared."

Bradley came and sat beside them. "Do you know what this is about?"

Just as the words came out of Bradley's mouth, the auditorium started to quiet down. Blake looked up to see Alexandra walking onto the stage looking elegant as usual.

"How does she manage to look that good all the time," said one of the residents sitting behind Blake.

Blake's eyes followed Alexandra as she strolled across the stage towards the microphone. Alexandra's eyes scanned the auditorium as if searching for someone. Her eyes landed on Blake who still stared at her. They locked eyes and Alexandra smiled at her. Blake did not return the smile, ensuring that her face showed no emotions.

Alexandra tapped the microphone with her hand to check that it was working. "Thank you all for being here today. I know you are probably wondering why you are here, but I promise that if you love surgery as much as I do, especially ground-breaking surgeries, you won't regret being here. Today we have a very special guest here with us who has traveled from Los Angeles. She is a legend in her field, and has won many awards and accolades for her outstanding achievements. To the world, she is one of the greatest surgeons of the twenty-first century but to me, she is the greatest woman in the world. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome my mother, Dr. Victoria Devereaux."

Alexandra beamed from ear to ear watching her mother walk towards her. Everyone in the auditorium stood up on their feet clapping. Dr. Victoria Devereaux, one of the most famous and most successful general surgeons in the world, had performed many record making surgeries. She made many contributions towards the development of medicine through her family's business. The Devereaux family dedicated their lives to medicine and had their hands in everything from pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, bioengineering, to medical device manufacturing. Victoria became head of her family's business when her father passed away. He always wanted her to take on a more active role in the business side of the company. But Victoria, just like Alexandra, always loved the operating room more than anything else. Performing a ground-breaking surgery was what gave her the most joy. That's why she delayed as long as she could before stepping into her father's shoes. Everyone was probably stunned to see how much they resembled each other. They shared the same long, dark mane of hair and facial features.

"Hi, baby." Victoria hugged Alexandra tightly before kissing her on both cheeks.

Alexandra beamed from ear to ear, happy to see her mom. Alexandra pulled away from her, looked at her, and then hugged her again. She didn't realize until now how much she had missed her mom since moving to Seattle. "I'm so happy you are here." Alexandra struggled to hold back her tears, overcome with emotions from seeing her mom.

"I'm happy to be here, sweetie." Victoria eyes glistened, making it clear she felt just as emotional as Alexandra. They released each other after their lengthy embrace and Alexandra exited the stage to sit in the audience.

"It's truly an honor to be home, because that is what Parkwood memorial is to me. This hospital was where I first fell in love with surgery. I came here most evenings after school to watch my dad work. That's why I want to take this moment to publicly say, thank you to my beautiful Alexandra for honoring your grandfather's wishes, by making the sacrifices that you have made to be here. So, I hope you are

treating her well, because if you don't you will have to answer to me," Victoria stated pointing her thumb to her chest. Everyone in the audience laughed at her actions. "I am here today because my daughter and I will be performing a very difficult surgery and we need as much help as possible, not just in the operating room but also theoretically. We need great minds like yours to give your input as I go over the review of the patient. Some of you will also be invited to be in the operating room with us. You have been selected based on your performance in your previous surgeries and you come highly recommended by my daughter. She went to bat for you as the family of the patients wanted us to bring in experts from other hospitals, but she firmly said no. She believes that her staff here is more than capable of handling the surgery," Victoria continued delving into the details of the surgery.

The more Blake heard about the surgery the more intrigued she became.

"I hope we are selected to be a part of the team. It will be a great addition to our list of achievements," Miranda said, gripping Blake's hand with excitement.

Blake wasn't as optimistic as Miranda and didn't want to be disappointed if Alexandra didn't choose her, so she tried not to think about it too much. After Victoria finished her presentation, she invited Alexandra back on stage to go over the neurological part of the surgery. Blake's eyes locked on Alexandra's lips as she listened to every word she said. *She even has the perfect the mother. How can one person be that fortunate? She has everything she could ever want or need.*

"I am now going to send out an email to those of you who have been chosen to be a part of the surgery. However, if you have any doubts, please feel free to decline the invitation,"

Alexandra informed the audience as she opened her phone to send the email.

Everyone in the auditorium started pulling out their phones from wherever they had them, obviously hoping to be one of the invitees. As Miranda scrambled for her phone, Blake sat there staring at Alexandra whose eyes were trained directly on her as if daring her to look at her phone. Blake didn't want to give Alexandra the satisfaction of seeing her behave like the rest of her colleagues, so she sat calmly with a straight face staring right back at her. The sound of Miranda's slight scream grabbed Blake's attention as she broke her stare from Alexandra to find out why her friend was screaming.

"I have been selected," Miranda informed Blake with excitement. "Did you check your phone?" Miranda looked at Blake anxiously awaiting her response.

"No," Blake answered getting up from her seat.

Miranda gave her a confused look before getting up to follow her out of the auditorium. "What? Why haven't you? Don't you want to be a part of the surgery?" she inquired as she caught up with Blake.

"If I am invited, it doesn't matter when I check the email."

"Well, it does as they want all the invitees to meet in imaging, in a couple of minutes." Miranda grabbed Blake by the elbow, stopping her in her tracks. "What's going on with you? I thought you would be eager to know." Miranda stared at her friend confused by her behavior.

"Ok fine. I'll check," Blake relented, opening her phone to check her email. She looked at the phone, said nothing, and handed it to Miranda.

"You have been selected," Miranda confirmed excitedly.

Blake's lack of excitement remained unchanged at the news.

"I don't understand your lack of excitement. You live for this type of challenging surgery."

Not that Blake wasn't excited about the opportunity of being a part of such a ground-breaking surgery, but she was more concerned about performing the surgery with Alexandra. She couldn't understand why doing the surgery with Alexandra made her nervous.

"Come on, let's go. I don't want us to be late." Miranda pulled Blake with her towards the imaging room.

By the time Blake and Miranda arrived at the imaging room, it seemed like everyone invited was already there. "Dr. Westmore, Dr. Hayes, nice of you to join us," Alexandra said as she approached them with her mom.

"Dr. Westmore, I have heard many wonderful things about you from my daughter who speaks very highly of you. I am looking forward to working with you." Victoria shook Blake's hand. She then turned towards Miranda and greeted her also.

Shock rippled through Blake at Victoria's statement. Alexandra spoke highly of her? Why when she'd been nothing but blunt and disinterested when interacting with the woman? While Victoria and Miranda were getting acquainted, Blake and Alexandra stood there staring at each other as if they both wanted to say something to the other but just couldn't find the words. The sound of Victoria's voice informing them that they should get started broke Alexandra's eyes from Blake's. They spent the next hour going over the details of the surgery. Victoria appeared very impressed with Blake's inputs and often commended her for them.

The surgery, scheduled for the Friday of the following week, filled everyone with excitement. Blake's anxiety about working with Alexandra subsided after the review. She focused on being a part of the surgery, which was the only hope for the patients' survival, and the challenge made her want it even more. Over the next week, Blake and Alexandra spent a lot of time together in the same room as they prepared for the surgery which helped to ease her anxiety even more. The more time she spent with Alexandra, the more it made her respect her as a surgeon. She saw that she didn't take who she was for granted and cared deeply about her patients. Alexandra was also very considerate of her colleague's

opinions and feelings. It made it difficult for her to continue building walls around herself to keep Alexandra at a distance. She struggled to not see the inner beauty of the woman. It became difficult with each passing day as she existed in Alexandra's orbit.

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Chapter Six

On the day of the surgery, Blake was the first member of the surgical team to be at the hospital that day. She felt ready, but wanted to review the notes again to ensure that they had covered everything that could go wrong during the surgery, and that they had a solution for it.

“Good morning, Blake, you are here early.”

Blake turned to see Alexandra standing in the doorway staring at her with a smile on her face. Her eyes moved of their own volition as they scanned Alexandra’s body from head to toe. *How can she look that good all the time?*

“Good morning. I wanted to review the images again to ensure we didn’t miss anything.” Blake turned her attention back to the images she reviewed.

Alexandra entered the room and stood beside Blake. She stood so close that their shoulders touched, causing Blake to turn her head and stare at their shoulders. When she lifted her eyes from their connected shoulders, they were met with Alexandra’s dark blue ones as they stood there staring at each other. Blake shifted her eyes and gazed at Alexandra’s slightly parted lips as she breathed softly.

“Can I ask you a personal question?” Alexandra’s hesitant tone piqued Blake’s interest.

At that question, Blake shifted her eyes back to Alexandra’s, and just as she was about to answer her phone rang. Blake looked at her phone grateful when she saw Miranda’s name flashed on the screen. Having Alexandra standing so close made her feel things she didn’t want to put meaning to. She quickly answered seeing it as an opportunity to exit the room.

“I have to take this,” she informed Alexandra and headed towards the door. They didn’t see each other again for the rest

of the morning until it was time for the surgery.

Later, Blake and Miranda walked into the operating room to see Alexandra and her mom scrubbing in for the surgery. They glanced at each other when they saw that both women scrubbed their hands in a similar manner.

Alexandra turned her head to see both women watching at them and smiled. “Ready ladies?” she asked as she headed into the area where the patients were being prepared for surgery.

“Yes, very much so,” Miranda answered, who remained as usual her ever bubbly self.

Blake showed no emotions and forced herself to be calm, cool, and collected. That day they were getting the chance to perform a surgery with a legend. And with all that Alexandra had accomplished at her age, one could also call her a legend. This fact was not lost on Blake, but she was the type of person who performed best under pressure and no matter how bad a circumstance was, she remained calm and never lost control.

They entered the operating room and looked up at the gallery, finding it filled. Not one seat sat empty. All week the hospital seemed abuzz with talk of the surgery as it is not often that they get to observe Siamese twins being separated in what could be one of the riskiest surgeries ever performed at the hospital. The patients flew in from South Africa as this was where Victoria had met them and offered to do the surgery. If they weren't separated, they would both die. It was a risky surgery as vital organs were joined together, and one wrong move could leave the twins paraplegic or dead on the operating table. But it was a do-or-die situation and the surgery had to be done to save their lives. They prepared as best they could, and the team felt confident that they would be successful.

“Let's begin,” instructed Victoria and everyone moved into position.

The hours ticked by as they worked meticulously on the twins. The blare of the vitals machine pierced through the air, alerting them that one of the twins started coding. Alexandra

looked up from where she still worked on the spine, her brow furrowed with worry.

Blake's mind raced as she ran through the possibilities that could be responsible. The blood pressure spike shouldn't have happened with patients so closely monitored. The lack of hemorrhaging and tachycardia left her floundering for a moment, until she spotted the oxygen monitor. *Too low! They aren't receiving enough oxygen.* Alexandra stepped aside, watching as Blake reacted quickly and adjusted the oxygen tube before upping the oxygen intake. Blake felt pressured from having so many eyes trained on her while she did what she did best. *You only feel pressured because Alexandra is here.* Meticulous in her approach, she displayed the confidence that made her one of the best. After Blake lowered the patients' pressure, Alexandra quickly continued operating. Time was crucial and she needed to fix their spines before they encountered another incident. The surgery went smoothly after that.

"Amazing work today, Dr. Westmore. You were incredible under pressure. Thank you," Victoria said as she hugged Blake. "I'm confident the twins will make a full recovery."

Blake's face registered surprise at the embrace. The recognition from Victoria deeply humbled her.

"You have a bright future ahead of you and I look forward to working with you again." Victoria released Blake from the embrace, giving her a fond smile.

"I told you she was an extraordinary surgeon, Mom," said Alexandra, who stood behind them.

"Thank you for your kind words, Dr. Devereaux, and it was truly an amazing experience. I am truly honored to have been given the opportunity to operate with you." The experience deeply humbled Blake.

"The feeling is mutual, Dr. Westmore. We will meet up later to discuss next steps."

Alexandra and Victoria headed towards the door, but just as Alexandra was about to go through the door she turned

around, and walked back to Blake to pull her into a hug. Blake turned momentarily paralyzed by the embrace, but for some reason, she returned the hug and melted into Alexandra's arms. It was like she couldn't control her body's reaction to the woman despite not wanting to soften in her arms the way she did.

"Thank you," Alexandra whispered as she held on to Blake for what seemed like forever, and they grew lost in the moment for awhile.

Their bodies fit perfectly together as Blake dipped her head, taking a deep breath and resting her nose in Alexandra's hair. Alexandra slowly released Blake and stared deep into her eyes as if searching for something, but as usual Blake kept her expression neutral, making it difficult for Alexandra to see how much the embrace affected her. Alexandra turned and walked away from Blake without saying a word. Blake watched as Alexandra went through the door and as soon as she closed the door behind her, Blake took a deep breath, shaking her head. What the hell was that? She definitely never expected Alexandra to embrace her like that, and something had just happened between them, but she didn't know what. Blake grew so lost in thought thinking about Alexandra that she didn't see when Miranda came up beside her.

"Hey, are you ok?" Miranda inquired, her voice filled with concern.

Blake jumped slightly, frightened by the sound of Miranda's voice. She tried to get a hold of herself before responding to Miranda "Yes, I'm ok."

"I'm so proud of you. You were amazing in there today. Told you that you had nothing to worry about." Miranda pulled her friend into a hug.

Blake returned the hug. "You were just as amazing." They exited the operating room together.

"I'm going to follow-up on another patient. I'll catch up with you later." Miranda gave her another quick side hug before heading in the opposite direction.

Blake thought of nothing else other than Alexandra's hug as she made her way to her office. The hug left her body feeling sensations she couldn't or didn't want to put meaning to. The rest of the day went by very fast, and Blake could barely focus on anything other than that hug. Only news of the twins' prognosis gave her mind something else to focus on for a minute. They were expected to make a full recovery and live normal lives. By the end of the day her mind felt like it went on a marathon with thoughts of one hug. Luckily for her it was Friday and she intended to spend the weekend relaxing. She smiled remembering her plans for the night as she packed up and left her office

Hey Westmore, we are heading to Palmettos to grab a bite. Want to join us?" Bradley asked as he approached Blake who stood in the hospital lobby checking her phone.

"I have plans."

"Hot date?" Bradley teased, looking at Blake with a grin on his face.

Blake rolled her eyes at Bradley and responded, "None of your beeswax," before walking away from him and heading for the exit.

Blake stepped into the cool evening air, closed her eyes, and took a deep breath, welcoming the fresh air. Standing there she felt someone hug her from behind. Blake smiled and turned to see her date, April, who had sneaked up behind her.

"Hi beautiful," April greeted, pulling Blake into a passionate kiss.

Blake returned the kiss with as much passion, taking control from April, knowing April loved when she took control when it came to kissing or more. She found April very attractive with her petite frame and beautiful hazel eyes that showed everything she felt. She had a warm, welcoming personality and always had a smile on her face. This was their fifth date, but it was obvious to her that April was already smitten with her. As she deepened the kiss, her mind drifted to Alexandra's hug. *Our bodies fitted perfectly together. My body has never melted so easily into another woman's embrace. She*

*felt so soft beneath her scrub. What the hell is wrong with me?
I'm kissing one woman while thinking about another.*

After their first date, April was surprised when Blake told her she would like to see her again. She told Blake she thought she didn't like her because she was so quiet and didn't say much during dinner. By now April had come to realize that she didn't like to talk much about herself and preferred to use actions rather than words when it came to expressing her emotions.

Alexandra was elated that it was the end of the week as it had been a hectic one for her. She was very happy the surgery went well, and the twins were on the path to recovery. As usual, her mind often times drifted to Blake who she had spent a lot of time with preparing for the surgery. That was the most opportunity she got to be with her long enough in a room to get to know her better. She didn't understand why Blake intrigued her so much or why she cared what the woman thought of her. She knew Blake was a talented surgeon, but having spent the last week with her, she also realized how smart and intuitive she was outside of being a surgeon.

As she exited the hospital, she stopped dead in her tracks at the sight of Blake kissing a woman. Earlier, when she had asked Blake if she could ask her a personal question, she wanted to ask her what her sexual orientation was. Now she got her answer. As if Blake sensed her presence, she immediately opened her eyes to see Alexandra watching her. She immediately stopped kissing the woman, and removed herself from their embrace. A brief moment of silence existed as Alexandra and Blake stood there staring at each other. Blake's companion's eyes bounced from her to Blake, confusion taking over her features. If she was in her position she would probably be just as confused, wondering why Blake acted as if she had just been caught with her hand in the cookie

jar. Blake's companion cleared her throat, reminding Blake that she was still standing there. Blake looked at the woman as if she had forgotten about her.

"This is my boss, Dr. Edison," Blake introduced, motioning her hands towards Alexandra.

"Nice to meet you," her companion replied, extending her hand to shake Alexandra's.

"And you are?" Alexandra asked before turning her gaze to Blake trying to get a read on the woman's facial expression. But as usual, her features gave nothing away.

"I'm April, Blake's friend," the petite woman provided.

"Friend? Well, with that kiss I would assume you two are more than friends." Alexandra's gaze, once again found Blake's as she awaited a response.

"Well, this is just our fifth date so it's a little too soon to give myself girlfriend status," April provided, glancing at Blake.

Just as April opened her mouth to say something else, Blake interrupted. "We should get going."

April looked at Blake and then back at Alexandra her face still a picture of confusion. "Good night, Dr. Edison, it was nice meeting you," April said as she looped her arm through Blake's.

"It was nice meeting you too. Enjoy your evening. See you on Monday, Dr. Westmore."

Blake simply nodded in response. Alexandra wanted to shake her head at Blake's behavior but refrained. She stepped around them and headed towards her car which had pulled up behind Blake and April. As her driver opened the door for her, Alexandra paused before she entered the car and turned to look back at Blake whose eyes focused on her. A tension hung between them which she could not explain. Alexandra wanted to know more about Blake and why she was so cold and distant towards her— a first for her. People were naturally drawn to her. Therefore, to have someone show little or no interest in getting to know her was quite intriguing and she

wanted to know why. Blake broke the eye contact, turning and walking away. Alexandra watched Blake, wondering what about her possibly made Blake nervous and why she always seemed like she couldn't get away from her fast enough each time they came in contact with each other. Especially when they were alone.

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Chapter Seven

The following week, Blake arrived late for the weekly staff meeting on Monday afternoon. She wasn't scheduled to start working until the afternoon, but she got caught up at her apartment. On her way to the hospital, she kept replaying the scene outside of the hospital where Alexandra had walked out to see her and April kissing. She kept replaying what April had asked her when they started walking away from the hospital.

"Is there something going on between you two?" April asked as she released Blake's arm, turning to face her.

Blake looked at her as if she didn't understand the question.

"One could feel the tension between you two from a mile away."

Blake shrugged, and replied, "There's nothing going on between us," her voice devoid of any emotions.

The concern etched on April's face made it clear she didn't believe nothing was going on between them. Luckily, she decided to drop the issue. April knew better than to push her to talk about something she obviously didn't want to. As they headed to dinner, Blake's mind had remained on Alexandra. It must have been obvious her mind lingered elsewhere because by the time they got to the restaurant, April once again asked if there was something between them. Blake didn't think she lied to April. There was nothing going on between them, but she just didn't know why she was bothered so much by the entire interaction. She knew she was often very aloof during her interactions with Alexandra outside of work-related issues. She told herself it was a case of where she didn't want to be around Alexandra or get to know her outside of work and that was totally ok, because not everyone needed to be friendly with their boss

She walked in just as Alexandra began commending the staff for the amazing work they were doing.

“Dr. Westmore, nice of you to join us,” Alexandra greeted her as soon as she entered the room. She watched Blake take her seat beside Miranda.

“Sorry I’m late.”

“I was just commending your colleagues on the hard work they have been doing. And now that you are here, I want to especially thank you for your amazing performance during the Siamese twins’ separation last week. Maybe, if not for you, we wouldn’t be having this conversation today.”

Everyone in the room started clapping. “Thank you. It was a team effort, and I am just happy to have done my part.” Blake wasn’t the type who liked to be thrown into the spotlight, but Alexandra shining the light on her made her feel very good and again she didn’t know why. At the end of the meeting, Alexandra informed them that she would be away for the rest of the week and would be back the following Monday.

“Blake, can you stay back for a minute please?” she asked Blake just as she headed towards the door with Miranda.

Miranda looked at Blake and then at Alexandra.

“I’ll catch up with you after.” Miranda headed through the door.

After Miranda walked out of the room, Blake turned to face Alexandra, waiting for her to say why she wanted her to stay back.

“Aren’t you going to have a seat, Blake?” Alexandra motioned to the chair closest to her.

Blake looked at the chair then back at Alexandra and sat in the chair next to the one Alexandra motioned towards. Alexandra smiled when Blake sat in the chair farthest from her.

“I don’t bite you know, Dr. Westmore.” She tilted her head to one side, waiting for Blake to respond.

“Who said you did?”

At Blake's response, Alexandra's smile widened. "So how was your date on Friday?" Alexandra asked as if they were two girlfriends catching up on their weekend rendezvous.

The question completely threw Blake off guard. "I'm sure you didn't ask me to stay back to ask me about my personal life, Dr. Edison."

Alexandra took a moment to reply, holding Blake's gaze. Blake wondered if she was trying to figure out how to answer. "What if I did?" she finally answered after what felt like minutes for Blake.

"I'm sure you don't. So, what's the real reason you asked me to stay back?" she persisted, not willing to entertain that line of conversation.

It must have become obvious to Alexandra that she wasn't going to get an answer from Blake regarding her date, so she decided to drop it. "I want you to be in charge of the twins' recovery while I am away for the rest of the week. They are almost out of the woods and if they continue to progress the way that they have, they should be able to go home in two weeks."

Blake was touched that Alexandra trusted her to cover for her while she was away. "Ok. I'll be happy to do that"

"Thank you. You have my cell number so call me anytime if there's an issue, day or night." A pause lingered between them as they both sat there staring at each other.

"Well, if there's nothing else, have a safe flight," Blake got up from her seat, unable to bear the scrutiny of Alexandra's penetrating gaze much longer.

"Thank you."

Blake could feel Alexandra's eyes on her as she walked towards the door. Blake closed the door behind. *Why is she curious about my dating life? There's no way she's genuinely interested. We're not friends and she's happily engaged. Maybe I'm reading too much into it.* She was starting to become more and more confused by their interactions.

Chapter Eight

The week flew by very fast and luckily for Blake, there were no issues with the twins so there was no need for her to communicate with Alexandra. The urge to text her to provide an update on the twins intensified with each passing day. Or did she just want to know if she was ok? The latter confounded her. As she approached the entrance at Parkwood Memorial, Miranda caught up with her at the doors.

“Hey friend, how are you?” she bantered, handing her a cup of coffee.

“You are a lifesaver.” Blake took a much-needed sip of the coffee, closing her eyes momentarily.

“I can’t believe it’s already Monday; the weekend just went by so fast,” Miranda stated as she went through the doors.

“Did you get to clean out your closet as you had planned?”

“Somewhat.” Miranda gave Blake a cheeky grin.

Blake looked at Miranda and rolled her eyes “I’ll take that as no.”

As they approached the nurses’ station, they realized that there were small groups gathered around and everyone appeared immersed in their phones whispering about something. Blake looked at Miranda wondering what had happened. She saw Bradley talking with some of the nurses on the other side of the station. When he saw them, he made his way over to them with a concerned look on his face.

“Hey what do you think about what’s going with the chief?” he asked.

“What are you talking about?” Blake questioned, looking just as puzzled as Miranda.

“You haven’t seen the photos and video?” Bradley asked, his eyes widening with his question.

“Obviously not. What photos and videos are you talking about?” Miranda pushed.

“I can’t believe you have not seen this, it’s all over the news and *TMZ* since yesterday.” Bradley showed them his phone.

Pictures of Taylor kissing a woman filled the phone. A woman who was definitely not Alexandra. He scrolled through at least ten photos in different places and angles. There was even a photo of them on a bed together. The video showed Taylor and the woman making out in what seemed to be on the set of one of her movies.

The first thought that came to Blake’s mind was Alexandra. She wondered if Alexandra had seen the photos and how she was handling the news. Blake took the phone from Bradley and scanned the news feed to search for any mention of Alexandra. It was the most talked-about news in the tabloids. Taylor and Alexandra were Hollywood’s lesbian power couple who everyone loved seeing together. Many of the tabloids mentioned that there were no signs of trouble in their relationship and wondered what could have prompted Taylor to cheat on the woman whom she had said on many occasions was the best thing that ever happened to her. And of all her achievements, her greatest was her relationship with Alexandra.

“Is the chief here?” Miranda inquired.

“No, I don’t think so. No one has seen her. I don’t think she would want to come in today,” Bradley responded.

“Look it’s on the news,” announced one of the nurses standing beside Blake.

Blake, Miranda, and Bradley all turned to see Alexandra on the television exiting Tacoma International Airport as the paparazzi flashed their cameras while shouting a million questions at her. Alexandra hid her face behind sunglasses as her driver tried to shield her from the cameras. They were so

focused on the television that they did not see Alexandra enter the nurses' station.

“Good morning,” Alexandra greeted as she made her way to the counter making her presence known.

Her voice gave nothing away and her face remained impassive. She paused halfway, looked up at the television, and then at her staff who were now so silent, you could hear a pin drop. Without another word, she continued towards the counter.

Blake watched as Alexandra gave the nurse a docket with some instructions and headed towards the elevator. Amazement filled her at how composed she appeared and that she did not look like someone whose life had been turned upside down over the weekend. Once Alexandra disappeared out of sight, the chattering began again.

“Ok, that’s enough,” Blake shouted, annoyed by her colleagues’ insensitivity. “I am sure you all have work to do, and I think it would be nice if you don’t make our boss feel like she is under a microscope here also where her every move is being watched.” She moved away from the gathering and headed to the attending doctors’ lounge.

Miranda followed her to the lounge.

“What was that about?” Miranda fell into step beside her.

“What was what?” Blake shot back, her voice dripping with irritation.

“You scolding everyone for talking about the chief. I am just surprised by your outburst. It’s so unlike you.”

Blake shrugged her shoulders and plopped down on the sofa in the lounge. “I just think it’s insensitive for everyone to be standing there discussing her life like that knowing what she is going through. I just don’t think she needs to be scrutinized here at work.”

“I agree, but it’s just unusual for you to react like that about anyone. You are always Miss Cool, Calm, and Collected,” Miranda pointed out, sitting down beside Blake. “I can’t begin to imagine what she is going through. How she is able to keep

her composure like that, is beyond incredible. I wouldn't be able to show my face here today if I was in her shoes.”

“That's why I don't think people here should make an already terrible situation worse.” Blake quirked an eyebrow at Miranda when messages came in simultaneously on both their phones.

Alexandra had sent out a message canceling the weekly department meeting. The message informed them that if there was anything pressing that anyone needed to discuss, they should send her an email and she would make time for them the following day, but she had an emergency surgery today and wouldn't be available for the meeting. Blake read the message, shocked that with everything happening, Alexandra could focus on a surgery.

Throughout the day, the topic of every nurse or doctor's conversation centered around Alexandra and Taylor's break up. By midday, the paparazzi had swarmed outside of Parkwood Memorial wanting to get a picture of Alexandra. As Alexandra did her rounds around the hospital, she could feel her staff staring at her at every turn and no one would look her in the eye. She expected this type of behavior and was determined to not let her personal life affect her work. After the surgery she had scheduled, she was happy to go back to her office as she really didn't want to be around anyone today, but she knew she had to come into work. Her heart ached, but she didn't want to face the pain, and she saw work as a way to escape the hurt. Her mom didn't want her to return to Seattle, but Alexandra didn't want to be in Los Angeles where she would have less privacy. Embarrassment and humiliation washed over her. Flaws and all, she loved Taylor unconditionally. To the world they appeared the perfect couple. She believed as much. Equally shocked by the photos, she couldn't understand why Taylor cheated on her.

After the story broke, Taylor flew from Amsterdam where she was shooting a movie to see Alexandra. Replaying the encounter still didn't give her the answers she was looking for. She had been trapped in their home as a result of all the paparazzi that stationed themselves outside the gate since the story broke. Taylor had burst through the door and as soon as she saw Alexandra she started crying.

"I'm so sorry. Please forgive me. It was a moment of weakness," Taylor begged, tears streaming down her face.

Overcome with hurt and anger. "How did it happen?" she asked, needing to know.

"I don't know. It just did. I'm so sorry." Taylor continued crying, not making eye contact with her. Whenever Taylor lied, she could never look her in the face.

"You don't know how you ended up fucking your co-star?" Alexandra gritted out as calmly as possible. She knew Taylor knew that despite her being calm she was furious. She had always been the more level-headed of the two of them even when upset, and she always tried to handle their disagreements as peacefully as possible. But this wasn't some disagreement. Her heart was breaking into a million pieces, and she literally wanted to scream. "How long has the affair been going on?"

Taylor made a step toward her, but stopped when she saw the look on Alexandra's face. "It's just happened. Okay? Ashley was relentless and I was feeling lonely with you not being here. And one thing led to another. I'm so sorry," Taylor sobbed, scrubbing her face with the back of her sleeve.

"How long, Taylor?" Alexandra fought to hold on to what little control remained. She just couldn't wrap her head around what she was hearing from her fiancée.

"It started a little over a month ago," Taylor whispered, her eyes downcast.

"A moment of weakness would have been a one-time thing. The fact that you have been fucking this woman for over a month is not a moment of weakness," Alexandra shouted, finally losing control of her emotions.

“Maybe if you hadn’t moved to Seattle, then maybe it wouldn’t have happened. I have been feeling so neglected since you’ve been there. You have barely had time for me since you moved there,” Taylor shot back.

Alexandra lost it as fury burned deep within. She couldn’t believe Taylor tried to blame her moving to Seattle for her transgression.

“Are you fucking serious right now? You’re going to play that card. Well, if feeling neglected was all it took for you to throw away what we had, then there’s not much else I can say. That is total bullshit, and you know it. I tried my best to still prioritize our relationship, but the fact that you are trying to turn this around on me says more to me than anything. And right now, I can’t even stand to look at you. So how about you go back to Amsterdam and let Ashley give you all the attention you need,” she shouted, moving past Taylor, needing to be anywhere but there.

Alexandra thought it a low blow because she knew she did her best to always make time for Taylor and regardless, instead of falling in bed with someone else, Taylor should have spoken to her about how she felt. The fact that it was not just a one-time thing was too much for Alexandra to bear, and she left their home to go and be with her mother. Taylor had shown up there, but Alexandra wouldn’t see her. Taylor tried calling, but Alexandra refused to answer. Nothing Taylor could say to her would ever make her understand why she cheated. Alexandra did read the messages Taylor sent her saying how sorry she was about what happened and that she had to find out that way.

Alexandra sat there thinking how her life changed in a matter of hours when she heard a knock on her office door. “Come in,” she answered, pulling herself together before the door opened. She tried her best to mask her emotions when Blake entered the room.

“Do you have time now for us to go over the twins’ progress this past week?” Blake stepped into the office, closing the door behind her.

“Sure, come on in.” Alexandra signaled for Blake to have a seat.

Blake kept eye contact with her as she sat in the chair, keeping her expression neutral, obviously trying not to make Alexandra feel uncomfortable. As Blake went through the details of what happened while Alexandra was away, she realized that although that she didn’t want to be around anyone, she felt at ease with Blake. She welcomed the distraction from all the thoughts that were running through her mind about her failed relationship.

“Thanks for the update, Blake, and thanks for looking after them while I wasn’t here,” Alexandra acknowledged graciously.

“You are welcome.” Blake gaze lingered on her for a moment before she stood up from the chair to leave. Blake stopped halfway towards the door, turned around, and said, “I am sorry about what happened, and if there’s anything I can do for you, let me know.”

Blake’s words surprised Alexandra. She didn’t expect Blake to show any concern about what was going on with her. Blake always seemed so cold towards her. But she also really appreciated the gesture as everyone else she encountered throughout the day acted weird around her and wouldn’t make eye contact. Blake was the only one who behaved normally around her and treated her the same as before the cheating scandal.

“Thank you. I really appreciate it.” She couldn’t prevent the somber tone of voice even if she wanted to. Blake stood there looking at her for a moment as if she wanted to say something else. Just as Alexandra was about to say something to her, she received a message on her cell phone from Taylor. Her heart squeezed painfully in her chest seeing Taylor’s name. The words on the screen made her feel nothing but hurt and anger.

I love you and I’m so very sorry for everything. So very sorry. My love, you mean more to me than anything in this world. You have to know that. I made a huge mistake and it’s

killing me to know that I hurt you. I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me. I know you need time to process everything, and I'll give you the space you need. Just know that I'm not giving up on our relationship. Love you always.

By the time Alexandra looked up from her phone, Blake had left her office. Alexandra spent the rest of the day in her office and worked until late that night. She didn't want to face the paparazzi and didn't want to go home and be alone.

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Chapter Nine

By the end of the second week, the buzz surrounding Alexandra's very public breakup died down a bit around the hospital and the paparazzi were slowly fading away. Alexandra spent almost every hour at the hospital working as she didn't want to deal with the pain. She felt so lost, and work was the only thing that gave her any form of joy. At nights when she tried to sleep, visions of Taylor in bed with another woman plagued her mind. Family, friends, and colleagues expected her to lock herself away like a wilted flower, but her inner strength wouldn't allow it. She would live through the pain, though unbearable at times. *God! How could she have done this to us? How do I live without her? Sixteen years thrown away for a fuck.*

Her mom called her twice, sometimes three times per day, for the past two weeks wanting her to talk about how she felt, but Alexandra didn't want to talk about it. She didn't receive any more messages from Taylor since the last message she sent about giving her space. Alexandra knew Taylor needed to return to Amsterdam to shoot her movie, and more than likely that was why she didn't follow her to Seattle. She knew they were operating on a very tight schedule and as the lead, Taylor needed to be there.

It was now Friday night, and she dreaded the weekend, but she knew if she showed up to work on the weekend, her staff would start speculating. She wanted things to seem as normal as possible, because usually she didn't work on weekends and would only come in if there was an emergency and they needed her to perform a surgery. She checked the time on her computer and saw that it read almost eight p.m. and decided to go home. She gathered her things and headed through her office doors towards the elevators. She hadn't eaten much all week and wondered where she could get a really good burger and fries with some gravy on the side. She was a big fan of

Canadian poutine but didn't think she could get that in Seattle. She would settle for fries and gravy at this point.

As Alexandra exited the elevator and headed towards the main exit, she saw Blake and Miranda also on their way out. She hadn't seen Blake since their conversation in her office. Once again, the woman held her gaze as she approached them and for some reason, it gave her great comfort. She really appreciated the fact that Blake did not make her feel scrutinized or acted any different towards her. Those crystal blue eyes gave nothing away, and she could not help but smile inwardly, wondering if she would ever be able to read the woman.

Blake saw Alexandra walking towards her and Miranda. She kept eye contact with her, trying to get a read on her. *I wonder how she's doing.*

Miranda must have realized she wasn't paying attention to her and followed her eyes to see Alexandra approaching them. "Do you think we should invite her to the party? I think it would be a good distraction for her," Miranda whispered to Blake.

It was Miranda's birthday on Saturday and her parents were throwing her a party at their house. Miranda's birthdays were a big deal for her and even though she was grown, her parents made it a point of duty to throw her a party every year.

"It's your party," Blake answered, her eyes still on Alexandra.

"Hi, Alexandra," Miranda greeted as Alexandra drew closer to them.

"Good evening, ladies." Alexandra stopped to talk with them.

Blake responded with a wave.

“Any plans for the weekend?” Miranda inquired with excitement in her voice.

Alexandra smiled at Miranda’s enthusiasm. “Not at the moment.”

“Well, tomorrow is my birthday and I want you to come to my party, and since I am the birthday girl you aren’t allowed to say no,” Miranda demanded with a grin on her face.

Alexandra’s eyes widened slightly, her brows raised, clearly surprised by Miranda’s invitation. *She probably doesn’t want to be around people. But she did tell her she didn’t have any plans for the weekend.*

“Thanks for the invite. I’ll be happy to attend.” Surprisingly, Alexandra seemed unbothered by the idea after the initial shock wore off.

Miranda clapped her hands together with excitement, expressing her happiness that Alexandra accepted her invitation. Blake rolled her eyes internally at her friend’s excitement.

“I’ll text you my home address and I’ll see you tomorrow.” She immediately retrieved her phone from her bag to text her the address.

“Ok, great.” Alexandra headed towards the exit with them.

When they got outside, they saw Alexandra’s driver waiting for her.

“Have a good night, Alexandra,” Miranda said before they parted.

Before heading towards her car, Alexandra stopped and asked, “Do you know where I can get a really good burger with fries and gravy?”

At Alexandra’s question, Miranda pointed at Alexandra and said “Oh my God! You are a fan of poutine?” A huge grin took over her face.

“Yes, I am. It’s a must-have each time I go to Canada, but unfortunately. it’s not that easy to get here in the states, so I’ll settle for fries and some really good gravy.” Alexandra smiled

genuinely and Blake marveled at her ability to smile so freely under the circumstances.

“Well, you are in luck as Palmettos has the best burgers and fries in Seattle and Trevor is an amazing chef and makes one of the best gravy I’ve ever tasted,” Miranda informed with confidence in Trevor’s abilities.

“Ok, great. Where can I find Palmettos?”

Miranda looked at Blake, then back at Alexandra with a shocked expression on her face and mouth wide open. “Wait, what? You haven’t been to Palmettos since you moved here?”

Alexandra looked at Miranda appearing both confused and amused by her friend. “No. Should I have been?”

“Of course, you should have. Palmettos is Parkwood’s staff chill spot as it is right around the corner and serves the best food around here.”

As Blake stood there listening to Miranda, she hoped Miranda wouldn’t invite Alexandra to come along with them. They were on their way to Palmettos to have dinner and kick-start Miranda’s birthday celebration. Just as Blake was about to interrupt Miranda to try and steer the conversation in another direction, the dreaded words came out of Miranda’s mouth.

“We are on our way there now for dinner. Why don’t you come with us? I promise you will not regret it.”

Alexandra looked at Blake and said, “Dr. Westmore, do you also recommend Palmettos?”

Blake shrugged and replied, “Yes they do have the best food around here.”

Alexandra turned back to Miranda. “Well, if two of my most esteemed surgeons recommend it then I’ll take you up on your offer and join you for dinner. Give me a second to update my driver on the change of plans.” Alexandra stepped away from Blake and Miranda and walked to her car where her driver stood waiting for her.

“What the heck, Hayes? Why did you invite her with everything that’s going on in her life,” Blake whispered as soon as she was sure Alexandra couldn’t hear her.

“Well, that is exactly why I invited her. She needs a distraction and she doesn’t have any friends here.”

“How do you know she doesn’t have any friends?” Blake shot back.

Before Miranda could answer, Alexandra rejoined them.

“Okay, ladies, lead the way.”

Blake walked ahead as Alexandra and Miranda followed behind her, with Miranda striking up a conversation with Alexandra about her trips to Canada. When they entered Palmettos, Trevor saw them and waved as he poured a drink for a customer. A fair number of patrons gathered inside Palmettos, but it wasn’t too crowded.

“What do you think?” Miranda asked Alexandra.

“It’s charming. I like the old school vibes and that it’s not too loud in here.”

Blake signaled for their usual spot at the bar. Miranda looked at Blake nodded and said to Alexandra, “We usually sit at the bar, but we can get a booth or table.”

“No, no bar is just fine.”

Blake hoped Alexandra wouldn’t sit beside her, but unfortunately for her, Alexandra did just that and Miranda sat on the other side of Alexandra.

“Hi, ladies! What can I get for you tonight?” Trevor asked, smiling at Miranda.

Alexandra looked back and forth between Trevor and Miranda, probably picking up on Trevor’s obvious crush on Miranda.

“Hi, Trevor. I’ll have my usual. This is my boss, Dr. Alexandra Edison. This is her first time here and I gave her a five-star review of Palmettos, so you better not disappoint.”

Miranda pointed a finger at Trevor as if threatening him before explaining to Trevor what Alexandra was craving.

Trevor laughed at Miranda's little threat. For a moment it became obvious he totally forgot about everyone else at the bar and focused solely on Miranda. Blake cleared her throat to get Trevor's attention. "I'll have a scotch on the rocks with the surf and turf and a glass of water," she ordered, getting straight to the point. The faster she ordered the faster she could leave.

Alexandra leaned a little closer to Blake. "Interesting choice of drink."

Blake turned to look at Alexandra to ask her why, but before she could voice her question Trevor interrupted them.

"What would you like to drink and is there anything else you'd like to add to the food order Miranda placed for you?" he asked Alexandra.

"Dr. Hayes got the order perfect, and I'll have the same drink as Dr. Westmore, except I'll have my scotch neat."

"I'll be right back with your orders, ladies." Trevor stepped away from them but not before his gaze eyes returned to Miranda and lingered briefly.

Blake realized that Alexandra must have caught on to the fact that even though Trevor addressed all three of them, his eyes were always fixated on Miranda. When Trevor stepped out of earshot, Alexandra turned towards Miranda and asked, "Did you give his restaurant such a great review because you two are together?"

Miranda looked at Alexandra, eyes wide, shocked by her question. "W-what?" she stammered, clearly not expecting that question from her boss.

"He wishes they were together. But he's not her type," Blake chimed in, quite pleased that somebody else other than her saw the obvious.

"No, we are not together. Why did you assume we were?" Miranda questioned.

Alexandra felt bad that she had assumed wrong. “I’m sorry I understood incorrectly. It’s just the way he looked at you that made me believe as much. Because for a man to look at a woman with so much affection and desire, one would guess that they were together?” she explained, the inner corners of her eyebrows raised.

“One would also assume that she would give him a shot seeing how obvious it is that he is in love with her,” Blake added dryly.

Miranda gave Blake the evil eye.

“Why won’t you give him a shot?” Alexandra asked.

Miranda shrugged. “We are just too different.”

“But different can be good, and how do you know that you two are so different if you don’t give him a shot,” Alexandra pushed much to Blake’s delight.

“She prefers suit and tie, and Trevor is ripped jeans and tats,” Blake quipped, enjoying seeing Miranda being put on the spot.

“Really?”

Miranda looked at Alexandra, opening and closing her mouth several times, unable to provide an answer. Blake knew she did not want to lie because there was some truth to what Blake said. She didn’t see Trevor as the type of guy she would bring home to meet her parents. On multiple occasions, Trevor told Blake he’d thought about asking Miranda to go on a date with him, but feared she would turn him down. She knew he hoped that one day she would ask him out or something would happen between them. He tried showing Miranda in small ways that he thought the world of her, but it was like Miranda was oblivious to his gestures.

“There are many women who would do anything to have someone look at them like that, and maybe you two might not be that different after all. And even if you are different, it’s just an opportunity to see the world from a different point of view and that might make your relationship more interesting. Maybe under all those tats, there’s a guy who is more than a

suit and tie. Take it from someone who is constantly judged based on how I look or my family's background," Alexandra advised passionately.

Blake eyed Alexandra, impressed by her words. She lowered her gaze, filled with shame knowing she too had been judging Alexandra ever since her first day at Parkwood. Before Miranda could respond to Alexandra's statement, Trevor returned with their drinks, and her cell phone vibrated. Miranda quickly took the call while Trevor placed the drinks in front of them.

"I have to go. There is a problem with one of my patients and I gave the nurses instructions to call me," Miranda informed them when she got off the phone.

"Let me know if you need anything," Blake offered.

"Will do. See you at the party tomorrow, Dr. Edison. Bye, Trevor." Miranda rushed towards the door.

Blake and Alexandra watched as Trevor's eyes followed Miranda walking away.

"You know it's her birthday tomorrow. You should come to the party, Trevor."

Trevor swung his head towards Blake and said, "I wouldn't feel right showing up since she didn't invite me."

Blake grinned mischievously. "Well, I am her best friend and I get to invite whoever I want, and I am sure she wouldn't mind."

"Are you sure she wouldn't mind?" Trevor looked at Blake skeptically.

"Scout's honor," Blake responded with the gesture of a scout.

"Ok. I'll be there." Trevor gave Blake the brightest smile that could light up any room.

Chapter Ten

Alexandra looked at Blake and smiled, apparently realizing what she had done. “Well, I guess it’s just you and me.”

“Guess it is.” Blake took a sip of her drink. Now that it was just her and Alexandra, Blake wished she could leave, but thought it would be rude to leave Alexandra there by herself to eat alone. They sat there silently for a moment sipping on their drinks.

“What is it about me that you don’t like, Dr. Westmore?” Alexandra asked, breaking the silence.

Blake was about to take another sip of her drink but paused midair, put the glass down, then turned towards Alexandra. Thrown by Alexandra’s question, she asked, “What makes you think I don’t like you?”

“Just a feeling.” Alexandra’s gaze held hers as she racked her brain trying to come up with reasons why Alexandra thought she disliked her. *Well, you have given her no reason to think otherwise since she arrived. You barely acknowledge the woman unless it is a necessity.*

“Well, there must be a reason why you feel that way,” Blake pushed, wanting to know exactly why Alexandra felt the way she did.

Alexandra looked at Blake and shrugged. “Maybe it’s just the way you react towards me.”

Blake ran her eyes over Alexandra’s features, wondering how best to respond to the statement. In the end, the words that came from her mouth was not exactly what she wanted to come out. “Why? Because I am not running around drooling after you like every other doctor, nurse, and patient at Parkwood or trying to seek your approval?” she answered her tone holding no malice.

Alexandra laughed at Blake's candor. "That's one of the many things I have come to admire about you, Blake. Your honesty is very refreshing. I like it." Alexandra paused. "But I wasn't aware that my staff was drooling after me and you don't need my approval, Dr. Westmore. You are a brilliant surgeon," she continued, still amused by Blake's statement.

Blake stared at Alexandra, admiring her strength and her ability to not let her personal life affect how she reacted to people. "Oh, come on, you have to know the effect you have on people when you walk into a room. It's like they pause to admire all of that," she said, gesturing towards Alexandra's body and face with her hands.

"Actually, I didn't know that. Guess next time I walk into a room, I'll have to check to see if people really react that way," Alexandra stated, her voice still filled with laughter.

"Bullshit, you have to have known," Blake shot back, before taking a sip of her drink.

"Ok. So, let me ask you this. If this is the natural effect I have on people when I walk into a room, why do you seem to be immune to all of this?" Alexandra asked, gesturing towards her body the way Blake did.

Blake couldn't help but smile at Alexandra mimicking her. "I learned a very long time ago not to want or lust after women that I cannot have. It's just wasted energy that should be geared towards things that are actually attainable."

"So, what makes you think that you couldn't have all of this?" Alexandra again gestured towards her body.

Blake shrugged. "Girls like you don't usually go for girls like me. It's that simple."

Alexandra stopped laughing as she must have realized that a certain sadness existed behind Blake's statement. "What type of girl do you see me as, Blake?"

"Rich, high society, country club girl who only dates people in the same circle as them." She delivered the reply in a matter-of-fact tone.

“I am very disappointed that’s how you see me, Blake and it’s very sad that you see yourself as someone who someone like me would never want. Hopefully, over time, your opinion of me will change,” Alexandra replied, her tone filled with melancholy.

Before Blake could respond, Trevor returned with their food. “Here we are ladies Enjoy. Let me know if you need anything else.” Trevor left them to serve a group of women that came into the restaurant and signaled him over to their table.

Blake’s assumption about her hurt Alexandra. Her mood completely changed since Blake’s statement. It brought up memories of when she and Taylor had just met and Taylor had the same opinion of her. Of all the reasons she thought Blake didn’t like her, being shallow wasn’t one of them. They ate in silence for a moment. After that statement Alexandra just didn’t know what to say to Blake. Blake must have realized that she had somehow hurt Alexandra’s feelings with her earlier statement and felt bad about it and decided to break the uncomfortable silence between them.

“How’s the food? I hope the fries and gravy satisfied your cravings.” Her tone lacked its usual confidence.

Alexandra decided not to let the tension linger between them and ensured that her tone didn’t communicate her disappointment any further. “It’s pretty good actually.”

“I don’t think I could ever have fries and gravy like that,” Blake admitted, still trying to keep the conversation going.

“What? You have never tried it?” At Blake’s obvious effort, Alexandra’s mood improved.

“Nope. Just doesn’t look like something I would enjoy.” Blake eyed Alexandra’s plate with a slight frown.

“You seem to have a tendency, Dr. Westmore, to judge things base on what you see. Sometimes you need to explore what’s inside before you make up your mind. You may be surprised by what you find.” Despite the delivery being more passionate than intended, she hoped Blake got the hidden message in her statement.

Blake frowned. Her features pensive. “Ok fine. I’ll try it.” She looked at the fries and gravy with a slight grimace.

Alexandra smiled as she used her fork to feed Blake.

“So, what do you think?”

“Well, I must say it’s not as bad as I thought it would be,” Blake replied after she finished chewing.

The corners of Alexandra’s mouth lifted in a smile. “See, always good to keep an open mind.”

They spent the rest of the night talking about basketball, which happened to be their favorite sport and, of course, medicine. Alexandra realized that they had a few other things in common and it was quite easy talking to Blake when she wasn’t judging her.

Alexandra looked at her watch and saw that it had grown pretty late. “Shall we get the bill?”

Blake looked up at the television and nodded. “Sure.”

Blake pulled out her purse to retrieve her credit card, but Alexandra stopped her.

“Dinner is on me tonight.” She placed her black card on the counter.

“That’s not necessary,” Blake protested, clearly not comfortable with Alexandra paying for her meal.

“I insist. It’s my way of saying thanks for staying with me after Miranda left. I know you weren’t too enthusiastic about me joining you for dinner,” Alexandra stated as she signaled to Trevor that they were ready to pay.

“Did you enjoy your meals, ladies?” Trevor placed the bill on the counter, smiling at them.

Alexandra returned Trevor's smile. "Everything was just perfect. You lived up to Dr. Haye's praises."

"So, I guess I will be seeing you again?"

"Definitely! May I also have two shots of the best tequila that you have? Preferably gold?"

"I do have the good stuff with the worm," Trevor replied, with a wicked grin on his face as he retrieved the tequila and poured it.

Alexandra turned towards Blake and passed one of the tequilas to her. "I want you to have a shot with me."

Blake looked at the tequila then back at Alexandra, then licked the back of her hand without removing her eyes from Alexandra's. She then poured salt on her hand. She held the salt bottle, waiting for Alexandra to wet the back of her hand so that she could pour the salt for her. Alexandra licked the back of her hand without removing her eyes from Blake. She then held out her hand for Blake to pour the salt. Alexandra took up her glass, holding it mid-air while waiting for Blake to take up hers.

"Cheers." Blake clinked her glass against Alexandra's and shot back the tequila.

Alexandra did the same and handed Blake some lime. "Now let's go home," she said as she got up from the bar.

Blake waved goodbye to Trevor. "Bye, Trevor. See you at the party tomorrow."

Stepping outside into the cool night air, Alexandra realized that she had told her driver she would call him when she was close to being ready but had forgotten to do so. "I forgot to call my driver ahead of time," she informed Blake, searching for her phone.

"I could give you a ride."

Alexandra stopped searching for her phone and turned towards Blake. "Are you sure? I wouldn't want to put you out of your way."

“Yes, I am sure. Besides, I would still have to wait until he gets here. And the sooner I leave here, the sooner I can get to bed.”

“That’s very sweet of you, but you don’t have to wait.”

“It’s ok. I insist, so let’s go.” Blake led the way to her car. They walked in silence to the parking lot connected to the hospital.

“Nice car,” Alexandra complimented as Blake opened the door to her 1965 Ford Mustang, slipping inside.

She reached over and opened the passenger door for Alexandra.

“Not at all what I was expecting,” Alexandra added as she looked around the car’s interior.

Blake started the engine, then turned to face Alexandra and asked, “What were you expecting, Dr. Edison?”

Alexandra looked at Blake and shrugged. “Not sure, but definitely not this.”

Blake didn’t respond instead she put the car in gear and drove off.

They drove in silence for about five minutes before Blake addressed Alexandra’s statement. “It was my dad’s car.”

Alexandra looked at Blake and saw a flicker of pain on her face. “Was?” she asked Blake without taking her eyes off her.

“He died when I was young,” Blake responded as they pulled up at a stoplight.

“Sorry to hear that.” Alexandra stared into Blake’s eyes. There was just something about Blake that she was drawn to, and she couldn’t figure it out.

The light turned green, and she pulled off. “It was a long time ago; nothing to be sorry about.”

“How old were you when he passed?” Alexandra wanted to know more about Blake. She didn’t want to bring up bad memories for Blake, but she wanted to see how much she could get Blake to open up to her.

Blake's eyes focused on the road when she replied, "eleven," barely above a whisper.

"Eleven? And he left you this car."

Blake took a long time to say anything and for a moment Alexandra thought she wasn't going to answer. Alexandra heard when Blake took a deep breath before she said, "He didn't leave it to me. I bought it back from the guy who owned it when I was able to afford it."

"Why?" Alexandra couldn't help her persistence.

Blake looked over at her. "You sure do ask a lot of questions."

Alexandra pointed towards the road. "You better keep your eyes on the road."

Blake shook her head, focusing her attention back on the road.

"I would still like an answer, Blake," Alexandra pushed not willing to let her off the hook so easily.

Blake again looked over at her.

Alexandra gave Blake a wicked smile. "What can I say; I am persistent."

Blake couldn't help but return the smile, even though it was apparent that she was trying not to. It was evident that talking about her dad was a hard topic for her, but apparently, she couldn't help but answer Alexandra's questions.

"He loved this car and I remember how he would spend hours cleaning it ensuring that it always looked brand new. But what I remember most is when he would take me to get ice cream on Sundays and he would often put me in his lap and let me steer on our way back. When we got home, he would always scoop me up in his arms and say 'Baby girl, you are the only thing in this world I love more than this car.' He would kiss me on my forehead, throw me over his shoulder, and carry me inside. When he died, my mom sold the car a week after he was buried, and it was like losing him twice in a matter of week and I vowed that one day I would find it and

buy it back and so I did.” Sadness filled Blake’s voice, making it obvious to Alexandra that her dad meant the world to her.

“I’m happy you were able to get it back,” Alexandra told her, wondering whether or not to ask Blake what happened to her father. She didn’t want to bring up more sad memories for Blake, but for some reason, she wanted to know as much as possible about her.

Alexandra slipped into deep thought for awhile, pondering whether or not to continue this line of questions regarding Blake’s family history. Blake made that decision for her because more than likely she didn’t want to reveal anything else to Alexandra.

“Now it’s my turn to interrogate you, Dr. Edison.” She looked over at Alexandra with a smirk on her face.

“Sure, you can ask me anything you desire to know.” Alexandra turned to face Blake, leaning back against the car door.

“Can you drive?”

Alexandra’s brows wrinkled in confusion, completely thrown by Blake’s question. She expected Blake to ask something a bit more personal.

“Yes, I can drive.” She wondered where Blake’s line of question came from. Blake remained silent for a moment as she focused on the road.

“Why did you ask if I can drive, Blake?” Alexandra asked, eager to know where Blake was going with this question.

“Just wanted to know if you had a driver because you can’t drive or simply because it’s the way of the rich and famous,” Blake replied, her voice filled with mirth.

Alexandra laughed at Blake’s response and said, “Of all the questions you could ask me, you asked if I could drive?”

“Yes, because I wanted to know. So, I asked what I wanted to know.”

Alexandra shook her head at Blake’s response. “Well, maybe one day I’ll take you for a drive on the outskirts of the

city and you can show me around the rural areas. I heard there are some pretty amazing sights to see.” Alexandra stared at Blake daring her to turn down her offer to go on a road trip with her.

Blake obviously mulled over her proposal as it took some time for her to respond. “Sure, as long as you don’t run us over a cliff since you spend so little time around a steering wheel.”

“Don’t worry, I can assure you that my driving skills won’t take us over a cliff, but don’t take my word for it. I’ll prove it to you sooner rather than later,” Alexandra declared with confidence, flashing Blake a smile.

Blake pulled up in front of Alexandra’s apartment building. “Got you home safe and sound.”

“Indeed, you did. Thanks for bringing me home.”

Alexandra still sat with her back resting against the door looking at Blake. The atmosphere in the car had changed as both women sat there staring at each other neither saying anything nor moving.

They sat like that for maybe a minute until Alexandra took a deep breath and said, “Please let me know when you are home. Good night, Blake,” before she opened the car door and stepped out.

“Good night.”

As Alexandra approached the door, she turned to see Blake still sitting there. She waved at Blake and stood there for a minute, her eyes locked with Blake’s. It was as if neither of them wanted to say goodbye. Finally, Alexandra entered the building and Blake drove off as soon as Alexandra went inside.

Entering her apartment, Alexandra felt a sudden wave of sadness and loneliness hit her. Blake distracted her from her life, but now that she was home, reality kicked in and she suddenly missed Taylor. She was accustomed to talking to Taylor when she got home from work no matter how late the hour. Even though it was late, she didn’t feel sleepy and wished she was so she could fall asleep and not think about

Taylor. Alexandra decided to take a quick shower before going to bed. While she showered, her thoughts drifted to Blake, wondering if she got home safe and the conversation they had about her dad. She couldn't help but wonder why Blake tried not to show any emotions, but more importantly why she cared to know more even though Blake had been nothing if not cold towards her until tonight.

After she finished showering and settled into bed, she checked her phone and was a little surprised to see that there was a text message from Blake letting her know that she arrived home safe. Alexandra couldn't help but smile when she saw the text. She was just about to reply, but instead of replying she decided to call Blake. She wasn't sure Blake would answer and for a moment she thought about changing her mind, but before she could hang up, the line started to ring.

Blake watched as Alexander walked towards the main entrance of her apartment building. Even though security was there, she wanted to ensure Alexandra got inside safely before she pulled off. Blake drove at an incredible speed home, hitting the highway and going over the limit on more than one occasion while looking for the cops. She really enjoyed driving her dad's car at very fast speeds. Plus, she was tired and wanted to get home to bed. Driving fast also helped her clear her mind which was filled with thoughts of Alexandra. She usually didn't speak much about her father to anyone other than Miranda on rare occasions. She didn't want to speak to Alexandra about her dad. However, before she could stop herself, the words kept flying out of her mouth. Alexandra's invitation to go on a drive with her completely threw her. She had to think about it for a minute as she wasn't sure she wanted to be driving in a car for a long period with just Alexandra. For some inexplicable reason, she felt compelled to accept the offer. She wondered how Alexandra could appear

to be so in control after everything going on in her life. Blake thought she was pretty strong for handling it so well, but more so, she was thinking how easy it was for her to talk to Alexandra about her dad. The more she thought about their evening, Blake couldn't help smiling at how funny Alexandra was and wondered that maybe she misjudged her. She also knew she wasn't the most social person. Regardless she had been extremely anti-social when it came to Alexandra, and couldn't figure out why she had behaved that way with her ever since they met.

Blake arrived at her apartment building after midnight. It took her around fifteen minutes to get home from Alexandra's apartment. As soon as she pulled into her parking spot and even before switching off the ignition, she texted Alexandra to let her know she was home. Once she entered her apartment, she headed straight for the shower. Bone tired, she wanted to get into bed as soon as possible. She always showered before going to sleep no matter how late it was. After her shower, just as she was about to get into bed, her phone vibrated on her bedside table. Blake frowned, wondering who could be calling so late. She wasn't on call at the hospital and hoped there wasn't an emergency that would require her to go in. She approached the table and looked at her phone, surprised to see Alexandra's name. She quickly answered, thinking something must be wrong for Alexandra to call her this late.

"Hello?" Blake tried to hide the anxiety she felt wondering why Alexandra was calling her. The line sat silent, and Blake removed the phone from her ear, checking to ensure that the call remained active. Just as she was about to say something else, Alexandra answered.

"Hi, Blake."

Another brief moment of silence lingered between them as Blake waited for Alexandra to lead the conversation since she was the one who called.

"Are you ok?" Blake asked as she dropped the towel she used to dry herself and laid on her back in bed.

“Yes, I am ok. Thanks for letting me know you are home safe.”

“Well, you demanded that I did, so I’m just complying with your request.”

Alexandra laughed through the phone at Blake’s statement.

“I didn’t demand. I asked nicely. Besides, it’s the right thing to do whether or not I had asked. So, you wouldn’t have let me know you were home if I hadn’t—according to you—demanded you let me know?”

Blake thought about Alexandra’s question for a moment then replied, “Maybe.”

Alexandra sighed through the phone and simply said, “Ok.”

Blake had a feeling that Alexandra was not ok, but she didn’t want to pry so she refrained from asking her again. For a moment they were both silent on the phone again until Blake asked, “Was that the only reason you called, Dr. Edison?” Blake wasn’t sure why she had asked that question or what she was hoping Alexandra’s response would be.

“I also wanted to ask you what a good gift for Miranda would be. I don’t know much about her outside of work, and I want to get her something in the morning before the party.”

Blake smiled at Alexandra’s thoughtfulness.

“Miranda is very simple despite her affluent background. She likes simple things so it’s not hard to get her gifts. It’s one of the many things I love about her. So, you can get her anything and she will appreciate it even though you don’t have to get her anything.”

“I want to get her something, therefore, could you please give me some direct insight as to what she might like other than *anything*,” Alexandra insisted with mirth in her tone.

Blake could not help but smile. “You know, Dr. Edison, for someone asking for my help you sure are bossy.”

“What can I say? I like getting to the point,” Alexandra answered wryly.

“She is a girly girl like you, and I am sure you have exquisite taste in all things girly,” Blake responded, enjoying the banter between them.

Alexandra burst out laughing at Blake’s statement. In between laughing she said, “And what exactly does a girly girl like, Dr. Westmore?”

Blake joined in the laughter. “You know; make-up, fashion, jewelry, the works.”

“So, I guess you don’t classify yourself as a girly girl then,” Alexandra asked, still laughing.

Blake thought it about for a minute then said, “I guess not,” rolling her eyes at herself for falling into that one.

“And why not?”

“Just the way I am. Anyway, back to Miranda’s gift. She loves old school music especially 90s R&B, Broadway, handmade jewelry from exotic locations and anything having to do with medicine.”

Blake figured Alexandra could sense that she was trying to divert the conversation away from herself, but she wasn’t going to let her so easily.

“And what do you like, Dr. Westmore?” Alexandra pushed.

Blake didn’t want to talk about herself. For some reason once again, she felt compelled to answer Alexandra which she found strange. But she didn’t want to go down that road with Alexandra, so she said, “What I like, Dr. Edison, is not to talk about myself.”

However, Alexandra had other plans. “Why is that?” Alexandra persisted.

Blake took a deep breath, rubbing her forehead with her index and middle finger. “Jeez, woman, you don’t give up, and besides it’s late and I need to sleep.”

Alexandra laughed at Blake’s outburst and apparently decided to let her off the hook.

“Ok, Dr. Westmore. I’ll let you go to bed. Have a good night.”

“Good night, Dr. Edison.”

After Alexandra got off the phone, Blake laid on her back staring at the ceiling thinking about her until she fell asleep. Confused by her feelings when it came to her boss.

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Chapter Eleven

Blake stood facing away from the entrance of the Hayes' backyard, engaged in conversation with Miranda and her parents joking about the first time they met and how shy Blake was. The backyard was beautifully decorated to host Miranda's party. A band played soulful jazz music in the background. Most of the staff from Parkwood, who Miranda had worked with for years, were there. Blake was just about to say something to Miranda when she realized that most of the guests, including Miranda and her parents, were looking at something or someone behind her. Immediately, she could feel Alexandra's presence. Blake turned to see Alexandra walking towards them beautifully dressed in tight-fitting white pants, a light-yellow sheer top, and white heels. Her hair flowed smoothly down her right side and glistened as rays from the sun bounced off it. Blake watched as men and women alike gawked at Alexandra. She seemed oblivious to all the eyes on her as she strutted across the yard as a powerful, confident woman without a worry in the world despite all that happened in her life. Blake couldn't help but smile.

"Hello, everyone. Happy birthday, Dr. Hayes. This is for you," Alexandra greeted, handing Miranda a gift bag.

Miranda her usual bubbly self took the bag from Alexandra and gave her a big hug. "Thank you, but you shouldn't have," she gushed while hugging Alexandra.

Blake couldn't help rolling her eyes at her best friend who she knew was just being gracious.

"It's your birthday and birthday girls deserve birthday gifts," Alexandra responded as she returned Miranda's hug.

Miranda released Alexandra and turned to her parents to introduce her. "Mom, Dad, this is my boss, Dr. Alexandra

Edison. Dr. Edison, these are my parents, Caroline and Collin Hayes.”

Caroline shook Alexandra’s hand. “Nice to meet you, Dr. Edison. Our daughter speaks highly of you.”

“Oh, does she?” Alexandra looked at Miranda who watched Blake watch Alexandra.

“Yes, she does,” answered Miranda’s dad who brought Miranda’s attention back to Alexandra. “Thank you for coming and I hope you have a great time,” he added, shaking Alexandra’s hand.

“Miranda, you should invite Alexandra over for dinner sometime and you should come too, Blake. We hardly see you anymore and I miss having you around,” Caroline stated, giving Blake the *you better not say no look*.

Blake smiled at her, holding her hand up, signaling that she wouldn’t argue the invitation.

Collin waved to a group of men who had just walked in. “Well, ladies, have fun, we are going to greet some guests that have just arrived.”

Miranda frowned. “I swear, Mom, Dad, each year my party is filled with more and more of your colleagues.”

“Oh, honey, stop being so spoiled,” Caroline said as she kissed Miranda on the cheek before heading with Collin towards the group who had just walked in.

Miranda turned her attention back to Alexandra and Blake, shaking her head in disbelief at her parents’ retreating backs. “Alexandra, thanks again for coming. Now let’s go get you a drink. I sure need one. You too, Blake,” Miranda offered, her voice filled with mischief.

Blake narrowed her eyes at her friend. Just as they were about to turn in the direction of the bar, Blake heard someone calling Miranda’s name behind them.

“Oh my God, Blake, it’s Chloe, Liz, and Amber from university,” Miranda squealed excitedly. Blake didn’t

particularly share Miranda's excitement about the group of women approaching them.

"I think I will take, Dr. Edison, to get that drink." Blake beckoned Alexandra to follow her.

Miranda looked at Blake and scowled. Before Blake could step off the ladies joined them. They were all overly excited to see Miranda with each hugging her and screaming. Alexandra apparently couldn't help laughing at Blake's facial expression which conveyed the utmost annoyance at the scene in front of her.

"What are you ladies doing here?" Miranda inquired.

"We have a conference here in Seattle and thought we would surprise you. So, we called your mom and she told us to come by today," Amber replied, smiling from ear to ear.

"I see you still have Westmore around. Hi, Blake," Liz greeted, looking at Blake who was examining her shoes.

Blake stopped examining her shoes, looked at Liz, and said, "Liz".

Liz shook her head rolling her eyes. "I can see you still have not developed a sense of humor over the years," Liz continued, just as oblivious now as she was back then to the fact that Blake didn't give a rat's ass what she thought.

Blake didn't respond to Liz's comment. It was pointless. Soon they would go back to wherever they came from, and she probably wouldn't see them again. It wasn't like at university where she had to deal with them regularly because they were Miranda's friends.

Blake turned her attention to Chloe who was just standing there staring at her. "Hey, Chloe." She greeted her with a small wave.

Chloe didn't respond. Instead, she walked up to Blake and kissed her passionately. Blake froze, caught off guard and stunned by the kiss. For a moment she became lost in the kiss as Chloe devoured her mouth. Blake slowly pulled away from the kiss, looking at Chloe and lost for words. She glanced at the group of women around them whose faces registered

various degrees of shock. Liz kept opening and closing her mouth as if she couldn't find the words she wanted to say. Miranda and Amber sported twin looks of confusion and surprise written all over their faces. The group of friends didn't know that Blake and Chloe had something between them in university. Being kissed by Chloe was the last thing she would have expected if they saw each other again after all these years. When she returned her attention to the woman in front of her, Chloe's eyes were filled with tears as she stared into hers.

"You still take my breath away," she said, her voice hoarse from unshed tears. Chloe put her head in her hands, unable to stop the tears that she had been trying to hold in. She looked at Blake and then ran off towards the main house. The other ladies looked at Blake, expecting her to go after her, but Blake just stood there watching Chloe run away from her.

"What the fuck?" Liz was finally able to get her mouth to work again. She looked at Blake wanting to say something but decided against it and went after Chloe. Amber followed her then turned and signaled for Miranda to follow them. Miranda shuffled for a moment, apparently wanting to stay with Blake, but knew she had to go and see to Chloe.

"We will be having a lengthy conversation about what just happened. My God you and Chloe," Miranda silent shouted, pointing a finger at Blake before turning and heading in the direction the others went.

Blake could feel Alexandra's eyes on her. She took a deep breath turning to face Alexandra. An amused expression graced Alexandra's face, which for some reason gave Blake a sense of relief.

"Let's go get you that drink Miranda promised you," she said, moving in the direction of the bar on the other side of the lawn.

Alexandra followed Blake in silence, which she was grateful for as she needed a moment to ponder over what had just happened. Luckily the bar wasn't crowded.

“Hi, ladies, what can I get you?” asked the bartender who seemed caught up in Alexandra’s spell staring at her a little bit longer than normal while his cheeks started to turn red.

Blake looked at him then at Alexandra, who as usual seemed oblivious to people staring at her. Blake cleared her throat to get the bartender’s attention.

“Oh sorry,” he mumbled, embarrassed by his behavior.

“Scotch neat?” Blake asked, looking at Alexandra.

“Sure.” Alexandra’s face still portrayed her amusement at the scene that had played out before her.

“Two double scotch neat,” Blake ordered from the bartender who still gawked at Alexandra.

They stood there looking at each other while the bartender fixed their drinks.

The bartender handed them their drinks and said, “Sorry for staring. It’s just that you are possibly the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. It would be a joy to paint you. Your features would be a dream come true for any artist who would be lucky enough to have you pose for them.”

Blake couldn’t help rolling her eyes.

“Thanks,” Alexandra replied with a polite enough smile while making it clear that she was not a fan of people fawning over her.

Blake took up her drink, then held it up towards Alexandra signaling for them to cheers. “Another one to your list of many admirers.”

Alexandra shook her head, laughing at Blake’s statement as she held up her glass to Blake’s and said, “Guess I’m not the only one with admirers after that kiss.”

Blake took a long drink from her glass, savoring the smooth liquor as it burned her throat. She chose not to comment on Alexandra’s statement. Instead, she turned to the bartender.

“May I see the bottle of champagne that you are serving?”

The waiter looked between Alexandra and Blake, seemingly confused by Blake's request. He retrieved a chilled bottle that wasn't opened and gave it to Blake.

She retrieved the glass she had just drunk the scotch from, raised it to Alexandra, and said, "I'm going for a walk on the grounds. Enjoy the party." She then turned to the bartender. "I'm taking the bottle." She walked away in the opposite direction of the crowd.

"Hey, can I come with you?"

Blake half turned her body towards Alexandra, wondering if she should just say no, but thought that it might seem rude. She tried to think of an excuse, but before she could form any words, Alexandra was already making her way towards her with a smirk on her face as if she knew Blake was trying to find a reason to decline her invitation and she wasn't going to give her a chance.

Blake shrugged and continued in the direction she was heading. Alexandra followed beside her as she moved farther away from the house and the party. She walked down a narrow brick path just wide enough for Alexandra to continue walking beside her. She turned a corner and saw the lake hidden behind the wonderfully maintained shrubs on the Hayes property. The atmosphere very serene. It was like the Hayes had their own private paradise. No other houses were visible from where they stood looking at the view. It was early evening and the sun had settled magnificently, ready to make its descent and the rays bounced beautifully off the water. Blake continued walking and sat down on a bench a few meters from the edge of the lake.

Blake watched as Alexandra walked towards her with her shoes in her hands, having had to remove them because of the sand. Why had she wanted to come with her? The way Alexandra always looked at her with those piercing, dark blue eyes made her feel like she could see through her. Alexandra joined her on the stone bench that could seat at least six people. Even though there was plenty of space on the bench, Alexandra sat so close to her that their shoulders touched. Blake tensed at the contact, hoping Alexandra didn't notice.

They sat in silence for a moment admiring the view in front of them. Blake looked at Alexandra's bare feet in the sand. *Even her fucking feet are beautiful.*

Alexandra broke the silence. "Nice view. How do you know of this place?" she asked, without removing her eyes from the view in front of them.

Blake was relieved that Alexandra didn't ask her about what had happened earlier with Chloe. She poured herself some champagne and offered Alexandra the bottle. Alexandra shot back the remainder of her scotch and held her glass for Blake to pour the champagne.

"I used to come here a lot when I came home for holidays with Miranda when we were in college."

Alexandra turned to Blake. "Why didn't you go to your home for the holidays?"

Blake glanced at her then turned back towards the water, wondering how much about her past she should divulge. As usual, she had no control over her mouth when it came to Alexandra. "I didn't have a home to go home to and Miranda wouldn't take no for an answer when I declined her invitation to come home with her our first Thanksgiving in college." Blake tried as best as she could to hide the sadness she often felt when she thought about that time in her life.

"I know you said your dad passed away when you were young, but what about your mother?" Alexandra inquired her voice filled with concern.

Blake took a long drink of her champagne then turned to face Alexandra, trying to read her facial expression. She didn't want to be pitied by her. She saw not pity, but something else she couldn't decipher. Just like the night when she had dropped Alexandra home, she couldn't help but answer her questions.

Blake shook her head, smirked, and said, "You seem to always have a lot of questions for me."

Alexandra, who was now also facing Blake, shrugged. "What can I say? I like to be informed and one of the ways of

being informed is to ask the questions I want to know the answers to.”

Blake raised eyebrow. “And you want to be informed about my life.”

“I find you intriguing,” Alexandra supplied, her gaze intensely focused on Blake.

Surprised by Alexandra’s response, Blake laughed, shaking her head, and said, “Trust me there’s nothing intriguing about me.” After a moment Blake stopped laughing and looked at Alexandra, curiosity taking over. “So, what is it about me you find intriguing?”

Alexandra smirked, shaking her head. “You still have not answered my question, Blake.”

Blake nodded before taking another drink of her champagne. “Fair point. If you answer my question, I’ll answer yours.” She knew her response would probably irk Alexandra.

“But I asked my question first.”

Blake shrugged. “Well, if you really want to know the answer to your question that’s the deal.”

Alexandra gave her a thoughtful look. “I just think there is more to you than you let on. You are very guarded, and I can bet you don’t allow many people to get close to you. You are very straightforward and blunt, but never rude, which says to me that even though you act like you don’t care what your colleagues think of you, in some ways you do. You are very passionate about work, and it makes me wonder if that passion extends to your personal life since you have sort of built a wall around yourself.”

Blake blinked at Alexandra, wondering when she had started psychoanalyzing her. She didn’t know whether to be impressed by Alexandra’s observation—which was not far from the truth—or the be irritated. No one had ever read her quite like that and it was quite disconcerting. She decided not to respond to Alexandra’s assessment but instead answered her initial question.

“I haven’t spoken to my mother since my senior year of high school, and no you cannot ask me about what happened because that’s not something I want to talk about right now.” Blake looked at Alexandra as if daring her to object.

Alexandra held up her hand in surrender and held her glass for Blake to pour her more champagne. Blake realized as she was pouring the champagne, Alexandra was looking at her with a mischievous grin on her face.

“So, what was that kiss about?” she finally asked.

Somehow, Blake knew in the back of her mind that Alexandra would ask her about what had happened earlier with Chloe.

“Come on; what else are we going to do here but have a conversation?”

“I am perfectly fine with just sitting here drinking and watching the sunset without saying a word,” Blake shot back. Blake couldn’t resist laughing when Alexandra started pouting like a petulant teenager.

“Ok, now I will make you a deal. Tell me about the kiss and you can ask me anything you want to know about me no matter how personal it is, and I will answer,” Alexandra negotiated, obviously not willing to let Blake off the hook so easily.

Blake raised her left eyebrow. “Anything?”

Alexandra nodded and took a sip of her drink. Blake figured she must really want to know if she was willing to throw a bait like that.

“We messed around in the last two years of university. Well, messed around is putting it lightly. As you can see, Miranda’s friends aren’t too fond of me and the feeling is mutual except for Chloe who was always nice to me and didn’t treat me like the rest. I guess just like you, Chloe was intrigued by me in university. Even though Miranda and I were friends, I never hung with them much, but Chloe came around more than the others which I later found out was due to the fact that she wanted to spend time with me. I didn’t flaunt my sexual

preference, but they knew I was a lesbian and I guess Chloe was curious. And as they say, curiosity killed the cat.”

Blake shook her head smiling, clearing her head before continuing. “One day she came over wanting help from Miranda on an assignment, but Miranda wasn’t home, so I offered to help. She accepted my offer and we worked on the assignment together. While doing the assignment, I realized that she was constantly touching me, and I knew she was not the touchy-feely kind of person as I had observed her around the others. Anyway, I received a text message on my phone and was smiling as I read the message. A message which was from Miranda by the way, telling me how Liz was getting on her nerves. Chloe took it upon herself to ask why I was smiling. If it was some hot message from a girl. I said no and then she started to wrestle with me for my phone wanting to see the message. Anyway, she ended up on top of me on the living room floor, and before I knew it, her mouth was on mine kissing me like her life depended on it. Naturally, I was shocked, but I kissed her back. Before I realized what was happening, we were heading to my bedroom still kissing. Next thing I knew, we spent the afternoon fucking and when I say fuck, I mean really fuck.” Blake paused, shaking her head as moments of that day flooded her memory

“After that first time, it became a regular thing for us. We didn’t go on dates or anything like that, and Chloe wasn’t sure whether it was curiosity or what, so we decided to keep it a secret until she figured things out. I would be lying if I said I didn’t develop feelings for her. It’s hard not to when you spent two years sleeping with someone. During those two years, we were both pretty much exclusive in the bedroom and we didn’t really define what our relationship was.”

Blake paused, taking a much-needed sip of her champagne. “Closer to the end of our final year I wasn’t expecting to have the conversation that we had. Chloe had gotten accepted to both Harvard med and Brown. I was already going to Brown. To go to Harvard med was always her dream. She told me that she was in love with me, but her parents would never accept our relationship as much she would want them to, and since her parents were paying for her education, that wasn’t

something she could risk. I told her I understood and that it was okay. The remaining months we spent as much time together as possible. A week before the semester ended, Chloe told me that she changed her mind and she loved me too much to walk away from me and she was willing to risk everything for me. But I told her she didn't know what she was saying, and I wouldn't allow her to make the mistake of throwing away her dream for me. I knew too well how hard it was to not have the support you needed to get through med school, and she needed her parents for that. She disagreed but eventually, I was able to convince her. She went to Harvard, and I went to Brown and that's that. It's not like it would have worked anyway as we were from two different worlds."

Alexandra sat quietly for a moment, clearly allowing the information to sink in. Blake wasn't surprised when she asked, "Why did you think it wouldn't have worked between the two of you? You both had feelings for each other."

"Oh no, you don't." Blake turned to face Alexandra. She pulled up her left leg and tucked it under her right, resting her elbow on the back on the bench. "It's my time to ask my question. That was the deal."

Alexandra took a deep breath and nodded as she probably knew there was no point in arguing with Blake about not answering her question.

Blake took a deep breath looking into Alexandra's eyes and asked, "How are you doing?"

Alexandra looked at Blake, confusion written all over her face. "I am right here with you so you can see how I am doing," she replied with a chuckle.

Blake shook her head. "I know what you are allowing me to see, but I want to know how you are really doing. I don't need details about your situation with Taylor. I just want to know how you are in spite of the situation." Blake could see the pain flash across Alexandra's face at the mention of Taylor's name and wondered if she made a mistake.

Alexandra turned her focus towards the water and for a moment Blake thought about telling her that she didn't have to

answer the question. Alexandra sighed as she turned back to face her.

“What can I say? If I tell you I am okay, I will be lying, but at the same time I can’t allow what happened to make me stagnant. I have to keep living. Naturally, I am hurting of course, but I have to find a way to get through the pain,” she replied, her voice filled with the emotions she was trying to hide.

Blake wanted to hold Alexandra and tell her everything would be okay, but instead, she nodded and turned her eyes back to the lake. The hurt in Alexandra’s eyes stirred a pang of sympathy in Blake, though she couldn’t understand why. She’d never been in love and lost, so why did such an answering grief encompass her at the sight of Alexandra’s pain?

Alexandra wondered how Blake could be so calm after what had just happened. She knew it must have affected her, being kissed like that by someone she obviously had a history with. A history that she didn’t even share with her best friend. Alexandra had a feeling that if she decided not to go with Blake’s terms, she wouldn’t answer her questions. She really wanted to know more about her, and she really did find her intriguing. Therefore, there was no harm in answering her question. She knew that it was a risk throwing a bait like that as there were certain things she wasn’t ready to discuss with anyone as yet. But she wanted to know what happened with Blake and Chloe, and sometimes you have to give to get what you want. She also felt a deep sadness for Blake, and even though she didn’t want to pry, she couldn’t help herself. She knew for Blake not to have spoken to her mom for so long, something bad must have happened. She decided to let it slide for now, but it only made her want to know more about Blake Westmore. She wanted to know why she was so guarded and

tried her best not to show any emotions regarding things of a personal nature. Alexandra also saw Blake in a different light during this moment. She had never seen her laugh so freely since they had met. From the very first day she saw her at Parkwood, she thought Blake was one of the most beautiful women she had ever seen. Seeing her laugh so freely showcased her beautiful features even more.

They sat in silence for a moment as the sun began to set.

“So beautiful,” Blake said, her gaze fixed on Alexandra.

Feeling Blake’s eyes on her, she turned to face her. They held each other’s gaze for a moment. “Yes, quite breathtaking,” Alexandra whispered.

Blake’s phone blared, breaking them from the trance they were in, causing Blake to jump slightly before reaching into her pocket for her phone.

“Hey, I’m just down by the lake,” Blake answered in response to Miranda on the other end of the phone asking where she was from what Alexandra could hear.

Alexandra turned her attention back to the sun setting across the lake while Blake continued her conversation with Miranda. Alexandra became lost in thought, thinking about Taylor, and didn’t realize Blake was saying something to her.

“Earth to Alexandra.” Blake tapped her on her shoulder, trying to get her attention.

Alexandra turned her attention to Blake. “Oh, sorry. I was just lost in my thoughts.”

Blake nodded and got up from the bench, signaling to Alexandra that she was ready to head back. “I have to return to the house; Miranda needs me. You can stay longer if you need some more time alone and head up when you are ready.” Blake looked at Alexandra with an expression that she couldn’t read.

“I will head back with you,” she answered, not wanting to be left alone with the direction her thoughts were heading.

They walked back to the party in silence, both lost in their own thoughts. Blake's question had completely caught Alexandra off guard, making her really think about how she was coping with her breakup. For the last couple of weeks, she had thrown herself into her work, trying to numb the pain. But in moments like this where she didn't have work or anything to distract her, the pain in her chest became unbearable, and having Blake so close didn't help the situation. She didn't want to break down in front of one of her employees. Or was it particularly Blake she didn't want to break down in front of? They went their separate ways once they rejoined the party. Blake went in search of Miranda to find out what the crisis was, and Alexandra was accosted by one of her resident doctors who wanted to discuss a case with her. Alexandra watched Blake walk away from her, seeing the one-stoic woman in a different light. Blake showed a new side of herself by the lake. A side that she found attractive. Softer and more caring. *There's so much more to her than she reveals.*

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Chapter Twelve

“Why were you hiding down by the lake?” Miranda asked as soon as they were alone in her bedroom.

“I wasn’t hiding.” Blake plopped down on Miranda’s bed.

“Well, that’s where you usually go and hide when you want to get away from the world whenever you were here. So, what were you doing down there? You were gone for some time.” Miranda joined Blake on the bed facing her.

Blake could feel Miranda’s eyes on her even though she stared at the ceiling.

“Why did you call me? You said you needed me. I’m sure you didn’t ask me back here just to ask what I was doing down by the lake,” she responded, trying to avoid Miranda’s question.

She knew if she told her she was there with Alexandra, Miranda would have a whole set of questions to ask which she was not in the mood to answer. But knowing Miranda, she would be persistent until Blake gave in, so she might as well tell her.

“You being evasive makes me want to know even more.” Miranda reached out and turned Blake’s head so that she faced her.

Blake turned on her side to face Miranda, looking at her best friend with so much love. She felt so grateful for their friendship. Miranda had been the one constant in her life for the past decade and she had never let her down and always had her back. She knew she was a hard person to love because she often kept her feelings inside, but Miranda always insisted that she tell her everything no matter good or bad.

“Have I told you how much I appreciate and love you?” she asked Miranda, her tone filled with said love.

“Well, not recently.” Miranda eyed Blake skeptically, obviously wondering where she was going with this professing of feelings.

“I do and thanks for always being there for me, and I hope we will have another hundred birthdays to celebrate together,” Blake continued showing her emotions freely.

“Aww, that’s so sweet,” Miranda gushed while pretending to wipe tears from her eyes.

Blake rolled her eyes and laughed at Miranda’s shenanigans.

“Well, I still want to know what you were doing down by the lake,” Miranda insisted, giving Blake her time to cut out the crap face.

“I was there with Alexandra.” Blake rolled onto her back and faced the ceiling again.

Miranda sat up so she could look at Blake. “What were you doing there with her?”

Blake rolled her eyes at her friend, shaking her head, knowing there was no way to avoid her friend’s interrogation. “Well, after the whole Chloe incident, we went to get a drink at the bar. I headed towards the lake and she followed me. We ended up just talking for awhile and watched the sunset.”

Miranda narrowed her eyes at her. She knew Blake wasn’t the most talkative person and as far as she had observed Blake wasn’t too friendly towards Alexandra.

“What did you two talk about?” Miranda watched her closely.

Blake groaned, knowing there was no way out of this line of questioning. “She asked me about Chloe, and I asked her how she was doing with the breakup,” she explained as casually as possible.

Miranda narrowed her eyes even more, slapping her playfully on her right thigh. “How is it that after all these years you never once told me about what happened with you and

Chloe in university?” Miranda glared at her, letting her know she wasn’t too happy about being kept in the dark.

“It wasn’t just my secret, Miranda, and Chloe didn’t want anyone to know. Outing someone who doesn’t want people to know they are gay or bi-sexual is never something I would do. It is a very personal journey for that person alone to let others know. Ok?” Blake’s tone made it clear that there was no room for arguments.

“Well, putting it like that, I can’t be mad at you for not telling me. I’m touched by how thoughtful you were about Chloe, but then again, it’s you and you are one of the most considerate people I know. I also wanted to know if you were okay after the whole incident with Chloe so that is why I called you.” Miranda gave Blake one of her signature warm smiles.

“I’m okay. How is Chloe doing?” She knew Liz and Amber probably thought she was a cold-hearted monster for not going after Chloe. She just didn’t see the need rehash the past.

Miranda sighed and turned on her back. “She is a bit sad. Apparently seeing you brought up a lot of regrets and feelings she has been trying to deal with over the years, but she has calmed down and is trying to enjoy the party now.”

“Okay, that’s good,” she replied, relieved that Chloe was okay. Blake got up off the bed, pulling Miranda with her. “Come on, birthday girl, time to get you back to your party. Don’t want mom and dad blaming me for you missing your party.” Blake led Miranda to the door.

Blake found herself scanning the party for Alexandra once they were outside and as if on cue their eyes met when she spotted Alexandra speaking with some of their colleagues from work. Alexandra’s eyes lingered on her with a look that Blake couldn’t place before one of their colleagues said something to Alexandra, causing her to break eye contact with Blake. She followed Miranda through the crowd. They went to talk to Miranda’s parents who were having a conversation with a group of people Blake recognized from previous parties. As soon as they saw Blake and Miranda coming towards them,

they excused themselves from their guests and approached them.

“Here’s the birthday girl and her missing friend,” Miranda’s mom teased before gathering both of them in her arms at the same time.

Blake felt like she was home, and she allowed herself to marvel in the way Miranda’s mom always made her feel so safe and protected and loved. She couldn’t help but smile and wrapped her arms around her friend and her mom who meant more to her than she could put into words. As they pulled away from the hug, Blake could feel Alexandra’s eyes on her. She turned her head in the direction of where she last saw Alexandra and again, she was met with eyes that always seemed like they saw right through her. She held Alexandra’s gaze as usual because, for some reason, she felt that whenever they had their so many stare downs if she averted her gaze first it would make her lose whatever always happened with them in moments like these. Something in the way that Alexandra looked at her gave Blake pause. She didn’t know whether it was discomfort or anxiety and why Alexandra had this effect on her which she couldn’t place. Blake watched as Alexandra’s attention was called away from her by a member of the group she stood with. She turned her attention back to Miranda and her family, trying to focus on the moment with them.

Hours later, Blake left the Hayes residence feeling happy with the way the day had gone. She was always happy to celebrate Miranda’s birthday with her and spend time with her parents, especially her mom who she adored. While awkward at first, she’d managed to have a light conversation with Chloe, though neither spoke of their shared past. As the evening drew to an end, she parted ways with everyone, feeling lighter about the fact that she no longer harbored a secret from Miranda. Usually, she would spend the night of Miranda’s party at their home, but unfortunately this year she had to get back to her apartment in the city since she had a surgery scheduled for late afternoon tomorrow. She needed to get home and rest so that she could be in top form to perform the surgery. As she exited the main door, she was almost

knocked over by someone who walked right into her from the left side of the patio. Blake grabbed onto the person, trying to prevent both of them from toppling over. The person grabbed onto Blake, resulting in their bodies being pulled together as they both held on tight to each other. Blake felt a shot of electricity zipped through her body as she turned her face to meet Alexandra's piercing blue eyes and her body involuntary shivered. She eased Alexandra slowly away from her body, keeping a light hold on her waist, ensuring she was steady on her feet before she pulled away.

"Sorry, Blake, I wasn't paying attention to where I was going. Are you ok?" Alexandra reached out to touch Blake, looking to see if she had done any damage.

Blake almost jumped when Alexandra reached for her, but her practiced calm kept her rooted to the spot as Alexandra examined her. She had to clear her throat before she could answer.

"Yes, I'm ok," she responded a few moments after composing herself. She looked around and saw that Alexandra was the only one outside on the patio. "What are you doing out here all by yourself?" Blake asked as her eyes continued scanning their surroundings.

Alexandra groaned, waving her phone in her hand. "I'm trying to get a car to head home, but I didn't take into consideration the fact that we are this far out of the city that I should probably have called ahead of time. So, I will have to wait here for another thirty to forty-five minutes. I was just heading back inside to see if I spotted anyone leaving who I could get a ride with as it is a bit of a wait," Alexandra explained, giving Blake a knowing look as if she figured she was leaving and was waiting on her to offer her a ride.

Blake shook her head at herself as there was no way Alexandra would have guessed that she was leaving. Before she could stop herself, the words that she didn't want out of her mouth were already being verbalized without her control.

"I'm heading home now, and I can drop you home. That's if you want." She groaned internally at her inability to say no to

the woman.

Alexandra's face lit up into a megawatt smile that made Blake's spine tingle and she took a deep breath to calm her nerves. *What the hell is wrong with me tonight?*

"Are you sure? I don't want to put you out of your way," Alexandra queried, holding eye contact with Blake, still smiling.

Blake shook her head to clear her mind. "Yes, I'm sure." She signaled for Alexandra to follow her towards her car.

"Wait." Alexandra grabbed onto Blake's elbow stopping her mid-stride.

Blake turned towards Alexandra with a confused look on her face. "Are you sure you are ok to drive seeing that we have been drinking a bit?" she questioned, her voice filled with concern, appraising Blake for any signs of inebriation.

Blake glanced down at Alexandra's fingers firmly still wrapped around her elbow. Fingers that caused electricity to pulse through her body, affecting her chain of thought way more than any alcohol she had consumed. Blake brought her eyes up to meet Alexandra's piercing blue eyes that were expectantly waiting for her to answer. Blake cleared her throat, giving herself a moment to answer in a manner that wouldn't sound rude. Even though she was appalled that Alexandra would think that she would be irresponsible enough to drink and drive if she wasn't clear headed, the fact that Alexandra was concerned enough to ask softened Blake's irritation.

"No need to worry, Dr. Edison. I can assure you that I'm sober enough to drive us home. I'm willing to walk the straight line if it will make you happier. But just so you know, I stopped drinking a long time ago and had maybe four bottles of water, a bowl of ramen noodle soup, and just before I came out here, one of Mrs. Haye's famous chamomile tea," Blake explained, channeling as much calm as possible.

Alexandra dropped her hand from Blake's elbow. "Well, no need for all of that, Blake, I just wanted to ensure you were

well enough for the job of getting us back to the city in one piece,” Alexandra shot back, rolling her eyes at Blake.

Blake sighed and moved towards the car, leaving Alexandra to follow in her path. Blake went to the passenger side, opening the door for Alexandra who didn't take her eyes off of her as she eloquently sat in the seat with so much grace that it had Blake thinking she was royalty. Blake couldn't help but admire Alexandra's long legs that went on for days. She was so lost in her thoughts that it took Alexandra clearing her throat to make her aware of the fact that she had been staring at Alexandra's legs for longer than was normal. She shook her head, clearing her mind, once again wondering what the hell was wrong with her tonight. Maybe all the booze was not out of her system or maybe she was just intoxicated by all things Alexandra Edison tonight.

The first ten minutes of the drive to Alexandra's penthouse occurred in silence. Alexandra appeared to be lost in her thoughts just as Blake. Blake glanced over at Alexandra who had her head turned towards the window looking up at the clear sky filled with stars. An advantage of living in this part of the city that Blake loved. The sky, clear and calming at nights was something to behold. *Beautiful*, she thought as she took in Alexandra's features. Much to her surprise, Blake didn't realize that she had uttered the word aloud which prompted Alexandra to turn and face her. She turned her head back to the road, clearing her throat.

“I mean the stars in the sky are beautiful,” she clarified as she could feel Alexandra's eyes boring a hole into the side of her head.

She chanced another glance in Alexandra's direction and found her with a knowing smirk on her face. “Yes, the stars are quite beautiful, Blake,” Alexandra agreed, turning in her seat, facing Blake.

“So, did you enjoy the rest of the party after we separated?” Blake asked, changing the conversation before Alexandra could steer it in a direction that Blake didn't want it to go.

“Yes, I did, and it was pretty amazing seeing the staff interact outside of work. I’m happy Miranda invited me, and it was lovely meeting her parents who are just wonderful,” Alexandra answered her features lighting up, conveying her excitement.

“I’m happy you had a wonderful time. Guess we can expect you again next year.” Blake threw in that last part trying to get a view on what Alexandra’s plans were in terms of her stay in Seattle.

“Well, next year is a long time away, but yes, if I’m in town and can make it, then definitely.” She flashed Blake one of her megawatt smiles.

Blake couldn’t help but smile at Alexandra’s answer as she found Alexandra’s ability to answer a question without giving a direct yes or no answer at times fascinating.

“What type of music do you like?”

Blake’s head snapped in Alexandra’s direction, surprised by the sudden change of conversation. Blake wondered where Alexandra was going with this line of question, but she figured she was just trying to make conversation. Instead of answering, she reached towards her dashboard and switched on her media player. Tupac Shakur’s *Dear Mama* blasted from the speakers. Blake lowered the volume ensuring that she could hear Alexandra’s response. She glanced over at Alexandra who gazed at her with a contemplative expression on her face as if she tried to see through Blake.

“Why rap music?” Alexandra asked as she tucked her leg beneath her, making herself more comfortable.

Blake wasn’t sure what she expected Alexandra’s response to be to her favorite choice of music, but she figured the reaction would pretty much be like most people who always found it strange that she loved 90’s rap and overall rap music.

“I love what it is. What it stands for and the fact that it is one of the most criticized genres of music, but despite all the negativity, it is still one of the most successful genres of music. Also, the fact that if you listen closely to the lyrics even

though harsh, they speak the reality of life that society doesn't want to acknowledge. In some ways, it is like soul music that touches your heart but in a different way. Take for example *Dear Mama* by Tupac, it speaks the reality of many people, not just black people," she answered more passionately than intended.

Blake didn't mean to go off in a spiel about her passion for rap music, but for some reason she just couldn't shut up when Alexandra asked her a question. She figured someone like Alexandra wouldn't be caught listening to rap music, hence she was even more shocked by Alexandra's next question.

"Tupac or Biggie?"

Blake couldn't help but laugh, because of all the things she wasn't expecting that question. Realization dawned on Alexandra's face as her eyes widened in disbelief.

"Blake Westmore I'm highly offended at your assumptions that I'm someone who wouldn't know rap music," Alexandra stated in mock indignation.

Blake laughed even more at the look of horror Alexandra tried to portray. "What can I say? Most people with your background wouldn't be caught dead listening to rap." Blake chuckled, still trying to get a hold of herself.

"Well, it's not fair for you to place me in a box and assume that I'm what you expect of someone like me Blake. And I'm starting to realize that you do that a lot where I'm concerned actually."

Blake stopped laughing when she realized that her statement offended Alexandra and, in some ways, she was correct about her interpretation of the way Blake viewed her. It further humbled Blake the way Alexandra called her out on it without turning it into a big blow-up. Blake took a deep breath as she thought about how to address Alexandra's statement. She considered going on the defensive, denying the allegations, but what good would that do when she knew Alexandra was correct and trying to deny it would just be insulting her intelligence.

“Well, I’m sorry for my assumptions, and I will try to do better going forward and it is Tupac for me. I mean I appreciate Biggie’s music, but I am a Pac fan,” she apologized, her voice filled with sincerity.

Much to Blake’s disappointment, Alexandra only nodded and turned her body towards the window once again. Regret washed over Blake. Deep down she knew she hadn’t given Alexandra a fair chance to get to know her and the last thing she wanted was to hurt Alexandra’s feelings.

Blake couldn’t help but reach across the seat to take Alexandra’s hand in her own, giving it a gentle squeeze as she said, “I’m truly sorry, and I never meant to hurt your feelings.”

Alexandra looked at their hands and Blake thought she might pull away, but she didn’t, instead she squeezed her hand and gave her a small smile. Blake desperately wanted the atmosphere in the car to go back to what it was before a few minutes ago. Before she could come up with a way to cheer Alexandra up, they were outside of Alexandra’s building. Blake hadn’t realized that for the last few minutes of the journey she still held on to Alexandra’s hand. As she came to a stop, she slowly released Alexandra’s hand and turned to face her. She could see that what she had said bothered Alexandra, but she didn’t know how to fix it any further now. She watched as Alexandra turned towards her and smiled, but it didn’t quite reach her eyes.

“Good night, Blake. Thanks for the ride,” she said, her tone lacking any form of emotion. Alexandra opened the car door, exiting without a glance back at Blake.

Blake watched Alexandra as she disappeared into her building. *I really need to start doing a better job of not letting her think that I don’t like her.* Disliking Alexandra was so far from the truth that if she allowed herself to really reflect on how she felt towards Alexandra she knew that her behavior was just a defense mechanism to hide her true feelings towards her boss. Blake sighed as she put the car in gear, pulled off the curve, and headed home with a heavy feeling in her chest.

Blake entered her apartment fifteen minutes later debating whether she should text Alexandra to let her know that she was home. The last time she dropped her home, Alexandra had demanded that she text to let her know she was home safe. Blake figured she would have probably demanded the same if she hadn't offended Alexandra with her statement, generalizing her. She figured she might as well test the waters to see how upset Alexandra was. She got comfortable in bed after her shower and grabbed her phone from the nightstand thinking what she should text. She figured she might as well keep it simple and not go into apologizing again.

Blake: Hey. Just letting you know that I'm home safe. Have a good night, Alexandra.

Blake watched the screen for any signs of bubbles indicating that Alexandra was responding, but after five minutes she decided to give up and tossed the phone on her nightstand as she laid on her back waiting for sleep to take over. Around fifteen minutes later she heard her phone vibrate. Her hands shot out to retrieve it, almost knocking over the glass of water that sat beside the phone on the table. She tumbled with the phone as she anxiously pressed her fingerprint to unlock it. Alexandra had responded to her message. It wasn't any witty comments like the previous time but at least she responded, Blake thought to herself.

Alexandra: Thanks for letting me know. Have a good night, Blake.

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Chapter Thirteen

Blake walked briskly towards the exit of the hospital, eager to head home and get some rest as her day had been longer than she wanted it to be. What was supposed to be an easy surgery turned into a complicated one, which resulted in her spending more time in the operating room. Luckily for her and her patient, it ended as a successful surgery. Blake was so caught up in her thoughts that she didn't realize someone standing on the curb outside the hospital and collided into them from behind.

"Oh my God, I'm so sorry," Blake apologized without realizing who she held onto. Before she realized what was happening, the person turned in her arms and they were now standing face to face, alarmingly close. A jolt of electricity shot through her body when a pair of intense blue eyes landed on hers.

"Dr. Westmore, you almost ran me over. What has your mind so preoccupied that you aren't aware of your surroundings?" Alexandra eyed Blake with concern.

Blake realized how close they were standing and took a step back to gather her bearings. She couldn't help but realize how good Alexandra looked in casual clothes wearing jeans, a pullover sweatshirt, and sneakers. *This woman makes everything look classy.* Blake realized she had yet to answer Alexandra's question after Alexandra raised an eyebrow at her.

"Sorry; was just thinking about how my day turned out," she answered, trying not to think about how good Alexandra smelled.

Alexandra cocked her head to one side observing Blake. "Ah yes, you experienced a bit of difficulty right when you thought you had everything under control. Your ability to

respond well under pressure in the operating room was quite remarkable as usual.”

Blake studied Alexandra, shocked that she watched her surgery. “I didn’t think you would be at work today, so I’m surprised that you spent time watching me in the operating room,” she added as she continued to observe Alexandra, trying to get a read on her mood.

“I had some paperwork that I wanted to get done and came in to do it, then I remembered that you had surgery today and thought I’d watch the surgery while I work.”

Blake wasn’t surprised about Alexandra working on the weekends as she suspected Alexandra had been using work to cope with her breakup. She was more surprised that Alexandra came to watch her, seeing that their night didn’t end on a positive note the evening before. She still felt bad about what happened and wanted to make it up to Alexandra.

She didn’t know what Alexandra’s plans for the rest of the evening were, but she knew that she was starving and needed to eat. Before she could give it much thought and talk herself out of it, she heard herself saying, “I’m starving and need to eat like yesterday. If you haven’t eaten yet and don’t have plans, would you like to grab a bite with me?”

Blake observed the slight shock on Alexandra’s face and was about to add that it wasn’t a date or anything like that when Alexandra said, “Sure, let me call my driver and update him.”

As Alexandra made the call, Blake couldn’t help admiring how the jeans she wore hugged her ass in the most delectable way that made Blake’s breath hitch in her throat when she realized where her thoughts were going. She stopped herself knowing she shouldn’t be ogling her boss at all.

“Ahem.”

At the sound of Alexandra clearing her throat, Blake realized that she had been caught staring, but luckily for her, she was good at masking her emotions as she met Alexandra’s eyes.

“I was thinking of stopping by Palmettos but if you are feeling for something else, I’m game.”

Alexandra shook her head. “No, I’m fine with the menu there, so lead the way.”

The five-minute walk to Palmettos went by in relative silence. Arriving at Palmettos, Blake stepped forward, opening the door for Alexandra.

“Quite chivalrous of you, Dr. Westmore,” Alexandra quipped as she stepped past Blake, prompting her to smile and shake her head. Blake forgot that it was Saturday and Palmettos was usually packed on Saturdays. Along with good food there was also Karaoke on Saturdays. They made their way inside looking for an open table as the seats at the bar were taken. Just as Blake was about to suggest they go somewhere else, she spotted Trevor waving them towards him.

“Hey, Trevor,” Blake greeted, giving Trevor a quick hug.

He turned his attention to Alexandra giving her a wide smile.

“Hey, you. I’m happy to see you back here. I guess the food was up to your standards as a first-timer?”

Alexandra returned Trevor’s smile. “Yes, the food was amazing. I think I will be one of the regulars going forward.”

Trevor scanned the restaurant before saying, “We have a full house tonight, but luckily for you Blake, I reserved a table for you and Miranda. By the way, is Miranda joining you? I didn’t see her come in with you.”

Blake flashed Trevor a wide grin, grateful that his crush on Miranda always seems to work in her favor when it came to special treatment at Palmettos. “Actually no. She is home recuperating from her party. She went all out in the drinking department and is nursing a terrible hangover. I’ll be spending the day with her tomorrow and will give her a hug for you.”

Trevor gave Blake a shy smile. He signaled for them to follow him to the table which sat in a private spot. Blake was familiar with the table. Usually, this was where she and Miranda would often have dinner when the restaurant was

crowded, and they called ahead and reserved a table. Blake noted how private the set-up was and wondered what Alexandra thought about as she eyed her surroundings. Trevor pulled out Alexandra's chair for her while Blake sat in the chair directly across from her.

"What can I get you ladies to drink while you go over the menu?"

"Two scotch, one neat and one on the rocks. Unless you feel for something different tonight." Blake turned her attention to Alexandra.

Alexandra shook her head, signaling that she was ok with scotch.

"Can we also get some calamari to start and coconut shrimp?" Blake added.

Trevor turned towards Alexandra. "Would you like to add anything to that?"

Alexandra shook her head and smiled at Blake. "No, I think Dr. Westmore has covered the starters."

"I hope you don't mind that I ordered for you," Blake said as soon as Trevor was out of earshot.

A smile took over Alexandra's features. "No, I kind of like your take-charge attitude which you rarely show outside of the operating room. It's quite refreshing to observe. Usually, you are so laid back."

Once again, Alexandra's honesty and her ability to read her so well threw Blake off. "What can I say? I'm never one to show my hand too early in the game and I rarely ever do until I have a read on my opponents," she answered, smirking at Alexandra.

Blake watched as Alexandra studied her, knowing her brain worked to figure out the true meaning behind her statement. Before Alexandra could come up with a response, Trevor returned with their drinks. "The starters will be over shortly. Please let me know once you are ready to order your entrees."

Blake held her drink towards Alexandra. “Cheers to another successful surgery and a life saved.”

Alexandra smiled and knocked her glass to Blake’s and they both took a long drink never breaking eye contact. Blake took a second sip, gathering the courage to broach the topic of how their night ended. She thought it best that she started with an apology.

“I’m very happy that I ran into you. Well, I did literally run into you.” Both chuckled at Blake’s statement.

“Yes, that you did.”

Blake took a deep breath before continuing. “I was actually planning to give you a call when I got home. I wanted to apologize again for last night. I also want you to know that I don’t have anything against you even if it might seem that way, and I think that you are doing a fantastic job at the hospital.” Blake paused for a moment wondering where all that came from. She had only planned on apologizing for what she had said the night before.

“No need to keep apologizing, Blake. I’m used to people misjudging me either because of how I look or because of who my family is. I won’t lie and say it doesn’t bother me, because it does when people that I don’t want to misjudge me like that does instead of getting to know the real me and seeing me for who I am. I mean really seeing me,” Alexandra replied, her tone a bit emotional.

Blake could only nod at that, lowering her head to stare into her drink and feeling even worse about the way she had misjudged Alexandra from the very first day.

“Your head should always be held high, Blake, even when you are in the wrong. Apologize with your head held high.” Alexandra used her indexed finger to lift Blake’s chin, forcing her to look at her. Blake almost jumped at the contact, feeling the touch deep within.

“I am sorry,” was the only thing she could think of saying as she tried not to react to the touch which had taken her by surprise.

A waitress arrived with their starters and took the order for their main course. They ate in silence for a bit, savoring the flavors of the food which was quite delicious. Alexandra moaned when she took a bite of the coconut shrimp, forcing Blake to bring her eyes back to her face. Blake watched as Alexandra licked her lips, wondering if Alexandra knew how much of a turn-on she was doing that. *I mean she is a walking breathing turn on, but doing things like that just amplified her sensuality.*

“I guess you are enjoying the shrimp,” she acknowledged, unable to keep her eyes off Alexandra’s lips.

Alexandra took another bite before responding. “These are some of the best coconut shrimp I’ve ever had. So yes, I am.”

Blake totally agreed. “We can order another serving if you want.” Blake looked around for the waitress.

“No. Well, not yet at least. Maybe after our main course if we are still hungry,” Alexandra responded then continued eating the last bite of shrimp off her fork.

Blake watched Alexandra carefully before asking, “So, how often do you go into work on the weekends?”

Alexandra cocked her head to the side, observing Blake with a thoughtful look on her face. Blake would have paid big money to know what she was thinking at that moment. Alexandra took a sip of water and Blake wondered if she was buying time to come up with an answer to her question because she didn’t really want to answer.

“Look if I’m prying too much...” Blake started.

Alexandra, realizing where she was going with her statement, waved off her concerns by signaling for her to stop with her palm. “No, you are definitely not prying too much, Blake. I was trying to think of the best way to let you know that since I don’t have any friends here. I go into work on the weekends just to get out of my penthouse.”

Blake could hear the sadness behind Alexandra’s words even though she tried her best to hide it. *She must be feeling so lonely going through the breakup with no family or friends*

close by. For some reason, she felt guilty for not being more welcoming and for not trying to ensure that Alexandra had support adjusting to being in Seattle. Before she knew what was happening, she heard herself saying, “I will be more than happy to show you around the city. There is a lot to see here, and it will allow you to meet new people and possibly make some friends on this side of the map.” Blake watched as Alexandra gave her a smile that lit up her entire face and she could not help but return the smile.

“Well, guess I’m growing on you. I will definitely take you up on that offer. Plus, I have yet to show you how well I can handle a car.”

Surprise filled Blake that Alexandra remembered that conversation.

“Oh yes, you can. I forgot,” Blake responded in a teasing tone.

“Don’t underestimate me, but hey action speaks louder than words so I will just have to do as I promised,” Alexandra shot back with a glint in her eyes that said she should definitely not underestimate her, not only with her abilities to handle a car but in general.

The rest of the night went by smoothly with great conversation. Blake realized how extremely easy it was talking to Alexandra. Alexandra’s wicked sense of humor pleasantly surprised her. They enjoyed a few of the karaoke performances where Blake discovered that Alexandra had a beautiful voice as she sang quietly to some of the songs that were played. After their meal, they did have that second serving of coconut shrimp and a few shots which gave both women a small buzz.

“I’m so full,” Alexandra protested as she relaxed back in her chair rubbing her stomach.

Blake laughed at her actions.

“It’s still early. Do you want to go for a walk so we can burn off some of the calories?” Alexandra added.

Blake was surprised by Alexandra’s invitation, but found that the thought of taking a walk with her was very pleasing.

Blake looked around for Trevor but found no sign of him. She signaled for a waitress.

“We are leaving; may we have the bill please?”

“Is that together or separate?” asked the waitress who, instead of addressing her question to Blake, chose to address Alexandra while literally gawking at her.

“That would be one bill and I’m paying,” Blake responded before Alexandra could get a word in.

Still, the waitress barely acknowledged her statement as she handed her the payment billfold. Blake watched in amazement as the waitress wrote her phone number on a napkin and set it down before Alexandra and said, “Taylor is a fool for letting you slip through her fingers. If you need help getting over her, give me a call.” She winked at Alexandra and walked away.

Blake watched her walk away before turning back to Alexandra who was having a hard time holding in her laughter.

“Did you give her a tip?” She continued laughing while putting on her hoodie that she had removed earlier.

“I don’t think she cared about getting a tip. She was going for the bigger prize, which is you,” Blake replied, gathering her things to leave. “And no, I didn’t tip her.”

Blake allowed Alexandra to walk ahead of her. “You’ll have to lead the way. You know, I don’t know many scenic routes here,” Alexandra stated as they exited Palmettos.

Blake looked up and down the street pondering which direction to head in. The sun had gone down, and the weather was perfect in Blake’s mind. Blake headed in the opposite direction of the hospital signaling with her head for Alexandra to follow her. Alexandra fell into step beside Blake, and they walked in companionable silence for a few minutes.

Blake lived in Seattle most of her life, but had never given much thought to seeing the city through the eyes of someone not from there. She loved Seattle and loved everything the place had to offer, even the weather.

“I haven’t walked around much since I’ve been here,” Alexandra stated as she admired all the areas that they were passing.

“Well, let this be the first of many to come.”

Alexandra once again gave Blake one of those blinding smiles that made her whole face lit up. Blake was very happy that she could do that for her as she thought back to that waitress who had brought up Taylor’s name earlier. She was quite surprised that Alexandra was still in a good mood after that, and wondered if it truly didn’t bother her being reminded of Taylor. Or was she just good at controlling her emotions?

Blake turned in the direction of the waterfront which was a fifteen-minute walk from where they currently were. She had a feeling that Alexandra would enjoy seeing the waterfront at night. It was one of the most beautiful sights at night, especially on a clear night with many stars.

“Oh, you are taking me to the waterfront. I’ve been meaning to come here. I heard that it was one of the must-see in Seattle,” Alexandra stated upon realizing where they were heading.

“Yes, that’s correct. There is a coffee cart just right down there that sells some of the best coffee I’ve ever had,” Blake emphasized pointing in the direction of the cart.

“I’ll keep that in mind for our next visit. Drinking coffee this late would surely not help me sleep and it is already hard enough trying to fall asleep as it is.”

Blake wanted to know what kept Alexandra up at night. She assumed with the breakup and everything with the hospital she did have a lot going on. She wanted to ask her about it, but at the same time didn’t want to pry too much. *What the heck? If she doesn’t want to talk about it, she’ll let me know.*

“Do you want to talk about what’s keeping you up at night?” They came to a spot on the pier which had fewer people, giving them a clear view of the sky and water.

Alexandra stood silently for a moment looking at the sky. Blake used the moment to admire her profile from that angle and once again was blown by the woman's beauty. Blake was so caught up in her thoughts that she didn't realize that Alexandra was now looking her, directly in the eyes and had caught her staring.

Alexandra observed her silently without breaking eye contact before shrugging her shoulders and said, "Life, I guess. Plus, I think I'm still getting used to just being in a different city and there's just so much to do with the hospital. But I guess in time though, things will slow down a bit and it will be easier for me to unwind when I get home in the evenings."

Blake didn't miss the fact that she didn't mention the breakup and she wasn't going to bring it up either. Evidently it remained a topic Alexandra didn't want to discuss.

"If you want someone to talk to when you are having trouble sleeping, I'm just a phone call away. Sometimes having someone to talk to before bed helps to relax your mind, making sleep come a lot easier. For example, when I can't sleep, I call Miranda who always has something interesting or funny that will either have me laughing so hard that my head hurts or relaxes my mind that I fall asleep in no time," Blake offered, meaning every word.

Alexandra replied, smiling at Blake. "That's another offer I might just take you up on."

They spent the next few minutes talking about sites that Alexandra could visit and getting to know things that both disliked about their home cities.

Blake looked around, realizing that fewer people were on the pier. "It's getting late. I should take you home so you can get your beauty rest."

"I'll call a car for us as we had quite a bit to drink and had a long day, so no driving for you." Alexandra pulled out her phone, launching the app for her car service.

Blake provided no objections. Tired and exhausted from the long day she just wanted to get home. She appreciated Alexandra's thoughtfulness.

"Thanks. I'll just take a rideshare to get my car tomorrow."

They walked towards the pickup spot and Blake was surprised when Alexandra looped her arm through hers. She wasn't sure how she felt about it, but didn't want to read too much into it. She was sure it was just an innocent action with no meaning behind it. It didn't take long for the car to arrive, and they made it just as the driver pulled up to the curve. Before the driver could get out of the car to open the door, Blake opened the door, signaling for Alexandra to get in ahead of her. Blake settled in beside Alexandra just as the driver came around and close the door for her.

Once the driver got back inside, Alexandra provided him with directions to Blake's apartment after which she rolled up the partition, giving them privacy.

Alexandra's eyes focused on Blake. "Thanks for tonight, I had a really wonderful time."

Blake turned away from looking out the window upon hearing Alexandra's voice. She gave her a small smile before saying, "You are welcome, and I hope you know that I was serious about showing you around the city."

Alexandra nodded, taking Blake's hand in hers and giving it a small squeeze before releasing it. Her hands were so warm, and Blake felt the warmth spread throughout her body. For the rest of the journey to Blake's building, they discussed historical sites in the city that they could visit together. In that moment, Blake realized that once she removed her defenses it was so easy to talk to Alexandra and she really enjoyed conversing with her. They were so caught up in their conversation that they didn't realize when the driver pulled up to the curve at Blake's building until they heard his voice over the intercom announcing that they had arrived.

"Good night. Please let me know once you reach home."

When Alexandra reached across, hugged her, and kissed her on her cheek, it caught her completely off guard. Blake could feel the heat radiating from Alexandra's body and it moved something inside of her which she refused to give too much thought to. She didn't get a chance to return the hug as the driver had opened her door, waiting for her to exit. She gave Alexandra one last thoughtful look before exiting.

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Chapter Fourteen

Alexandra strolled into her apartment with a smile on her face, feeling happier than she had been in a long time. Even though she put the best outside, the last few weeks were emotionally difficult for her. She tried to numb the pain of her breakup with Taylor by working endlessly. She forgot what it was like to feel the way that she felt at the moment. With this in mind, she promised herself to try and get out more. She smiled even more remembering Blake's offer to show her around, which gave her an idea for the coming weekend. She just needed to check to ensure that Blake would not be working. Just as she started stripping off her clothes while heading into her bathroom, her phone vibrated on her bedside table. She smiled, grabbing it off the table, thinking that it was Blake calling to see if she had reached home before she got a chance to text her. She was surprised to see her mom video calling so late since they had spoken earlier in the day and for a moment, she feared that something was wrong.

"Mom? Is everything Ok?" she answered, her voice filled with concern.

Victoria appeared on camera in her robe with a glass of wine in hand, a beautiful smile on her face.

"Oh, sweetheart, nothing is wrong. I know it's late, but you are usually up this time of night, so I thought I would call and talk shop with you." Victoria scrutinized her through the camera with a thoughtful look on her face before adding, "Please don't tell me that you are just getting home from the hospital, sweetheart."

Alexandra laughed at her mom's facial expression as she settled against her headboard. "No, Mom, I was out having dinner with a colleague then we went for a walk on the pier, and I'm just getting in."

Victoria raised an eyebrow at her statement and Alexandra knew that look well. “I’m so happy to hear that, love. I’m glad you are spending time doing something other than work. So, is this colleague male or female? Is it someone I met while I was there?”

Alexandra raised her hand, signaling for her mom to stop, chuckling at the rapid succession of questions from her. “I went to dinner with Dr. Westmore and before you get any ideas, it was just dinner with a colleague,” she clarified, not wanting her mom to get the wrong idea.

Victoria’s face lit up at the mention of Blake’s name. “Well, you know my stance when it comes to your situation with Taylor, but if you do decide to start dating again Dr. Westmore is definitely not a bad choice. That woman is one beautiful woman and with that air of mystery about her, I can bet she has women swooning after her,” Victoria said, mock swooning at the last part of her statement.

Alexandra knew her mom was in a difficult situation when it came to the breakup. Taylor was like a daughter to her, and she was just as hurt by the situation.

“I do agree that Blake is a very beautiful woman, and I could do a lot worse, but I’m not ready to date anyone. Not sure that I will be anytime soon, to be honest. There’s still a lot I need to work out where Taylor is concerned. It’s hard to just give up on sixteen years. But at the same time, we have been together so long that I don’t know how to be with anyone else, which is scary in itself,” she admitted.

Victoria gave her an empathetic smile before saying, “Whatever you decide, honey, you have my full support and I have no doubt that in time you will figure it out.”

Alexandra drew comfort from her mom’s words as she felt all the love and support, she had always had when it came to her mom. “Ok so other than talking about my love life. What was the reason you called?”

“Oh, right, so I actually called to go over a case with you that a colleague of mine has asked my input on.”

Alexandra got more comfortable by stacking a pile of pillows behind her as she listened to her mom talk through the case notes. They spent the next thirty minutes going over the diagnosis and brainstorming ideas for surgery.

“Thanks, honey. It’s getting late. I’m going to let you go and get some rest. Call me tomorrow when you have some time, and we can continue. I love you.”

Alexandra blew her mom a kiss. “Good night I love you more.”

She went to shower feeling even better. While she showered, she kept replaying what her mom said about Blake. No one could disagree that Blake was beautiful, and she had witnessed firsthand the way patients and staff flirted with Blake. But it was like the woman remained oblivious to her impact on people when it came to her beauty. Returning to her bedroom after her shower, she saw that a text came in on her phone.

Blake: Getting worried here!! Please send proof of life!!!

Alexandra chuckled. Instead of replying, she dialed Blake’s number, putting her on speaker as she applied lotion to her body.

“Is this proof of life enough for you?” she asked as soon as Blake answered the phone.

She had intended to text Blake once she was settled in bed. She was hoping that they could chat for a bit.

“More than enough. The only thing that would make it better was if I was seeing your face,” Blake replied in a teasing tone.

Instead of responding, Alexandra immediately hung up the phone, quickly grabbed a camisole from her drawer, and hastily threw it on. She settled against her headboard as she started a video call. “Better now?” she asked as Blake came into view.

Blake smiled, shaking her head. Seeing Blake so relaxed in bed without any makeup reaffirmed what her mom said earlier about how beautiful she was. The fact that Blake didn't place too much importance on her beauty made her even more beautiful to Alexandra. She was so naturally beautiful, rarely wearing much makeup.

"I guess you aim to please, Dr. Edison. I thought maybe you had forgotten to text as you said you would and just wanted to ensure you were home safely."

Alexandra smiled at Blake appreciating her concern. "Sorry I didn't text earlier, but my mom called, and I was talking to her for the last hour. I intended to text you once I was settled in bed, but you beat me to it. I'm sorry for worrying you."

Blake shook her head at Alexandra's apology, "No need to apologize."

They were both silent for awhile observing each other. Alexandra broke the silence. "What time will you be going by Miranda's tomorrow? I guess I shouldn't keep you too late on the phone if you need to get up early."

"Nah, I'm not really sleepy anymore. Guess you calling has given me an energy boost. I was aiming to go by Miranda's around noon, so I will be able to get enough sleep between now and then. What are your plans for tomorrow?"

Alexandra was about to say work, but remembered what her mother said and also the promise that she made to herself. "I'm not sure as yet but definitely not work. My mom is already worried about my long working hours, and I guess I should really take a breather. So, I think I will find a way to have a relaxing day tomorrow. Maybe go for a walk and check out a few of the shops in the area. If not, I'll just stay in, find a series to binge, and cook."

Blake shifted and for a brief moment, the camera dipped before she corrected it and Alexandra realized that she had nothing on and was about to comment on it, but stopped herself before the words could leave her mouth. She didn't think they were at that stage in their developing friendship

where she could ask Blake something like that, and also the fact that she was still her boss.

“I’m happy that you won’t be working. There is a fresh foods market called *Bonichoix* within walking distance from you that sells some of the best vegetables and fruits in the city. Their products are always fresh and for that location the prices are reasonable. Not that you would be worried about the price.”

At the last part of the statement, Alexandra raised an eyebrow. “I’ll have you know Dr, Westmore that I do spend my hard-earned salary wisely. Okay? And I do take into consideration whether or not something is the worth the money I pay for it and not just because I can afford it,” Alexandra defended passionately.

Blake chuckled at the fire in Alexandra’s tone. “I’m sorry for insinuating that, but I was just saying, so keep your hat on.”

Alexandra shook her head and laughed along with Blake. They chatted for another fifteen minutes before a yawn escaped Blake, prompting Alexandra to say, “I should let you go and get some rest. Sleep well, Blake.”

Blake nodded. “Good night, sweet dreams.”

They stared at each other for a moment as if waiting for the other to hang up. Alexandra finally ended the call by saying, “Good night,” one last time and disconnected. She stared at the dark screen for a moment before placing the phone on her bedside table and settled under her sheets. It didn’t take long for her to fall asleep, and this was the easiest sleep came for her in a long time.

Chapter Fifteen

“You spent the entire evening with Alexandra!” Miranda practically shouted, causing Blake to roll her eyes at her dramatics.

Miranda looked at her in disbelief as if the idea of her and Alexandra spending time together was a foreign concept. They were sitting outside by the pool at Miranda’s parent’s house after having a very delicious lunch that Miranda’s mom had prepared, causing Blake to seriously wonder why she ever moved out. She tried to be vague about her prior evening’s events, but this was her best friend who she never lied to. Blake didn’t want to discuss what happened, not that there was anything to discuss, but she knew Miranda tended to make things more than what they were. She took a sip of water, giving herself a few more seconds to answer.

“I told you we ran into each other when I was leaving the hospital and went to Palmettos for dinner. By the way, Trevor sends his love.” she answered, adding that last part to get under Miranda’s skin.

At the mention of Trevor’s name, Miranda rolled her eyes, waving off Blake’s comment. “I don’t know why you refuse to give the man a chance. He practically worships you and he is wickedly hot,” Blake continued as she attempted to steer Miranda away from the Alexandra topic.

She was usually very open with her friend when it came to her dating escapades, but for some strange reason, she felt very protective of Alexandra and didn’t want to discuss her with her best friend.

Miranda huffed at Blake’s statement. “Wickedly hot is not a reason to date someone. Plus, Trevor is a flirt and probably flirts with every female that enters that place. Well, except you of course because he knows you don’t play that field.”

Blake shook her head at her friend's attempt to not see what could be with a really great guy. "You know he does not and even if he did it's just what comes with his job. Plus, he does not look at anyone the way he looks at you or gives anyone else the attention he gives you. You need to just give him a chance already."

Miranda narrowed her eyes at her. "How did we go from talking about you, to talking about me?"

Blake smirked. "Talking about you is more interesting than talking about me." Miranda swatted Blake on her hand playfully. Blake laughed at her friend's antics before reaching in her pocket to retrieve a small box she had stuffed in her jeans pocket after she went inside earlier to retrieve it from her jacket. She placed the box in front of her friend.

"A belated birthday gift."

Miranda's face registered surprise. "You already gave me a gift, or should I say gifts, on my birthday."

Miranda was right, but this gift meant more than all the others as it held so much meaning to Blake. It was a symbol of what Miranda meant to her and how much she loved and appreciated her. And would never stop being grateful for all that Miranda and her family had done for her over the years.

"Well, this one is the main gift then. Plus, you deserve gifts every day, not just on your birthday," she replied, meaning every word.

She pushed the box closer to Miranda, signaling for her to open it, knowing without a doubt that Miranda would get the meaning behind the gift. She watched as Miranda opened the box and removed the 14K white gold infinity bracelet. Miranda's face registered shock and upon inspecting the transcription, tears fell from her eyes as she launched herself into Blake's arm overcome with emotions. The transcription inside the bracelet showed the date and time they had met sixteen years ago with a colon then nothing after with their initials below the writing. The infinity sign was beautifully designed with small angels on the outer side. The bracelet symbolized how she saw their friendship and what Miranda

meant to her. To her, their friendship was infinite, and Miranda was her guardian angel. Despite her humble background and Miranda's more affluent one, when they met at Brown University they clicked, and Miranda had been there for her in so many ways over the years.

Miranda's mom chose that moment to join them by the pool, her face registering concern as she drew closer. She looked between the two of them waiting for an explanation as to why her daughter had tears running down her cheeks.

"No need to worry mom, Miranda is just being a sap," Blake explained, trying to be stronger than her friend.

Miranda sniffled as she wiped her cheeks with the back of her hand.

"How can I not be when you go and do things like this," she said as she handed her mom the bracelet.

Miranda's mom inspected the gift and her face lit up with an appreciation of the gesture. She now had tears in her eyes.

"Now you are making your mom cry. Guess I am the only one who has no waterworks today," Blake pushed out, trying hard to hide her own emotions.

Miranda looked at Blake and smile. "You are just better at hiding your emotions."

They spent the rest of the afternoon reminiscing on various dramatic events they had experienced together since they met in college. It was nearing six when Blake left the Hayes to return to the city. She declined the invitation to join the Hayes at Miranda's grandparents' house claiming that she was still a little tired from having to work the prior day, which wasn't a total lie. Thirty minutes later she parked in front of Alexandra's building. They spoke earlier in the day via text before she left for Miranda's. Miranda's mom packed her leftovers from lunch and made her favorite coconut cream pie and for some reason, she experienced the urge to have Alexandra try the pie. So, now here she was trying to make up her mind to call Alexandra to let her know she was outside. She didn't want Alexandra to think anything of her just

showing up at her penthouse without prior notice. Taking a deep breath to gather herself, she reached for her phone and dialed. After the fourth ring, Blake was about to hang up when Alexandra answered.

“Hi, Blake.”

Blake could hear the lightness in Alexandra’s tone which meant that she was probably happy that she called. “I have something for you. I’m outside the building. Would you mind coming down to get it?” She tried not to sound nervous. She didn’t understand why she was feeling that way.

“Absolutely not. You get up here. If you are driving, park in P1 in the parking lot. I’ll text you the elevator code,” Alexandra commanded.

Blake was a bit conflicted about the invite because that wasn’t her intention. She simply wanted Alexandra to try a really good pie. Before she could protest, the phone line went dead and a text came in with the elevator code to access the penthouse. As far as she could see it, she had no choice but to obey Alexandra’s command.

Blake drove around to the entrance of the underground parking lot and was granted access using a second code that Alexandra also sent her in the text message. She parked in the designated spot and took a few minutes to gather her thoughts before she got out and went towards the elevator. The ride up to the penthouse seemed to only take a few seconds as before Blake knew it, the elevator doors were opening, and Alexandra stood there in the entryway giving her a panty-dropping smile. Blake tried to avoid giving her a once over, but her mind could not control her eyes as they ran up and down Alexandra’s body, taking in the way the yoga shorts she wore hugged her hips in all the right places and she had legs for days. Blake wondered at that moment if there was any piece of clothing that didn’t make the woman look like a goddess. Her hair fell down around her shoulders and showed signs of being tousled frequently. It took a moment for Blake to realize that she was just standing there staring at Alexandra. At her first attempt to get a few words out, she had to clear her throat a few times.

“Here, I wanted you to try this,” she said, handing Alexandra the pie.

Alexandra took the pie and grabbed her hand, pulling her further into the apartment towards the kitchen. Once they were in the kitchen, Alexandra placed the box on the counter and opened it immediately.

“Hmmm, this smell heavenly. It will be perfect for dessert. Thank you.”

Blake was so caught up with thoughts of Alexandra, that she didn't realize that Alexandra was making dinner and it smelled divine.

“Miranda's mom made it and I wanted you to try it. She makes the best pies this side of the country.”

At that, Alexandra moved in front of Blake, leaning her hip against the counter and giving her a look that Blake couldn't decipher. It was always disconcerting when Alexandra looked at her like she could see her every thought.

“That's very sweet of you,” she said after what felt like minutes being trapped in her gaze. She continued scrutinizing Blake before shaking her head and said, “You beguile me, Dr. Westmore, and quite often.”

She pushed away from the counter and went to retrieve a wine glass from the cupboard. “Wine?” she asked Blake as she went to the refrigerator for a bottle of wine. “Is white, Ok? I have red if you prefer.”

Blake shook her head. “I wasn't planning on staying.”

Immediately, Blake saw the crestfallen look on Alexandra's face even though she quickly recovered. “Oh, I'm sorry for assuming that you were going to stay for a bit. I was actually hoping that you would have dinner with me.”

Blake wanted to turn down the invitation, but she was never one to let fear influence her decision, especially when she was not sure what she was afraid of when it came to Alexandra. After all, she did enjoy Alexandra's company, and it was not like she was going home to do anything other than to watch a movie or catch up on some reading.

“Well, since you put it that way, who am I to turn down your cooking, because as I recall, you are an extraordinary cook and white wine is fine for me.”

Alexandra smiled, poured wine into the glass, then handed it to Blake. She reached across the counter to retrieve her glass, which sat almost empty, and topped it up.

“Dinner is almost ready. I made lobster linguini, but I can make you something else if you are not in the mood for that.” Alexandra signaled for Blake to join her in the living room.

“No, I’m fine with whatever you are making. I’m sure it will be delicious.”

They sat on the sofa with Alexandra facing Blake instead of the television, sitting with one leg folded beneath her.

“How was your day?” Alexandra asked her eyes focused on her.

Blake took another healthy sip of her wine, thinking that Alexandra already knew how her day went. They had texted most of the day until she went to lunch at Miranda’s.

She smirked at Alexandra. “You pretty much know how my day went already. Don’t tell me you are out of conversation topics already and we haven’t even started dinner.”

At that, Alexandra laughed and slapped Blake on her hand. “Hey now, I’m not out of ideas. It’s just that to me you can learn more about something from a face-to-face conversation compared to text, especially when the subject matter is very good at concealing their feelings.”

“Well, I somewhat agree with your statement, but you must also consider that sometimes it is easier for some people to be more open behind a text, especially if the other party in the conversation is hard to read,” Blake countered.

“Fair point, I guess it comes down to the parties involved in the conversation.”

The adorable smirk on Alexandra’s face made Blake have thoughts she didn’t want to be having.

“However, in response to your question, overall, my day was pretty good. I always enjoy spending time with Miranda and her family, and now I am here about to have dinner with you. So that’s two homemade meals in one day. So, hey what more can a girl ask for?”

“Well, you are definitely my type of girl if all it takes for you to be this happy is a homemade meal, because as you know, I have excellent skills in that department and I’m willing to make you everything that your heart desires.”

Blake realized Alexandra liked to flirt. But did she flirt in general or just with her? She hoped it was the latter.

“I might hold you to that,” she answered truthfully.

They spent the next few minutes talking about various food items that Alexandra was able to find at the market that Blake recommended. Blake couldn’t recall the last time she spent time in someone else’s home other than Miranda’s in this type of setting. She was pleasantly surprised that she felt very comfortable in Alexandra’s home.

“I’m a huge fan of *Coming to America*. I’ve seen it more times than I can count,” Blake said, acknowledging the image paused on Alexandra’s television.

“I think I can give you a run for your money in that department. I’ve lost count of the number of times I’ve watched it. It’s a movie that never gets old and each time I watch, I laugh just as hard as the first time. So, since we are both fans how about I share our dinner, bring it in here, and we can watch it from the start while we eat.”

“Sure, that sounds great. I’ll come and assist you.”

Blake followed Alexandra into the kitchen and once again couldn’t help but admire her legs. They were toned but not too toned, just the way Blake liked. They worked together in sync as if sharing dinner together was a regular occurrence for them.

“Grab another bottle of wine from the refrigerator,” Alexandra directed as she picked up both plates and headed towards the living room.

Blake did as she was told, pulling out the wine before joining Alexandra. Once back in the living room, Blake noticed that based on the setup, she would be sitting pretty close to Alexandra so that they could share the table on which the plates rested. Alexandra stopped fidgeting with the remote and patted the space beside her, signaling for Blake to sit directly beside her. To buy herself time to compose herself and to stop overthinking everything, she opened the wine and topped up their glasses before she sat down.

Blake was so caught up in her thoughts that it took a moment to realize how divine the food smelled and was shocked when her stomach growled. It wasn't like she was extremely hungry after the lunch she had at Miranda's. At the sound of her belly growling, Alexandra reached for one of the plates and handed it to her.

"I better feed you before your stomach gets angrier at me," she teased.

Blake rolled her eyes as she took the plate prompting Alexandra to laugh at her. They both got comfortable on the sofa as the movie began. Blake couldn't help the moan that left her mouth when the first piece of pasta and lobster hit her taste buds. *I knew Alexandra enjoyed cooking, but my God the woman could seriously go up against any one of those professional chefs on TV.*

"I take it by that sound that you are enjoying your meal?"

Blake had her eyes closed, savoring all the flavors assaulting her taste buds, hence, she didn't realize that Alexandra watched her, waiting for an answer.

"Gosh woman, I will never consider turning down your invitation of a home-cooked meal ever again knowing this is the treat I will be in for. This is quite possibly the best lobster linguini I've ever had," she admitted savoring the exquisite flavors assaulting her taste buds

"Well, I'm happy to hear that especially since as you know, they say the way to a woman's heart is through her stomach."

The timing of Alexandra's word in that exact moment turned out to be the worst possible thing for Blake. Completely caught off guard, the bite of pasta she had just taken went down the wrong the pipe. She ended up in a coughing fit. The smirk on Alexandra's face quickly disappeared. She placed her plate on the table before placing a hand on Blake's back, lightly patting, trying to assist Blake to clear her windpipe.

"Let me get you a glass of water," Alexandra informed her when the coughing stopped.

Blake watched Alexandra sprint from the living room through watery eyes, mentally scolding herself for her choking fit. But who could blame her after those words had left Alexandra's mouth? She knew Alexandra was messing around, but my god was she caught off guard.

"Here you are." Alexandra handed her the water.

Blake took the glass from Alexandra, taking a few small sips to ensure that she would avoid making another spectacle of herself. Alexandra's face showed concern and Blake wanted to take the worry away, so she narrowed her eyes and said, "Next time, please ensure that comments like that don't leave your mouth the same time food is entering mine."

Alexandra shot Blake a cheeky grin before rejoining her on the sofa. "I'll try to do better, Dr. Westmore," she answered, trying to sound remorseful.

The rest of the evening went by without any further choking incidents. They both enjoyed their meal while laughing and debating about various scenes throughout the movie. Once they were done eating, Alexandra paused the movie while Blake offered to go and get them the pie she eagerly wanted Alexandra to try.

"Oh My God! This is so amazing," Alexandra gushed, taking her first bite.

Blake smiled. Pleased with herself for knowing Alexandra would appreciate tasting the heavenly dessert.

“I knew you would love it, and seeing as I figure you are kind of a food snob, Caroline should be proud that her pie can elicit such a reaction from you.”

Alexandra took another bite before saying, “I’m not a food snob. I just enjoy great food, and just so you know, I quite fancy street cart food. For me, it’s about how the ingredients are used to make magic.”

Blake wondered if Alexandra maybe spent time as a chef in another life. She proved just as passionate and damn good at cooking as she was at being a surgeon. By the time the last piece of pie touched their lips, Blake was beginning to feel the effects of the long week she had and not yet getting enough sleep. She knew she needed to go home and rest, but she was enjoying Alexandra’s company. It was so strange that she had warmed up to Alexandra despite her initial reservations but then again, the more she thought about it, were there ever any.

“We should probably start cleaning up before I go. The long work week is catching up with me,” she heard herself saying despite not wanting to leave.

Alexandra shook her head. “There’s not much to clean. I cleaned while I cooked, but thanks for the offer. You are tired so I will take you up on the offer next time.”

Once again Alexandra had used that term “*next time*” just as she had the night before, but then again she was right because there she was having dinner with her.

“Is it okay if I leave my car parked here? I had too much wine and combine with how tired I am, it would be a death sentence to put myself behind the wheel.”

“Oh definitely, I was going to offer to call a car for you unless you wanted to sleep in the guest bedroom,” Alexandra offered not breaking eye contact with Blake.

The offer surprised Blake. The last thing she expected was an invitation to sleep over and as appealing as it sounded, she was definitely not going to accept the offer. “Thanks, but I think I need the familiarity of my bed tonight.”

Alexandra nodded and reached for her phone before typing quickly. “The car will be here in ten minutes.”

While they waited for the car, Blake insisted that Alexandra let her help clear the dishes and load the dishwasher. It was one of the quickest ten minutes Blake experienced because in no time the driver was downstairs waiting for her. Alexandra followed Blake to the elevator which was pretty much the door, giving her a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

“Thank you for another wonderful evening,” Alexandra said with a soft smile forming on her lips.

Blake flashed Alexandra a smile. “Be careful, Dr. Edison. I might take you up on your offer of endless home-cooked meals sooner than you think, especially knowing that you enjoy my company this much.”

Before Alexandra could reply, the elevator doors closed with both women staring at each other smiling.

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Chapter Sixteen

Alexandra raised her face towards the early afternoon sun, giving herself a moment to reflect on thoughts of Blake that plagued her mind. Away on conference for the week, she hadn't spoken to Blake since Monday. On her way home the night before, she realized that she missed talking to Blake.

There was just something about Blake that drew her in and added on top of that, the fact that she enjoyed her company. She knew now that she and Taylor were no longer together, there was no need for her to rush back to L.A., and truth be told, she wanted to fulfill her grandfather's wishes. Being with Taylor, she took into consideration their relationship whenever she made plans for her time in Seattle but now there was no need for that. With this in mind, she knew she needed to make friends and so far, Blake slowly filled that void in her life. She hoped that they became really good friends.

The amount of time they spent together surprised her since Blake had been so reserved around her when she arrived at the hospital. Overtime, it became clear that Blake was one of those people who didn't warm to people easily and was naturally reserved in her interactions with people until she grew comfortable with them. Even though she hadn't spoken to Blake since Monday, she knew that she wasn't scheduled to be at the hospital that weekend. Based on past conversations, she knew that Blake normally spent Saturday mornings in bed catching up on much-needed sleep. She just hoped Blake didn't stray from her weekend routine that Saturday. She could call and confirm, but she kind of wanted to surprise her. She took a deep breath, unable stop smiling as she dialed Blake's number.

“Hey, you! I'm outside your apartment building. If you are not dressed, get dressed and come down. Ensure you dress comfortably.”

Alexandra could hear the surprise in Blake's voice. "What do you mean you are outside?" she responded with a chuckle.

"Exactly what I said. I'm downstairs. Now just do as I say and get down here. I'm out front," she directed, not giving Blake room to ask more questions.

Before Blake could say anything else, she hung up the phone as she decided that would be the quickest way to get Blake doing as she had requested. She knew Blake would be too curious about what she was doing there to not come down. Then again this was Blake, so she never quite knew how the woman might react as she was so hard to read at times.

Luckily, her gamble paid off. Fifteen minutes later Blake exited her apartment wearing dark jeans with a baby blue t-shirt and black Chuck Taylors. Her hair swept up in a messy ponytail that made her look so damn sexy. When her eyes finally landed on Alexandra, they widen in surprise taking in the scene before her. Alexandra knew Blake would be surprised to see her sitting behind the steering wheel of a car, and not just any car, but a 1966 Ford Mustang convertible that she knew Blake would appreciate. Blake came to a stop on the driver's side of the car, her eyes surveying the car before landing back on Alexandra.

"Nice ride," she said, her light blue eyes holding Alexandra's as she waited for Alexandra to explain herself.

"Get in, Doc! We are going for a ride in this baby. Remember, I promised you that I would show you I can handle a car. Well, today's that day. Unless you have plans for the afternoon," she explained, hoping Blake had no plans.

Blake gave the car another once over then walked around and got in. As she settled into the passenger seat, she turned towards Alexandra.

"Are you sure you know how to handle this car? Because I really... really do love my life. So, you really don't have to prove anything to me."

Mirth colored her tone which caused Alexandra to roll her eyes. "Don't worry. I love my life just as much as you do. So, I

can assure you that me being around this steering is no hazard to your life.” She then winked at Blake.

Blake shrugged. “Well, you can’t blame a girl for being cautious since you are more often a passenger than a driver, plus this is a stick shift.”

Instead of responding, Alexandra started the car and it roared to life. She revved the engine a few times while smirking at Blake. “The whole point of today is to show you that despite me mostly being a passenger, I can handle myself around the steering. So, buckle up and enjoy the ride.”

As soon as Blake fastened her seatbelt, Alexandra pulled off from the curve changing gears smoothly. She looked over at Blake who watched her with an unreadable expression.

“Where are we going?”

Alexandra shook her head. “Just enjoy the ride. We end up wherever we end up.” Blake narrowed her eyes at her causing her to laugh.

“What if I wasn’t home?” Blake asked, raising an eyebrow at her.

Alexandra flashed her a smile. “I would have canceled our plans for today and tried again another weekend. I wanted it to be kind of a surprise. Luckily for me, you stuck to your Saturday routine.”

Blake chuckled at Alexandra’s answer. “Luckily for you, I’m boring and predictable like that, that you can plan an entire afternoon around my predictability.”

The smile on Alexandra’s face faltered at that statement. She gave Blake’s face a thoughtful once over. “You are far from boring and predictable. Quite the opposite, and nothing is wrong with having some kind of routine in various aspects of our lives.”

Blake nodded, scrutinizing Alexandra’s face as if searching for any kind of dishonesty in her statement. “I guess the fact that you have subjected yourself to an entire afternoon with me on such a beautiful day, is in favor of the point you just made,” she said, smiling at Alexandra.

Alexandra nodded in agreement as she navigated the vehicle towards the highway. Once she was cruising on the highway, she turned on the music knowing she would get a reaction from her companion when Jay-Z's *Hard Knock Life* blasted from the speakers. As predicted, she felt Blake's eyes on her instantly, and to drive her point home she started rapping along to the song. She knew Blake would get the point thinking back to the conversation they had weeks ago about her favorite music and Blake assuming that she wouldn't listen to rap music. She glanced at Blake smirking as she continued rapping. She could see that Blake was trying hard not to laugh, but eventually gave up and threw her head back laughing.

"Fair point well made," Blake acknowledged then started to rap along with her.

Alexandra had the entire *Blueprint* album programmed for their journey. They spent the journey discussing various songs on the album while both took time showing off their rapping skills. Alexandra marveled at how relaxed and carefree Blake appeared. She experienced a different side of the usually serious woman. It was quite refreshing seeing this side of her. She also realized that being around Blake had this calming effect on her and in some ways, Blake pushed her to always keep an open mind about life without her even being aware it.

Chapter Seventeen

To say Blake felt shocked when she walked outside and saw Alexandra sitting behind the steering wheel of what she considered a masterpiece of a car seemed like an understatement. She didn't expect to hear from Alexandra at all, seeing as they hadn't communicated since Monday when Alexandra reminded them of her scheduled conferences on the east coast. More often than not, she wanted to text her just to let Alexandra know that she thought of her, but, in the end, decided against it. She knew they had spent a bit of time together over the last few weeks, but to say she felt they were at that level of friendship where she felt comfortable texting her just to check in when it wasn't work-related was another understatement. The way Alexandra handled the car like a pro, surprised her even more. She couldn't help but admire her long fingers as they navigated the steering wheel or when she changed gears. The whole drive had once again shown her that there was so much more to the woman than what met the eye.

The scenic route they drove surprised her as it had been a while since she had taken a ride outside of the city to enjoy nature. She couldn't have asked for a better early summer Saturday afternoon, though they'd done nothing but drive thus far. Forty minutes into their journey, they exited the highway and Blake realized that they had taken the exit for Lake Washington.

Once again, she turned her to companion. "Are you going to tell me where we are going?"

The sun had grown brighter since they left the city, resulting in Alexandra donning her Ray-Bans, hence, Blake couldn't see her eyes at the moment to get any clues on her thoughts.

"You have been a good sport so far; don't ruin it now when we are almost there." The teasing lilt in Alexandra's tone

wasn't lost on Blake.

Blake groaned, pretending to be frustrated as she settled back in the seat, raising her face to the sky feeling the sun on her face. She closed her eyes and immediately her thoughts went to how beautiful Alexandra looked in her shades with her hair all windblown and sexy as hell. Once again, she wondered what could have possessed Taylor to cheat on her. *I guess some people just don't know what they have.*

When Alexandra pulled up at Lake Washington, she found herself equal parts surprised and unsurprised. Based on the exit they took she figured they would stop somewhere around the area. What did surprise her was when Alexandra retrieved a picnic basket from the trunk of the car along with a huge blanket.

"I thought we could have lunch and I could kill two birds with one stone. Well three actually, as I have always wanted to visit the park since moving here, but didn't get the chance to before now."

"I can't say that I'm disappointed at the outcome, especially knowing that whatever you have packed for lunch will be delicious. So, if nothing else, I know my stomach will be very happy."

Alexandra threw her head back, laughing at Blake's statement and she couldn't help the smile that spread across her face. "Are you familiar with this area?" Alexandra asked, glancing around. "I'd love to go for a walk."

Blake took a moment to check their surroundings, planning a route that ensured Alexandra would get the most out of the experience. The more time they spent together, the more she realized that Alexandra enjoyed simple beauty, and the park provided plenty of that. They walked along, commenting on the blossoming trees and tiny wildlife they encountered along the way. Thirty minutes into walking, Blake's stomach announced that she needed to be fed.

"There's a nice spot over here by the water. The trees give it some perfect shade," Alexandra suggested.

Blake spread the blanket out on the grass while Alexandra took a moment to admire the view from where she stood. After taking in her fill, she joined Blake on the blanket and started unpacking the food. As she pulled out delicious-looking sandwiches, fruits, salad, various cheeses, crackers, mixed nuts, and sparkling wine, Blake couldn't help but stare in surprise. The amount of thought that went into the picnic made it all the more special to her.

“Are we expecting someone else for lunch?” she asked, raising an eyebrow. “This is a lot of food for two people.”

Alexandra surveyed the spread as if she just now realized how much food she had packed. A slight blush tinged her cheeks as she said, “I guess I may have packed too much now that I'm looking at it, but I didn't have breakfast and figured I would pack extra. Plus, I wanted to ensure you would get your fill. And who knows? After our walk, we could be hungry by then.” Her eyes twinkled mischievously as she retrieved wine glasses from the basket.

They settled comfortably on the basket and dug into the food. They ate in silence for a few minutes, taking in the beauty of their surroundings. After a moment, Blake could feel Alexandra's eyes on her. She turned to face her, giving her a questioning look.

“Why are you watching me instead of taking in the beautiful view ahead of you?” she questioned as she popped a grape in her mouth.

Alexandra shook her head and turned back towards the lake, but Blake wasn't going to let it go. She threw a grape at Alexandra, hitting her on the side of her thigh, prompting her to turn her attention back to her.

“Tell me why you were staring or else I will continue to assault you with food.” She aimed at Alexandra with another grape, forcing her to raise her hands as a shield, laughing.

“Fine. It's nothing really. I was just thinking how calm you always are and how being around you seems to make me relax,” Alexandra told her after getting her laughter under control.

Blake popped the grape that she had aimed at Alexandra in her mouth. “Life is short and at the end of the day, our happiness is in our control so personally, I try to live a stress-free life as much as possible. I don’t take every single thing that life throws at me too seriously or stress unnecessarily.”

Alexandra considered what she said, staring into her eyes as if she searched for something more. Eventually, she broke eye contact, turning back to the water. Blake thought she wasn’t going to comment, but then she turned back to her.

“I’m working on finding a way to be happy alone. You are right. Our happiness is in our control, and we can choose to be happy or not,” she responded in a pensive tone.

Blake searched Alexandra’s eyes and behind all the strength she tried to show, Blake saw her pain, and she felt the need to help her in any way that she could to get through the pain. She knew Alexandra needed a friend there in Seattle and as long as she reached out to her, she was going to be there for her. Blake shocked by her thoughts paused for a moment to reflect on the consequences, but decided that it was the right thing to do.

“Just know that whatever I can do to ensure you find that happiness, even if it is taking surprise trips on a Saturday when I should be in bed, I’m more than happy to oblige,” she joked and had to duck her head when Alexandra threw a piece of fruit at her.

“Thank you for being a sport and rolling with the punches and being here.” Alexandra reached over and gave her hand a squeeze.

They smiled at each other and continued eating. After a moment Blake asked, “Did you feel pressured to follow in your family’s footsteps?”

Alexandra brought her eyes to hers and remained silent for a moment with a thoughtful look on her face. “No. I didn’t. They never expected me to follow their path. They wanted me to chart my own destiny. But growing up seeing my mother and grandfather save many lives and the valuable contribution they made to the field of medicine, from a very young age, I decided that I wanted to be just like them. I think I was the one

who placed too much pressure on myself to live up to the expectations I had set for myself, and I have worked very hard to live up to those expectations. But along the way, I realized that most of those expectations I placed on myself was due to not wanting people to think I had everything handed to me. Despite the years of studying, some people still think I am who I am because of my family's name."

"So, you felt more pressure from the outside than your own family? And now?" Blake understood where Alexandra was coming from. She knew people could be brutal with their opinions, not really knowing someone's truth.

"Now, I don't give a damn about what people think. No matter what you do in this life, someone will always think the worst. It's not my fault I was born in the family I was born in, and I wouldn't trade them for anything."

Blake couldn't help but admire Alexandra even more. The more she learned about her, the more she realized just how strong Alexandra was. "Cheers to not giving a damn about the opinions of others." She lifted her glass towards Alexandra.

Alexandra smiled and clinked her glass against hers, eyeing her over the rim of her glass. Blake, wish she knew what Alexandra was thinking with the way she looked at her. They continued eating and Alexandra shared stories with her about her grandfather and the many lessons he taught her over the years.

As promised, Blake showed Alexandra as many sights as possible around the park. They walked close to each other and were oftentimes touching as they passed other patrons in the park. Their conversations centered around various topics including their workweek, favorite food, favorite books, and other nonsensical topics as they strolled around the park. They decided to head back to the city once the sun started to set.

Alexandra said, "Let's trace the sunset home" as they came to a stop on the edge of the lake. More music filled the drive home, but this time Alexandra opted to play classic jazz which once again impressed Blake. It was a little after seven when they arrived at Blake's apartment.

Blake turned to face Alexandra. “Thanks for a wonderful day. A girl can get used to being surprised like that, especially when it involves wonderful music and delicious food.”

Alexandra turned to face her. “I’ll be sure to keep that in mind for our next adventure.”

Dark blue eyes held Blake captive as Alexandra looked at her for a beat without saying anything else. Blake had never had anyone who looked at her and made her feel like they could see through her. It was both comfortable and uncomfortable at the same time.

“I should get going. Let me know once you are home.”

Instead of responding, Alexandra reached across the seat, hugged her, and placed a kiss on her left cheek.

“Good night, Blake,” she whispered as she pulled away.

Blake tried not to think anything of the kiss as it seemed like cheek kisses were just a natural part of who Alexandra was. She nodded and got out of the car, waving goodbye before disappearing into her building. Thirty minutes later, as she was heading into the shower, her phone vibrated.

Alexandra: Home in one piece. I’m going to get some work done.

Blake admired the woman’s work ethic and wondered, if she had work to do, why did she choose to spend the afternoon with her? She wanted to ask as much but decided against it.

Blake: Glad to know. I’m heading into the shower. I guess the saying “all work and no play” doesn’t apply to you because you chose to play instead of work today.

Alexandra: Haha. Very funny. Let’s just say I have my moments and I do find your company more appealing than

paperwork. Maybe if it was a surgery, I would have chosen work over play.

Blake: That I can relate to. I'll take surgery any day over tedious paperwork.

Alexandra: Agreed, but unfortunately for me, it comes with the territory. I should get to it, so I'll talk to you later.

Blake: Ok. Later!!

Blake threw the phone on her bed and headed into the bathroom with a smile on her face. It wasn't lost on her how different she was when it came to Alexandra. The woman had grown on her, and she couldn't help how happy and alive she felt whenever they spent time together.

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Chapter Eighteen

The next couple of weeks were quite busy at the hospital. Blake hardly saw Alexandra other than at their weekly department meeting. They texted a few times, but other than that, they hadn't spoken much in person. Blake knew Alexandra had a few surgeries booked and went to watch one of them. Alexandra's talent once again impressed her as she observed her perform a very difficult spinal cord surgery. Since Alexandra became the face of the hospital, they had seen an increase in specialized surgeries with numerous cases flew in from out of state, and the hospital was on its way to once again being recognized as one of the best in the region. It meant more hours being spent at the hospital, but Blake loved what she did and did not mind one bit. Miranda had also been busy, and they did not have their weekly hangout last week. They were both too tired, which was how they found themselves at Palmettos late on Friday with Bradley and a few other doctors.

Blake groaned as her phone vibrated in her pocket.

"I hope it's not the hospital. As much as I love surgery, I don't think I have the energy to hold another scalpel tonight," she said, reaching in her pocket for her phone.

It wasn't the hospital, but a message from Alexandra. Blake looked up to see that all eyes around the table were trained on her, waiting on her to confirm if it was the hospital.

"Coast is clear," she informed them, putting the phone back in her pocket.

She was anxious to read the message but due to the seating proximities, it was unlikely that she could read the message without Miranda seeing what's on the screen or Bradley. Not that she kept her interactions with Alexandra outside of work a secret from Miranda, but Blake didn't think there was

anything to really mention and didn't want Miranda to make it more than it was. She tried to forget about the message, but it felt like the phone burned a hole in her pocket. After fifteen minutes of failing to focus on the conversations going on around her, she excused herself and went to the bathroom to read the message.

Alexandra: OMG!! It has been a hectic couple of weeks. I was hoping to catch you before you left the hospital. Anyway, I have something to discuss with you. Can you stop by my apartment tomorrow? I will be home all day. Stop by whenever.

Her interest piqued. She couldn't help wondering what Alexandra wanted to discuss with her, that it couldn't wait until Monday or why she didn't just call. Instead of texting, Blake decided to call. Call waiting flashed on the screen. Just as she was about to end the call, Alexandra answered.

"Hi, Blake." Alexandra answered, sounding a bit tired.

"Hi. I was just calling to find out what it is you wanted to discuss with me."

Alexandra sighed deeply. "Sorry, Blake, but I have my mom on the other line and would love to talk to you in person. If you don't have time to meet up tomorrow, we can do Sunday. If not I'll catch you at work on Monday."

Alexandra's tone threw Blake off. She didn't sound like she normally did when she spoke to Blake, which made her even more curious about what Alexandra wanted to discuss with her. She was even more puzzled as her tone on the phone didn't match the preamble of her text. But it was obvious that she wasn't in the mood, so she had no choice but to wait.

"No, it's fine. I'll see you tomorrow. I'll let you know when I'm on my way. Good night." Blake regretted she had called and at the same time she worried about Alexandra.

"Thanks, Blake, good night."

For the rest of the evening, try as she might, Blake could not stop wondering what Alexandra wanted to discuss with her and if she could speed up time, it would have been tomorrow already. More than once, she zoned out, prompting Miranda to ask if she was okay. Blake knew it was probably nothing serious and her mind was just running away from her. Bradley mentioning Alexandra brought her out of her musings.

“It doesn’t hurt that the chief is freaking hot. She makes me wish I was a woman so that I would have a chance of sleeping with her. The things I would do to her,” he was saying to the group in response to whatever someone else had said.

Blake was accustomed to Bradley and his inappropriate comments, but it rankled her hearing him objectify Alexandra like that.

“The woman is a world-renown surgeon, and you mean to tell me that sleeping with her is all you can think about? But too bad for you as a man or woman, I don’t think she would give you the time of day,” she snapped.

Her colleagues turned to face her, surprise evident on their faces at her outburst. Blake didn’t care. She hated when men saw women as nothing more than sex objects, and for some reason, Alexandra being the subject of that objectification made her fume.

Bradley stuttered, “Woah, Westmore, jeez...I didn’t mean anything by it. Why are you so uptight tonight?”

Blake knew that her mood had taken a nosedive since her interaction with Alexandra, but she didn’t care about Bradley’s feelings right now. She turned to face Miranda who gave her a curious look. She reverted her gaze to Bradley and glared at him, letting him know that she was in no mood for his nonsense. But Bradley being Bradley did not know when to let things go.

“Come on, Westmore, you can’t tell me that you have not thought about getting it on with the chief. I mean she does play on your team,” he intoned with a smirk on his face.

Blake glared at him, realizing that everyone's attention centered on their conversation. She knew how gossip could spread at the hospital and she didn't want to give them anything to gossip about where she and Alexandra were concerned. Not that there was anything to gossip about. She took a deep breath, sighing, and tried to sound as disinterested as much as possible.

"Bradley, unlike you, I have better things to think about other than sleeping with our boss. No one here at the table is blind. We all know she is attractive, but that doesn't mean we have to subject her to your juvenile thoughts and discuss sleeping with her with such cavalier attitude," Blake shot back, not willing to back down.

Bradley was about to say something else, but before he could, Miranda stepped in and changed the subject. Miranda knew her well enough to know that it would not end well if they continued with that line of argument. No one made mention of Alexandra for the rest of the night and Blake was happy when about an hour later, Miranda told the group that she was ready to call it a night.

She knew her best friend well enough to know that she would have questions about Blake's behavior, hence, she wasn't surprised when they got outside and Miranda asked, "What was that in there? I mean you and Bradley have always taken jabs at each other, but I have never seen you this worked up about any of his juvenile comments. Not that I didn't agree with you."

Blake didn't want to discuss the topic of her irritation all night. She shrugged as she continued walking, prompting Miranda to follow her.

"It just irritated me that he was so cavalier about sleeping with her like she was just any random person. She is our boss, and I was just annoyed with his attitude. Sometimes he just doesn't know when or where, and being the ultimate feminist that I am, I hate when men see women as just mere sex objects," she answered, knowing she had to give Miranda something.

Miranda looped their arms together bumping her shoulders with Blake's as she said, "Our boss would be pleased to know that she has you to defend her honor."

Blake rolled her eyes. "Note I said women overall. I would have done the same if it was you. I probably would have punched him in his face."

Miranda dropped a quick kiss on her cheek. "Aww, my personal hero."

When Blake got home, she barely had the energy to shower before falling into bed. Luckily for her, she was too tired for her thoughts about Alexandra to keep her up.

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Chapter Nineteen

Blake slept in most of the day on Saturday, which was the norm, but this week she slept in extra late due to how exhausted she felt. After she had settled into bed, she placed her phone on silent, knowing that she was not on call for the hospital even though she felt guilty doing it. But she knew she was of no use to patients if she didn't get the rest that she clearly needed. She got up after three in the afternoon feeling well rested. She rolled onto her back thinking about what she should do for the rest of the day. But before her brain could conjure another thought, she instantly remembered that a certain surgeon had requested her presence today and just like that she went back to wondering what Alexandra wanted to speak to her about. Shit. She instantly grabbed her phone from the nightstand, searching for any messages from Alexandra, wondering if she thought she wasn't coming, since it was so late in the afternoon, and she hadn't heard from her. She quickly shot off a text to Alexandra.

Blake: Hey, I will be over in an hour.

After all, Alexandra did say she could stop by whenever she had time. So, no need asking, she decided. She scrolled through a few other messages, shooting a quick text to Miranda while waiting for a response from Alexandra. After five minutes, she decided to grab a shower. Hopefully, she would respond by the time she was done. Fifteen minutes later she got out of the shower and her phone vibrated on the nightstand.

Alexandra: Sure. Just come on up when you get here. Park in the same spot.

Blake read the message again, trying to get a sense of Alexandra's mood, but she came up empty. Oh well, she thought deciding that if something was wrong, she would find out soon enough. Forty-five minutes later, Blake walked through Alexandra's foyer thinking she would be there waiting for her as she exited the elevator. She sent her a text when she got to the elevator informing her that she was coming up. She glanced around cautiously before heading further into the living room. There was no sign of Alexandra. She ventured into the kitchen where she saw Alexandra leaning over the kitchen island deep in concentration as she focused on what appeared to be MRI images. Blake wanted to instantly announce herself, but for a moment she stood paralyzed... tongue-tied, caught up just admiring Alexandra. With the way she leaned over the island, Blake had a clear view of her cleavage due to the low cut on her V-neck white tee. Bradley's question from the night before immediately popped into her head. *Would you want to get it on with our boss?* as he had so eloquently posed the question. The woman was extremely beautiful and oozed sex appeal, so maybe...just maybe if she thought about it. *I mean really give it some thought, I would...*

Before her mind could finish that thought, Alexandra's eyes snapped up to hers.

Shit... She was definitely caught staring at her chest. Being the master of controlling her emotions when she needed to, her facial features didn't mirror the slight shock she felt at being caught.

Alexandra held her gaze for a brief moment, then flashed her a huge smile as she righted herself and came towards her.

"Hey, you! Thanks for coming," she said, genuine happiness in her tone as she approached her.

Seems like she's in a better mood than she sounded last night. "You seem to be in a better mood than last night," she pointed out before she could stop the words from leaving her mouth.

Alexandra stopped a few feet away from her, forehead creasing in thought as if she was trying to figure out what she was talking about. She sighed deeply and Blake could have kicked herself for bringing it up, as it was clear that something had indeed upset Alexandra and it obviously had nothing to do with why she was there today.

“Sorry, I was so short with you. Taylor contacted my mom for the first time since everything happened, and I was just upset about it. Not about her contacting my mom, but just the fact that my mom is put in a position where it feels like she is choosing between her two daughters. I just hate that our lives were so intertwined, that it’s just not me the whole situation has affected.”

Blake closed the distance between them reaching out to rub Alexandra lightly on her arm.

“If you need to talk about it some more, I’m more than happy to provide a listening ear,” she offered.

Alexandra shook her head, the smile returning to her face even though not as bright as before. “Thanks, but I would rather not as I don’t want to be a grumpy company.”

She turned and headed towards the refrigerator. “Do you want something to drink?” she asked, looking over her shoulder at Blake.

As if on queue, her stomach complained with a loud growl. Between waking up so late in the afternoon and her eagerness to get to Alexandra’s place, she had forgotten to eat. She flashed Alexandra a lopsided grin.

“Since you offered, I think I would like to cash in one of my free home-cooked meals. Coffee would be great along with bacon, eggs, and pancakes if you have any. If not, whatever breakfast food you have would be great,” she told Alexandra, taking advantage of the opportunity to indulge in her cooking.

Alexandra arched an eyebrow, giving her a curious look before narrowing her eyes. “Did you just wake up only an hour ago?”

“Guilty as charged,” Blake admitted with a sheepish grin now on her face.

For a moment it seemed Alexandra wanted to say something else, but decided against it before moving towards the refrigerator, pulling out the ingredients to make what Blake had requested. Blake stood there for a moment watching her before she moved to the kitchen island, pulling out a stool.

Images of a spinal cord and various other organs covered the part of the kitchen island that Alexandra leaned over. Scanning the images clearly showed that the patient had a tumor that was attached to the spinal cord and other organs.

“That’s one monstrous tumor,” Blake commented as she lifted the image with the spinal cord. “Trying to remove this thing is going to be difficult with the way it’s lodged between other vital organs. Looking at this, I can’t even determine the best point of entry at this point.”

Alexandra came to stand beside her examining the image. “This is actually why I called you here today,” she announced, prompting Blake to lay the image back on the table as she turned to face her. “I know I could have waited until Monday at work, but I was itching to go over the images with a fresh pair of eyes and also because I have a proposition for you.”

At that Blake arched an eyebrow, wondering what proposition she had been summoned for.

“The patient, male twenty years old, has no choice but to have surgery if he has any chance of living at this point. The family lives in Paris and has consulted with numerous specialists in Europe who believe that surgery is too risky, and the patient would be better off spending whatever time he has remaining with his family as comfortably as possible. The patient’s sister attended one of the conferences I did the other day and reached out last week asking me to take a look at her brother’s case. Apparently, her brother refuses to sit around waiting to die and not at least fight for his life. There is a 1% chance that he survives the surgery, and he is willing to risk that 1% with me,” she explained.

As she spoke, Blake knew that despite the slim possibility Alexandra was going to take on the challenge and find a way to do the surgery. She could see it in her eyes, the sheer determination, and challenge.

“Even though the possibility is slim the patient wants to try, and I know it is risky, but there is a chance that he survives and lives for many more years. I just have to find a way to ensure that the tumor doesn’t beat me in that operating room. The part where you come in is that I need a general surgeon to work with me on this and you are one of the best in the field. We have one month to figure out how to remove this thing then head to Paris to perform the surgery. He has been undergoing radiation and chemo, so his immune system is weak, and the risk of infection is too high if he travels, even if private. So, what do you say, Westmore? Will you help me to beat this thing?”

Blake did agree that the surgery would be risky, but she was like Alexandra—if there was any chance of saving a patient’s life, she was willing to take it unless she was absolutely sure there was no chance of survival.

Plus, if they were successful, this would only bring more positive recognition to the hospital as surgeries like these served as history-making. But more than anything she had faith that Alexandra would find a way, and was honored that she had chosen her to join her.

“It’s going to be a tough one, but I’m never one to back down from a tough surgery. So, yes, I accept your offer,” she informed Alexandra, a bit of excitement in her voice.

She knew Alexandra understood her being excited about performing a surgery of that magnitude, given the circumstance of the patient.

“Game on, you monster. We are coming for you,” Alexandra said as she jabbed her index finger at one of the images on the counter, glaring at it.

Blake couldn’t help the laughter that bubbled out of her throat. Alexandra also joined in laughing at herself.

“Let’s get you fed so you can use that brilliant brain of yours.”

Blake once again marveled at Alexandra’s ability to put the best foot forward despite whatever unhappiness she felt about her personal life. She had meant it earlier when she said that she would provide a listening ear if Alexandra needed it. She got up off the stool and cleared all the MRI images off the island to give Alexandra more space to work her magic in the kitchen.

Thirty minutes later, Blake had a huge serving of pancakes, scrambled eggs, and bacon placed in front of her. Her mouth watered at the sight as her eyes widened at the amount.

“I mean, I am starving, but this is a lot of food for just one person,” she admitted with a raised eyebrow.

Alexandra sat beside her, serving her a huge helping.

“What can I say? Your craving has rubbed off on me and I will be joining you to have breakfast this time of the day.”

Blake grinned. “A woman that can appreciate breakfast food any time of the day is a woman of my heart.” Realizing what she had said, Blake plucked a piece of bacon from her plate in an attempt to change the direction of the conversation. “*Hmmm,*” she hummed closing her eyes.

She felt Alexandra’s eyes on her. She opened one eye, looking at her. “What? This is some of the best bacon I’ve ever tasted,” she added, hoping that Alexandra wouldn’t think anything of her earlier comment.

For a beat, Alexandra just stared intensely at her mouth while she chewed. Blake swallowed hard and the bacon wasn’t the only reason why she had to swallow. Alexandra shook her head slightly, flashing a soft smile and continued to share their meal.

They were halfway through the meal discussing the tumor when Alexandra turned her body fully towards her. “So, why did you get up so late today that you didn’t even have time to have coffee before coming here,” Alexandra asked just as

Blake aimed another fork full of eggs and pancake towards her mouth.

Woah. Way to change a topic. She gave her a sidelong glance as she felt the weight of Alexandra's gaze on her. "I was out late last night along with being exhausted from a long work week," she answered then immediately continued with the journey her fork was on, chewing slowly.

"Hot date?" Alexandra asked, her gaze still focused on her.

At that question, she swallowed the last bits that she was chewing and took a sip of orange juice before she turned towards Alexandra. She surmised Alexandra was just making conversation, but it gave her a weird feeling hearing Alexandra asking if she had been on a date. She cocked her head as her eyes roamed over Alexandra's features trying to get a read on her, but came up empty.

"Actually no. Miranda and I went to Palmettos with a few other members of staff after work," she provided, watching Alexandra's reaction closely.

"Oh," was all that Alexandra supplied.

Blake narrowed her eyes at her. "Seems like you were hoping for something a bit juicier," she pushed, trying to get behind the reason for this line of question. For some reason, her gut told her there was more to it.

"Nah, just me being inquisitive." Alexandra drank a sip of water, her eyes gleaming over the glass as her lips curled into a smile.

Blake shook her head, deciding to drop it. Maybe it was just simple conversation after all.

They spent the remainder of the afternoon brainstorming about the surgery, assessing all the risks involved and mapping out possible ways to mitigate those risks. Even though she had no intentions of working over the weekend, bouncing ideas back and forth with Alexandra didn't feel like work. In fact, Blake enjoyed having a conversation with someone other than Miranda who understood her passion when it came to being a surgeon and how seriously she took the responsibility of

saving lives. She didn't realize how late it had grown until Alexandra yawned, stretching her back. It was almost nine.

"I guess I should get going," she announced as she stood and stretched her back also.

Alexandra looked up from where she sat, appearing a bit apologetic. "Sorry for taking up your entire evening. I never intended for you to work on this with me today. You probably would have found something more relaxing to occupy your time than work."

Blake frowned as she locked eyes with Alexandra, realizing that there was nothing else she wanted to do while they had continuously bounced ideas off each other. "On the contrary, Dr. Edison, I found our time together very relaxing. Plus, I did get a free meal." She smirked as she rubbed her belly.

Alexandra groaned. "Some host I am. I didn't even make you dinner. I could make you something really quick to take home with you," she added, getting up from the sofa.

"No. I'm fine thanks. I am still full from what we had earlier."

"Are you sure?" Alexandra asked, her voice filled with concern.

She gave her a soft smile, enjoying this naturally nurturing side she had come to realize Alexandra had about her.

"I am sure," she confirmed, not wanting Alexandra to worry.

Alexandra walked her to the elevator and Blake was not surprised when she hugged her and even less surprised when soft lips hit her cheek. *Wonder what she would have done If I had turned my head so the kiss landed on my lips. Wow! Where did that come from?* She had never been happier to hear the sound of an elevator arriving when it finally did.

"Good night, Blake," Alexandra said, her eyes locked onto Blake's until the elevator doors closed.

Chapter Twenty

Over the next few weeks, Blake and Alexandra spent many hours together researching all possible angles to ensure a successful surgery. This resulted in late nights together at the hospital and weekends at their respective homes. Three weeks in, Blake suggested that Alexandra come over to her apartment on the weekend since she had never been there before, and it was only fair that she be the hostess for once. Now that Alexandra made her way over, she wondered if that was such a good idea and became even more irritated at her thoughts. She had never been one to really be bothered with people's opinion of her, but here she stood pondering what Alexandra would think of her apartment. Her place paled in comparison to the opulence that Alexandra seemed accustomed to, but one of the many things that she learned about Alexandra was that she is not someone who placed too much importance on her wealth. In fact, the more time Blake spent with her made her realized that Alexandra happened to be one of the most down-to-earth people she knew, and the good doctor had grown on her in more ways than one. Her apartment, an open concept loft located on the tenth floor of a converted industrial building provided one of the best views in the city and brilliant sunlight. She loved her apartment. She preferred the minimalistic modern concept and her home reflected as much. But looking at it now, she can't help but wonder what Alexandra would think. *Oh well, I will find out soon enough.*

She heard a soft knock on the door and try as she might, she couldn't stop feeling nervous. She took a deep breath as she opened the door to a very stunning woman in blue fitted jeans and a crisp, white button-down shirt with the sleeves rolled up to her elbow. Blake's eyes traveled the length of Alexandra's body, and it took Alexandra clearing her throat to make her realize that she was staring and had yet to say anything. Her eyes snapped back to Alexandra's, who had a teasing smile on

her face. Blake wanted to feel bad for ogling her like that, but how could she, when the woman always looked so damn good.

“Hey, you. Come on in.” She stepped out of the doorway to let Alexandra in.

“I was starting to wonder if you were going to let me in,” Alexandra quipped as she stepped over the threshold. Alexandra continued into the apartment, her eyes sweeping over the space. Blake watched closely, trying to get a read on what Alexandra was thinking.

“Nice place. In some ways, it’s kind of how I expected your home to be. Elegant and simple like its owner,” she commented, walking towards the floor-to-ceiling windows and taking in the view.

A soft smile took over Blake’s face as she released the breath she didn’t realize she held.

“May I get you something to drink?” she asked as she joined Alexandra at the window.

Alexandra turned to face her giving her a contemplative smile. She held Blake’s gaze. “I’m fine, thanks. Maybe I’ll have a beer later.”

The way Alexandra looked at her suggested that she wanted to say something to her. Having spent so much time together recently, they had grown pretty close and developed this comfort around each other. Alexandra happened to be smart and funny and also one of the most thoughtful people she knew. The more time she spent with the woman, the more fascinated she became and the more her attraction grew. After all, Alexandra happened to be a very attractive person. No surprise that she found her attractive, but the intensity of that attraction bothered Blake and the fact that she knew nothing would happen between them. Not only was Alexandra her boss, she was sure she wouldn’t want to cross that line with her. She didn’t want to do anything to jeopardize the tentative friendship they had formed. Not many people understood her except for Miranda yet somehow Alexandra also understood her. Plus, she truly enjoyed being around her. She raised an eyebrow when Alexandra said nothing.

Alexandra sighed, shaking her head. “Let’s get some work done, Westmore,” she commanded, leaving Blake to watch her walk away.

Blake’s suggestion that she come over to her place seeing that she had never been there before surprised Alexandra. Since they started working closely together, she had grown to know Blake on a more personal level and became even more intrigued by the woman. Blake hid her emotions very well, but behind all her armor, existed one of the most tender-hearted individuals she had ever met contrasting what she tried to show the world. She loved Blake’s passion when she spoke about surgery. Those eyes that hardly revealed any emotions lit up when they came another step closer to ensuring the success of the upcoming surgery. She had seen Blake interact with patients and family, and admired how she never shied away from showing empathy and care to her patients. Blake also made her laugh with her dry sense of humor, resulting in her never being bored in her company. It felt so nice and refreshing to have someone who she could talk to about surgery all day, and they never got disinterested. While she and Taylor had always supported each other’s careers, their discussions around her work were limited to just basic aspects. With Blake, she experienced something totally different, thrilling and exciting. Lost in her thoughts she didn’t hear when Blake asked her something.

“Earth to Alexandra!” Blake waved her hand in front of her face, breaking her from her thoughts.

She blinked her eyes rapidly, clearing her mind. “Sorry I was lost in my head for a moment. What was the question?”

Blake gave her a look that bordered on curiosity and concern. “I asked if you are ready to eat as I am starving, and seeing that I am no use in the kitchen, we will need to order

takeout,” Blake informed her, holding her gaze as if trying to figure out what was going through her mind.

A slow smile formed over her face. “There must be something you can make,” she teased.

Blake’s eyebrows shot up as if the idea was completely foreign to her.

“I mean you have never outright said you don’t know how to cook. Not liking to do something and not being able to do it are two completely different things.”

Blake held up a hand, uncertainty written all over her face. “I...I mean there’s a bit I can do, but I don’t think today is the day for that, and there’s not much here in terms of groceries,” she said in the most innocent voice she could muster.

Alexandra couldn’t help but laugh.

“Plus, it’s been a long week and day, and cooking on a Saturday is just not my thing,” she added with a smirk on her face.

Alexandra narrowed her eyes at her, but Blake did have a point. It had been a long day and week so, at this time, it would be better if they grabbed takeout. “Fine! I’m letting you off the hook this time,” she agreed with a pout.

Blake’s smiled triumphantly as she reached for her phone and asked, “What do you feel in the mood for? There’s this Thai restaurant a block away that makes the best noodles.”

Blake stood and stretched which resulted in her shirt lifting and exposing very smooth skin which caught Alexandra’s attention. *God, her skin seems so soft.* She had to clear her throat when she realized that Blake caught her staring. Blake smirked at her with a knowing look on her face.

“Thai is fine with me. I’m fine with anything you choose,” she finally answered.

She always found Blake attractive but lately, it’s like that attraction had grown ten-fold and she had been caught more than once staring at the woman in not-so-appropriate places. *Grrrrr...* She had always been very tactile with those she was

close with in her life and the more comfortable she became with Blake, the more she realized her touching tendencies increased. She realized that every opportunity she got, she was always touching the woman. Blake the complete opposite when it came to touching her, said nothing or showed any signs of discomfort. On many occasions she observed Blake interacting with Miranda in a very tactile manner. *Interesting...* So, why did she not get the same treatment?

Once they finished eating, they decided not to continue working. They were both tired and thought it best that they relaxed for the rest of the evening. They decided to watch a movie and have a bottle of wine, something which both women had not done for a while due to their busy schedules. They settled on the sofa with their glasses after clearing away the food containers.

She's so beautiful. Alexandra admired Blake's features as the woman closed her eyes, leaning her head back on the sofa. She was grateful that Blake had dedicated so much of her time to assist her. She knew that she didn't have to, and she appreciated it greatly.

"Thank you for doing this with me. I hope you know how much I appreciate it," she acknowledged, watching as Blake opened her eyes and those amazing blues landed on her with an intensity that made her stop breathing for a moment.

Blake looked at her for a long moment as if deciding what to say.

"You don't have to thank me. It is my job," she replied in a very soft tone with a hint of something behind it. Alexandra dropped her eyes to the space between them, a bit disappointed with the answer because maybe, just maybe she wanted Blake to say she did it for her instead of answering the same as she did weeks ago. As if Blake could read her mind, a long finger lifted her chin, forcing her to bring her gaze back to Blake's.

"And I also did it because you asked me to and I absolutely love working with you," she added.

Alexandra could only nod in acknowledgment a soft smile taking over her face. The night ended a few hours later when

they could hardly keep their eyes open. Blake offered her guestroom, but Alexandra declined, opting to go home instead. She refused to put meaning to the reason why she had declined the offer.

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Chapter Twenty-One

The Friday of the weekend of their trip to Paris, Blake woke up on a high. She was excited about finally getting to see Paris, but more than anything she knew they would be successful. There was no guarantee, of course, when it came to surgery, but she could feel it in her bones that they would save this young man's life. They had tried multiple strategies practicing on virtual patients, and their success rate only increased with each attempt. It had been a busy day for her as she wanted to finish up the pending paperwork before their trip on Saturday afternoon. The surgery would be on Monday evening, and they were scheduled to arrive in Paris Sunday morning giving them a day to go over a few things with the team who would be assisting in Paris. Since Alexandra had decided to take on the case, they had a few video calls with the patient, giving him a chance to get to know them. Blake admired the strength of the young man and his shared determination to survive. His determination inspired them to work even harder at ensuring a successful surgery.

That determination drove her to review the statistics again instead of heading home to pack even though it was almost seven. She knew they had a solid plan, but there was just this feeling that there was something more she could do. As she squinted her eyes, looking at the last set of images the hospital had sent over a few days ago, she saw it. The tumor had shifted just slightly, but that slight shift provided an opening for them to enter through the patient's front instead of his back. She knew it would be risky to change the plan this late, but with surgery nothing was written in stone, and you always had to know how to improvise. A patient's condition could change instantly. She reached for her phone to call Alexandra, but stopped before she pressed the call button. She needed to be sure it was a viable option. What she would propose to do held risk, but gave the patient a better chance of survival and

reduced the risk of paralysis. She placed her phone back in her pocket and headed towards the simulator room to test her theory.

Two hours later Blake found herself riding the elevator up to Alexandra's penthouse, excitement rolling off her. She called Alexandra when she left the hospital, informing her that she was on her way over. Alexandra wanted to know if something had gone wrong, but Blake didn't want to get into it over the phone. So, she told her that she would be there in fifteen minutes. She exited the elevator and wasn't surprised to see Alexandra waiting for her in the foyer with a concerned look on her face. That look turned quizzical when she saw the bright smile that took over Blake's features.

"Well, I guess it's nothing bad if you are smiling like that. So please take me out of my misery," Alexandra demanded.

Blake stepped past Alexandra grabbing her hand, leading them into the living room. She removed her phone from her pocket, connecting it to the T.V.

"Just watch," she said as she settled on the sofa, pulling Alexandra down with her. Blake played the clip of her practicing her theory at the hospital. She watched as recognition dawned on Alexandra's face. She knew showing Alexandra would be better than explaining, which was what had prompted her to download the video to her phone. She could see the wheels turning in Alexandra's head and she just knew she already began envisioning how she would approach her part of the surgery. She wasn't surprised when Alexandra turned to face her with a huge smile on her face.

"This is absolutely brilliant. You just increase his chance of surviving the surgery significantly. It will be so much easier for me to remove the tumor from that angle," she pointed out. "This is absolutely brilliant."

Surprisingly, Alexandra launched herself into her arms, placing a quick kiss on her lips, forcing her to fall back on the sofa taking her with her. What was intended to be a hug put them in a very compromising position with Alexandra practically laying on top of Blake. It took a moment for

Alexandra to realize the position they were in, and Blake expected her to remove herself from on top of her immediately. Blake's body started to heat when Alexandra's eyes darkened as they moved back and forth from her eyes to her lips. She had never been held so captive by anyone's eyes as she struggled to calm her breathing. She could feel the tension between them as everything around them disappeared, and she was consumed by everything that was Alexandra Edison. Her fresh lavender scent which Blake always found calming, the plumpness of her lips which she had tried hard not to think about kissing, and that pink tongue that just pushed out to moisten said lips.

Blake wasn't sure who moved first, but their lips crashed together in a kiss that knocked the air out of her lungs. The kiss, far from gentle, bordered more on brutal and carnal. Weeks of tension rolled off them as they tasted each other, giving into their attraction. Her entire body set on fire as electricity moved up her spine when Alexandra moaned into her mouth. Everything that she had conditioned her mind not to think about over the last few months came rushing to the forefront as she pulled Alexandra closer to her. She wanted to fuck this woman. From the moment she laid eyes on her, she had wanted to fuck her but didn't think she had a chance, so she tried hard to condition her mind not to go there. She knew there might be regrets, but she was going to be selfish and not stop the kiss, especially now that Alexandra's tongue was searching, probing for entrance into her mouth. She obliged, opening up her mouth, allowing Alexandra's tongue to sweep over hers. She needed to stop thinking and enjoy the moment. Regardless of what happened when it ended, she wanted the most from it. With that in mind, she took over the kiss, plunging her tongue into Alexandra's mouth. There was nothing soft about the kiss since it had started. No hesitant moments leading to a build-up. It was all-consuming, blazing as heat rolled off them. Blake poured everything into the kiss; everything that she had denied herself of feeling and everything she wanted. The intensity of the desire that thrummed through her, was unlike anything she'd ever felt before. She nipped and nibbled on Alexandra's lips, using her tongue to soothe as she ran her hand over Alexandra's ass

pulling her closer. Her hand tracked back up as her fingers skimmed the exposed skin between Alexandra's pants and tank. Her skin was so soft and warm, and Blake could feel how wet she was already.

Alexandra broke the kiss, looking down at her. Blake expected to see some form of regret, but blown pupils and desire met her. Alexandra ran a finger down her cheek before getting up. Blake felt the loss instantly. Before she had time to start pondering where they go from there, Alexandra held out a hand for her to take. Blake looked at the hand then back to Alexandra's face. Without question, she took her hand and followed as Alexandra led her to her bedroom. Somewhere along the line, they made the consensus not to speak about what was happening because as soon as they entered the room, Alexandra's mouth landed back on hers. They kissed frantically as they pawed at each other. Blake always loved being in control when she fucked, and she wanted to fuck Alexandra more than she had ever wanted another woman. And if tonight was all she would get, then she was going to make the most of it. With this in mind, she spun them around, walking Alexandra backward to the bed. She ran her hands all over her body, wanting to touch every part of her, needing to feel her skin. She reached for her tank and in one swift motion removed it, and was graced with the most beautiful breasts she had ever seen. In her excitement about the surgery, she didn't realize that Alexandra wasn't wearing a bra. Blake swallowed hard as her mouth watered at the sight. Soft, creamy skin with nipples so pink and hard. Unable to hold back, she latched on to a nipple.

"Fuck," Alexandra screamed as she sucked hard. Blake wondered if she had sucked too hard, but her concerns were washed away when she felt Alexandra's hand on her head pulling her closer to her chest.

She released that nipple, switching to give the other the same attention. Blake needed more and at this point, it was apparent that there was no turning back as far as they were both concerned. She dropped to her knees in front of Alexandra, kissing her belly as she pulled down her yoga pants. She nipped and sucked her hip bones, moaning as

Alexandra squirmed under her touch. These were not soft, tender nips and sucking because Blake couldn't control the hunger that had built since their lips touched. She could see how wet Alexandra was when her eyes landed on some of the sexiest underwear she had ever seen. She couldn't help it when she planted her face on Alexandra's mound, inhaling as Alexandra's arousal flooded her senses. She kissed her through her underwear placing soft bites on her mons pubis.

"Blake, please..." Alexandra moaned, her hips starting to move against Blake's face. She wanted to savor the moment, but she was too turned on and her need to feel and see Alexandra come undone at her touch, outweigh her desire to take things slow. In one deft move, Alexandra's underwear hit the floor. Blake rose to her feet, latching her lips to Alexandra's in a searing kiss.

Alexandra moved to remove her shirt, but Blake pushed her back on the bed. Alexandra's dark hair lay in sharp contrast to the stark white sheets. *God, she's beautiful.*

Alexandra's body was all she thought it would be and so much. Her skin looked so soft that Blake's hands trembled with anticipation of touching her all over. Blake thought she couldn't be any more turned on than she was until Alexandra moved closer to the headboard, spreading her legs as she went. Blake couldn't remove her eyes from the glistening cunt that was waxed clean. She licked her lips, moving her eyes back up to Alexandra's, who watched her with sheer desire in her eyes. Her eyes were almost midnight blue. She removed her clothes as quickly as she could without appearing too anxious. She knew her body looked good and felt no form of insecurity when Alexandra's eyes roamed over her. She crawled towards her target slowly even though she wanted to launch herself at her. Not once did they break eye contact as Blake settled between Alexandra's leg. Alexandra hissed when Blake's mound connected with hers and pulled Blake into a searing kiss. Blake returned the kiss with fervor as her hands traveled over skin so soft and warm. Her hands moved down Alexandra's side and back up before going back down. Without breaking the kiss, she adjusted their bodies so that her hand could get easier access to where she wanted to touch the

most. When her fingers reached her target, there was no probing touch as she plunged two fingers deep into Alexandra.

“Arrrgghh,” Alexandra screamed, breaking the kiss as her pussy clamped around Blake’s fingers.

So tight, hot, and wet. Blake’s eyes rolled to the back of her head at how good Alexandra felt. Blake tried to maintain control of her emotions in every aspect of her life except in the bedroom. She had never shied away from displaying the passion she felt from fucking a beautiful woman. The high she got from watching a beautiful woman pinned beneath her, coming undone at her touch—with Alexandra that passion seemed to multiply a hundred folds. She knew this would probably be a one-time thing. Then fucking out this sexual tension that had been building between them for months and if Blake was being honest, she knew it was from the very first day they had met, that there had been a spark. She pulled out her fingers almost all the way, plunging back in, using her hips to push her hand even further.

“Oh fuck, yes. You feel so good,” Alexandra cried, her back arching off the bed.

It was a sight to behold. Blake picked up a steady pace pounding into Alexandra. She needed to fuck her, and she wanted to leave her mark on her, and that was what she was going to do.

“You are so fucking tight,” she hissed as she swirled her tongue into Alexandra’s ears, nibbling on the lobe.

She moaned when Alexandra’s nails scratched down her back, gripping her ass and pulling her even closer. She could feel that she neared orgasm as her pussy walls tightened even more around her fingers, but Blake had other plans as she pulled back, removing her fingers. Alexandra whimpered, looking frazzled and confused. Her chest was heaving so hard that Blake almost felt bad for denying her until she placed her fingers soaked with Alexandra’s essence in her mouth, never breaking eye contact with her. She moaned when Alexandra’s essence hit her tongue, closing her eyes to savor the flavors. She was sweeter than anything Blake had ever tasted.

“Of fuck,” Alexandra whimpered as she watched Blake. “Blake, please...I need you,” she begged, reaching for Blake’s hand.

Blake shook her head, removing her fingers from her mouth. “I have other plans for you.”

Before Alexandra could protest, Blake swooped down her body lowering her mouth to her clit. When she wrapped her lips around Alexandra’s clit, her back arched off the bed. She sucked hard before releasing it to run her tongue back and forth against her entrance. She lapped at her lips, wanting to drink every ounce of her juices before sliding her tongue inside. Alexandra cried out in ecstasy, and it was music to Blake’s ears as she continued her assault. Blake was so wet and turned on that she knew there was a possibility that she might come from just eating out Alexandra and if that was the case, so be it. She could feel Alexandra’s walls clamping around her tongue as she picked up her pace, tongue fucking her. Blake used one hand to pin down Alexandra’s hips as she quickly replaced her tongue with her fingers and wrapped her lips around Alexandra’s clit. Alexandra exploded.

“Oh my God... Blake,” she screamed as her body came undone.

Her entire body shook as the orgasm ripped through her. Blake slowed the pace of her fingers, allowing Alexandra to ride out the waves of the orgasm. Blake could feel her pussy walls spasm around her fingers as she softly kissed her clit. She laid there between Alexandra’s legs, looking up at her as she tried to catch her breath. Alexandra’s eyes were closed, chest heaving hard with a euphoric look on her face.

Blake climbed slowly up Alexandra’s body, looking for any signs of regret when their eyes met. But she saw the opposite of regret and before she knew what was happening, she found herself on her back looking at a woman who had wicked plans for her. Oh my.

When Blake told her she was coming over, Alexandra never in her wildest dreams imagined that this was where the night would end up. Not that she hadn't thought about fucking Blake, but for it to have happened so unexpectedly was a very pleasant surprise. In the last couple of months, the tension that existed between them only increased, and with working on the surgery and everything else, she hadn't given much thought to what it could mean for them. And right now, with her fingers pounding into Blake, now wasn't that time.

"Yes, baby, right there," Blake moaned as she curved her fingers, hitting that sweet spot that she had just discovered. She wanted to please Blake because the woman thoroughly fucked her. Her sex life with Taylor by no means could be called boring, but being fucked by Blake Westmore was a different experience. The woman fucked her with so much passion that she thought she would have passed out from the pleasure that Blake rained down on her.

I don't make love, I fuck. Her conversation with Blake from a long time ago flashed into her mind.

Alexandra thought she would have exploded when Blake sucked her juices off her fingers so unabashedly. She had never seen anything so sexy. With that in mind, she traveled down Blake's body, sucking a nipple into her mouth as she went. She traveled lower, dipping her tongue into Blake's navel, which she realized the woman was sensitive to as her hips gyrated even faster when Alexandra dipped her tongue again, sucking hard. She could smell Blake's arousal and she smelled so fucking good that Alexandra could no longer wait to taste her. She wanted to taste every part of her.

"I need to feel your tongue inside of me," Blake demanded as if reading her mind, and Alexandra wasn't going to deny her. She wanted to do just that.

She slid her tongue deep inside Blake using her hands to massage her breast as she fucked her relentless with her tongue. Blake's back arched off the bed when her lips latched

onto her clit. “You feel so fucking good,” she moaned as her hips started to move faster.

Alexandra could tell she was close, so she increased the pace of her assault on Blake’s clit, closing her eyes to savor the feeling. Blake’s thighs started to tremble, and Alexandra helped her over the cliff by adding two fingers, sucking even harder on her clit.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck,” Blake chanted as she rode Alexandra’s face into oblivion.

Alexandra climbed up Blake’s body, settling against her side. Blake turned to look at her, eyes dark with desire which made her cunt clench. Blake sat up and for a moment Alexandra thought she was going to leave, but she reached for the blanket that rested at the bottom and pulled it over their bodies. She settled comfortably in the crook of Blake’s arm as she threw the other over her waist, holding her close.

Blake kissed the top of her head and whispered, “Good night, Alexandra,” her voice sounding sleepy.

Guess we will have the conversation tomorrow. For the first time in months, this was the fastest she had fallen asleep.

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Chapter Twenty-Two

Blake watched Alexandra from the gallery of the operating room. It was like Alexandra could feel her eyes on her. As soon as she arrived Alexandra looked up, locking eyes with her. Blake tried to get a read of her expression behind the mask, but came up empty. They were slated to leave for Paris in under two hours so either way, they would have to talk about what happened between them. Blake suffered both fear and anxiety over the conversation. Earlier when she had woken up, for a moment her surroundings confused her. Breath-taking views from Alexandra's bedroom greeted her, before the previous night came flashing back to her all at once. She turned over, preparing to face Alexandra, but the bed sat empty. For a moment dread filled her, wondering if Alexandra so regretted being with her that she rushed out of bed as soon as she woke up and realize that she had made a mistake being with Blake. She saw her phone on the bedside table and reached for it. When she saw the note beneath the phone, it soothed her fears.

Blake,

I got called to the hospital for a brief surgery. It should not interfere with our travel plans. I brought my bags with me. I will pick you up from your apartment as soon as I am ready for the airport. Please feel free to use whatever you need. There is coffee downstairs.

See you soon.

Alexandra (:

Blake couldn't help smiling at the fact that Alexandra had signed her name to the note. *Even her handwriting is sexy.* But the smiley face at the end of the note made her smile wider.

The note didn't say much, but at least it didn't seem like she regretted what happened between them. The airport was in the same direction as the hospital, so it was best if she met Alexandra there instead of her picking her up from her apartment only to head back in the same direction she had come. With that thought, Blake had gone home to grab her bags and get ready. Now here she was watching Alexandra do what she did best with those talented hands. Well, one of, because now she had firsthand knowledge of what else she could do with those hands. The thought made her pussy clench just thinking about what she did with those hands a few hours ago.

Standing there watching Alexandra only made her have thoughts that were not helping her libido. She remembered that Miranda was working that Saturday and decided it best she spend some time with her friend before her flight. She found Miranda in her office, who immediately flashed her a smile as she appeared in her doorway.

"This is a pleasant surprise. I wasn't expecting to see you before your flight," Miranda said as she got up from her desk pulling Blake into a hug.

"What's this for?" she asked, a bit surprised by the embrace.

Miranda shrugged. "I guess I was already missing you. I can't recall the last time I didn't see you for days."

Blake felt the same way. "I know."

Blake wanted to tell Miranda about what happened with Alexandra, but knew she needed to talk to Alexandra first. She hardly kept anything from Miranda, but this was just not her secret to tell. She decided to fill Miranda in on the breakthrough she had the night before with the surgery.

"That will significantly increase his chances of survival," Miranda agreed, her voice mirroring the excitement on her face.

Blake's phone vibrated in her pocket an hour later.

Alexandra: Hey. Are you still here? I'm ready to go. The car is out front.

Blake: Be there in a minute!!

“Time to go,” she informed Miranda, pulling her into a tight hug. “Don’t miss me too much now. Okay? I’ll call you once we have landed.”

Five minutes later, Blake exited the hospital, immediately spotting Alexandra’s Mercedes parked on the curve, the driver standing by the door. Her stomach clenched with anticipation not knowing what to expect. She decided the best thing to do was act normal and take her cues from Alexandra.

“Good day Dr. Westmore,” the driver greeted, opening the back door for her.

“Hello,” she replied, flashing him a quick smile as she ducked inside.

Alexandra was sitting there looking absolutely radiant in all white. Her hair was pulled up into a messy bun and Blake couldn’t help but admire her. Alexandra turned her attention to her, a frown taking over her features which had Blake completely thrown off guard.

“*Un instant, s’il vous plait,*” Alexandra said as she reached for her phone that was faced down on the car seat.

Blake realized she was on the phone as she spotted the ear pods in her ears. “Hi, Blake. Sorry but I have to finish this call while we drive to the airport,” she apologized, a soft smile taking over her face.

“No problem at all.” Blake noted that Alexandra didn’t break eye contact with her as she spoke to her.

Blake smiled internally, happy that no awkwardness existed between them. The jitters she felt somewhat faded as relief washed over. Another type of feeling took over though as Alexandra’s perfume envelope the atmosphere and her speaking French sounding oh-so-fucking sexy wasn’t helping

the state of arousal that was taking over. Blake groaned internally wishing that they were at the airport already, not that eight hours on a flight alone with her would help, but at least there would be more space on the plane.

Alexandra made all the travel arrangements for the trip, which was why Blake suffered a bit of confusion when they got to the airport but detoured from the departure terminal heading in another direction. She wanted to ask Alexandra where they were going, but she was still on the phone. Moments later her question was answered when they pulled up outside a private jet with Devereaux emboldened on the tail with Alexandra's family logo.

Of course, we are flying private. She had never flown private before and the size of the plane impressed her. She got out of the car before the driver came around to open her door. She went around to assist with their bags, but they were already being unloaded by a young man. She couldn't help staring at the plane which reminded her of how rich Alexandra was. Alexandra never flaunted her wealth and acted so laid back, that unless you did your research you would never know that she was worth billions. Blake remained so caught up in her thoughts that she didn't realize that Alexandra stood beside her until she felt warm breath hit her ears.

"I promise you will find inside more impressive," she whispered and walked away, leaving Blake to follow her.

And boy was Blake impressed when she entered the plane. Plush cream leather seats with mahogany panels and desks decorated the inside. A long sofa rested on one side with three sets of smaller seats on the other side. The plane, beautifully decorated, showed signs of the family's wealth, but not in an ostentatious manner. Blake sat in one of the smaller chairs as Alexandra spoke with the pilot and crew members. She watched Alexandra's interaction with them and realized that she always interacted pleasantly with her staff. Even at the hospital, she had grown on the members of staff who had such high respect and admiration for her. She never acted too busy to listen to their concerns or to stop and chat briefly with them. Alexandra turned towards her, catching her staring. There was

no point turning away, so she held her gaze as she walked towards her. Alexandra paused, searching her face before sitting down beside her and turning in her seat to face her.

“How has your day been?” she asked, her eyes not giving Blake much to work with.

Blake struggled to breathe as Alexandra’s fragrance enveloped her senses. “It’s been good so far. I spent some time with Miranda and that’s it really.”

She wondered if Alexandra intended to not speak about what happened the previous night. Before they could say anything else, the pilot’s voice filled the space announcing that they should put on their seatbelts. Alexandra turned facing forward as she buckled in. She rested her head back on the seat closing her eyes. Blake turned her face towards the window as the plane started to taxi down the runway. Even though nothing awkward existed between them, she needed to talk about what had happened, just to know where they stood, but it seemed like Alexandra had other plans.

Once they were up in the air and the captain announced that they could move around, Alexandra turned to face her again. She sighed deeply, giving Blake a look that said so much.

“I know we need to talk about what happened last night. I don’t want you to think that I’m trying to avoid talking about it. But could we do it after the surgery? I mean, if you need to do it now I can, but would prefer if we do it then.” Her eyes implored Blake to understand. Which she did.

She reached for Alexandra’s hand before realizing what she was doing, but refused to drop it once their hands connected. She stroked the back of her hands with her thumb. “Whatever time you need.” She gave Alexandra’s hand a quick squeeze before dropping it.

Alexandra smiled. “Thanks for understanding.”

Blake placed her head in her palm, smirking at Alexandra. “Ooh what will we talk about then, since we’re not talking about me debauching you?” she quipped, wiggling her eyebrows at Alexandra.

Alexandra burst out in laughter, throwing her head back. “I think it’s fair to say the debauchery went both ways,” she shot back, shaking her head.

They spent the rest of the journey going over the plans for the surgery. Alexandra also took the time to go over a few places she had in mind for Blake to see while they were there since she had never been to Paris before. They both decided a quick nap would also be good to help with the jet lag after they had a light dinner. Blake was relieved that no tension existed between them. The last thing she wanted was for the night they spent to cause any friction between them. Because as good...no...as mind-blowing as the sex was, she had grown to appreciate Alexandra as a friend and admire her deeply as a colleague.

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Chapter Twenty-Three

Blake had never been the type to be impressed by wealth, but she had to admit, that the suite Alexandra had booked for them in one of the most prestigious hotels in Paris blew her away. The suite came with two bedrooms, which totally caught Blake's surprise when Alexandra casually mentioned that they will be staying in the same suite. For a moment she thought Alexandra meant that they would be staying in the same room, same bed. However, there was no need to worry as they had enough space for at least six people. Both rooms had their own ensuite bathroom complete with a shower and jacuzzi. The king-size beds were big enough to sleep at least four people. But the breathtaking view that absolutely stole her breath as she observed the Paris skyline with the Eiffel tower in sight, in all its grandeur caught Blake's attention more than anything. The magnificence of the scenery blew her mind. She was so wrapped up in admiring the splendor before her that she didn't realize that Alexandra had come to stand beside her until she spoke in a mesmerizing tone mirroring the way Blake felt.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" she breathed out the rhetorical question, eyes fixed on the skyline ahead of her.

Blake turned, facing Alexandra. "Yes, absolutely breathtaking," she whispered, eyes roaming over Alexandra's features.

Alexandra turned her attention to Blake, holding her gaze, and Blake knew she wondered if her reply was in reference to the city before them or her. Alexandra's eyes bounced between her mouth and her eyes. She cleared her throat and took a deep breath.

"We should go to the hospital shortly so we can meet Pierre and his family in person." The look Alexandra gave her made her body heat.

This is going to be a long week.

They spent most of the day at the hospital going over the surgery with the team who would be assisting them. Blake realized that her body reacted to every touch from Alexandra. A mere brush of her fingertips when she handed her a document set her skin on fire. The lingering looks between them had her aroused all day. She felt sensations she never felt before when another woman looked at her the way Alexandra did. Blake thanked the stars that by the time they returned to the hotel they were both too exhausted for anything other than a quick dinner before bed. Even though the dinner itself turned out to be just as torturous as she watched Alexandra lips wrapped around the fork remembering what those lips did to her. She definitely needed a cold shower or two to get through the night.

On the day of the surgery, a nervous energy filled Blake, not because of the surgery but because of the impending conversation that would happen with Alexandra after the surgery. She didn't know why she was nervous about it, but she just was, and being nervous wasn't a natural thing for her. She had always been sure of herself or at least tried to be. But lately, she had been realizing that when it came to Alexandra, that self-confidence that she had worked hard to build over the years, oftentimes cracked just a little. After they had visited the hospital and spent most of the day there going over plans with the medical staff who would be assisting on the surgery, they returned to the hotel, ate dinner, and pretty much went to bed agreeing that they were exhausted and needed to rest for the long day ahead of them.

Now they were halfway through the surgery and so far, everything had gone smoothly. They operated in perfect synergy. She felt so honored to be sharing such a momentous moment with one of the most talented surgeons she had ever met. Totally in awe of the woman, she knew her professional and personal opinion grew each time she watched Alexandra work. And not just in the operating room but now, another room.

This is not the time to be thinking about that.

Interns, residents, and attendees packed the gallery above the operating room. This was a ground-breaking operation and if...no...when they were successful, she knew the news about what they had managed to do would travel throughout the medical field. But despite all that loomed ahead of them, she was just happy to be in the moment with Alexandra watching her be great.

Alexandra looked up at her and Blake knew before she said, “We did it. We have successfully removed the tumor without damaging his spinal cord.”

The gallery erupted with applause.

“Dr. Westmore, your turn to put our patient back together.”

Blake nodded and moved into position. Alexandra had completed her job, now it was her responsibility to finish it. All she had to do was reimplant the patient’s lungs within a certain amount of time. *Game on.*

Alexandra was elated as she and Blake walked towards the car that waited for them outside the hospital. The surgery had gone extremely well, and she couldn’t have been happier. The next forty-eight hours would be crucial for the patient, but she didn’t doubt that he would make a full recovery. The excitement from the success of the surgery cut short once she entered the car with Blake. Now that the surgery was over, she knew they had to talk about them having sex. Wickedly amazing sex. She was happy that Blake had been so understanding about waiting.

“I made reservations for us to have dinner so that we could celebrate our success, but also talk about what happened the other night,” she informed Blake as the car drove off.

Blake nodded, her gaze pensive. They drove in silence to the restaurant, but it wasn’t an uncomfortable silence.

Alexandra was wrapped up in her own thoughts which weren't necessarily bad, and she assumed so was Blake.

"We'll have a bottle of Armand de Brignac if you have it, please," Alexandra informed the waiter once they were seated.

She knew the significance of the champagne wasn't lost on Blake who watched her with an intensity that Alexandra didn't know what to make of it. She cleared her throat.

"So, should we eat first? Or should we just get straight to it?" she asked, not breaking eye contact with Blake.

She wasn't necessarily nervous about talking about them having sex, but the outcome of the talk mattered to her because she didn't want it to affect her growing friendship with Blake. Before Blake could answer, the waiter returned with their champagne. They stared at each other while he filled their glasses, only breaking eye contact when he required their attention.

"Would you like to place an order from the appetizer's menu?"

Blake allowed Alexandra to order for them stating that she trusted her to ensure she experienced the best French cuisines on the menu.

"Cheers to a successful surgery and may the next forty-eight hours be just as successful," Blake toasted as she lifted her glass towards Alexandra's to clink. Alexandra couldn't help but smile as she clinked her glass to Blake's.

"Now, as far as discussing our roll in the sack. How about we just get it out of the way so that we can enjoy our meal without it being on our minds," Blake added after taking a sip of the champagne.

Alexandra could tell Blake was just trying to make the atmosphere for the conversation as comfortable as possible. She really appreciated the effort. She took another sip of her drink, holding Blake's gaze which gave nothing away.

"First and foremost, I do not regret being with you. Absolutely no regrets. In fact, it was quite an experience, one that has left me with so many questions about myself. Not in a

bad way of course,” she added as Blake nodded her head in acknowledgment.

“The thing is, I’ve been with Taylor for so long that I don’t know what it’s like to not be in a relationship and I think I need to experience that before I even consider dating again. I know you are probably thinking that you are not looking for a relationship with me because as you told me a long time ago, you don’t do relationships. Which I think is sad, because I think you, Blake Westmore, would be an excellent partner to anyone lucky enough to bequeath that honor. And it is because of that why I don’t want to be callous with both our feelings and even consider trying to be with you in my current frame of mind, because when I’m ready if given the opportunity, I would most definitely date you. You are an exceptional woman and an even more exceptional lover,” she explained, eyes beseeching Blake to understand.

“But right now, I just can’t. In some ways, I think I still need to process my breakup. I need to find myself so that I can be the best version of myself for my partner when that time comes. Despite what has happened, being in love is something wonderful to experience and I would never deny myself the opportunity of falling in love out of fear of being hurt again. And I honestly do hope that when I’m ready you will be available.” The last part of her statement came out barely above a whisper, but she knew Blake heard her.

Ever since she left Blake in her bedroom that morning and despite being as busy as she was since then, she had thought a lot about what happened between them. She knew a growing attraction budded between them and knew that Blake felt the same. The question remained really and truly how they would move forward. And when she reflected on herself, on everything that had happened since meeting Blake, the only way forward was to be honest with herself and Blake.

What probably spanned a mere few seconds felt like an eternity as she waited on Blake to say something. She wished knew what she was thinking, because she could see that the woman was processing everything she said, but she just

couldn't tell how she felt about it as her face gave nothing away. Finally, a small smile took over Blake's features.

"I'm happy that you don't regret being with me because I absolutely don't either. However, even though I have never had a relationship, I do understand your need to find yourself. I also believe that we are mature enough to not let what happened come between us at work or otherwise. As for the possibility of me being available when you are ready to have another relationship, there is a high probability that I will be, but the probability of me wanting a relationship is very low. But as the saying goes, never say never, so I always keep an open mind," she replied never breaking eye contact.

Alexandra considered Blake's statement, holding her gaze.

"Love, Blake, is the most powerful drug known to man and you might be steadfast in your belief that you aren't open to relationships, but when that day comes you will have no choice but to experience one of the most beautiful gifts of life. And I am positive the right woman will change your views on relationships when the time comes," Alexandra countered, still not understanding why Blake seemed so against being in a relationship.

Blake cocked her head to the side before lifting her glass and said, "I have no doubt in the possibility of such a woman," giving Alexandra a look so intense it caused her to swallow hard.

Luckily for Alexandra, the waiter chose that moment to return with their appetizers. After addressing the elephant in the room, they had a wonderful time together at dinner. They discussed the success of the surgery and possible ways in which they could both use what they learned from the surgery in their respective area of expertise. Alexandra felt relieved that things were normal between them. Even though normal meant that now she was acutely aware of the magic that Blake's fingers could create as she watched her wrap them around the champagne flute. Normal now meant that she knew what a certain look meant when Blake looked at her with a particular intensity, her eyes fixed on her lips. Normal meant that as they sat there conversing, she couldn't help but wonder

what it would be like to be with Blake again, at least one more time and not when she had taken the time to figure things out but right here, right now. She swallowed hard as Blake ran her very pink tongue over her bottom lip, moaning as she took a bite of her dessert.

Once they were back at the hotel Alexandra couldn't get the thought of having one more night with Blake out of her head. She knew she shouldn't be thinking along that line because she had just told Blake that she needed time to figure herself out. And she did agree that she wasn't ready to date anyone but *God*, she couldn't help but wonder. That desire only intensified when they left the restaurant. She left her room in search of water. Thoughts of sleeping with Blake made her skin overheat. Her body heat skyrocketed when she entered the dining area and saw Blake in all her magnificent glory in just a pair of boy shorts and a fitted tank top, eyes closed with her head back, drinking a bottle of water. Alexandra's eyes roamed over Blake's body, taking in the definition of every curve of her muscles. She watched the movement of Blake's throat as she drank thirstily from the bottle as memories of what that area of skin tasted like flooded her senses. Her eyes moved from Blake's throat to her lips, lips that did wickedly amazing things to her body. She was paralyzed in her spot watching the woman as her need to have Blake amplified.

When Blake's eyes landed on hers, she did nothing to hide the desire that she knew Blake could see as she ran her tongue over her lips in a move that was definitely meant to entice. She could see it. The sheer want that she felt inside of her, reflected back at her in those baby blues. Alexandra had never been afraid of asking for what she wanted, and right now what she wanted was Blake Westmore. She moved across the room, stopping directly in front of Blake whose eyes never once left hers. Eyes that were now a deeper shade of blue closer to hers. She had intended to ask Blake for just one more night, for both of them to just get what they were feeling out of their system. She could see that Blake wanted her just as badly. For once the woman wasn't trying to hide her emotions.

"I stand by what I said earlier about needing time to figure myself out, but I'm asking you to give me Paris. Be mine for

the remainder of the week that we have here, because I very much want to have sex with you again and by the way that you have been looking at me, I know you feel the same. We get it out of our system and whatever happens in Paris stays in Paris.”

Shocked by her words, her heart pounded erratically against ribs. That was definitely not what she had intended to say. It would certainly be a blow if Blake turned her down. She knew in some ways she was playing with fire, but she wanted to be fucked by the woman again. Because that’s what Blake had done.

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Chapter Twenty-Four

Blake blinked multiple times, pondering what Alexandra was proposing. All night throughout dinner, thoughts of fucking Alexandra one more time had plagued her mind. Blake had never been more grateful for her ability to mask her emotions than in those moments when she watched Alexandra wrap her lips around the fork, moaning in pleasure when the flavors of the delicious meal they had hit her taste buds. She had wanted to throw everything off the table and take Alexandra right then and there, hard and fast. She wasn't even surprised or hurt when Alexandra told her she wasn't ready to be with anyone because she understood. She admired the woman for handling her break up the way that she did. She knew even though Alexandra appeared unaffected compared to how the average person would have been, she saw signs of the hurt she felt the more time they had spent together. She wanted to just jump right in and say yes but she wanted to take a moment to just think about the consequences of saying yes. But in the grand scheme of things, what consequences were there really? They both understood what they were getting into. Blake wasn't one for pretense and she wanted Alexandra, and if Paris was all she got, she damn well was going to make the most of it.

Alexandra sighed, taking a step back. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have made such a proposal. Its..."

But before Alexandra could finish her statement, Blake moved so fast that Alexandra gasped when her mouth landed on hers in a brutal kiss. She plunged her tongue deep inside Alexandra's mouth, pulling her as close as possible. Alexandra's body went limp against hers as she whimpered and fisted her hands in Blake's hair. Alexandra wanted her and Blake was determined to give her what she wanted. Consequences be damned. She moved her hand through

Alexandra's hair down her back, landing on her ass and squeezing hard.

"Yes," she whispered against Alexandra's lips, breaking the kiss only for a few seconds.

She used her hands to remove the robe covering Alexandra's body. Alexandra shivered and Blake wasn't sure if it was because of the temperature in the room or her touch. Either way, she loved it.

She moved her lips to Alexandra's ears, nibbling on the lobe as she said, "You are so fucking beautiful and if Paris is all we have, then I'm going to ensure that you get everything you want and then some."

She sucked Alexandra's earlobe into her mouth swirling slowly as her hands gripped her ass even tighter.

"God that feels so good," Alexandra moaned as she ran her hands down Blake's back.

On her way back up she moved her hands beneath Blake's tank. Blake could feel how warm her hands were on her skin. She groaned deep in her throat when Alexandra used her nails to scratch down her back. Blake had never been with anyone who had the impact that Alexandra had on her when she touched her like that. It was like she wanted to touch every part of her body at the same. She rested her forehead against Alexandra's, breathing deeply. She needed to calm herself down because she wanted to take Alexandra so hard that if she didn't calm down, her heart might pound out of her chest.

She gave Alexandra a quick, chaste kiss before turning and leading them to her bedroom, giving herself much-needed time to calm down. She stopped at the foot of the bed, her eyes roaming over Alexandra's body now only covered by her bra and underwear.

"Undress me," she commanded and marveled in the way Alexandra's eyes darkened at the command.

Alexandra moved her hands down the front of her tank, gripping her breast as she went, causing Blake's breath to hitch. In one swift move, the tank disappeared, and Blake's

nipples hardened painfully as cool air hit them. Alexandra took a nipple in her mouth, moaning in pleasure. The sound and the feeling of her tongue on her nipple forced Blake to throw her head back as pleasure vibrated throughout her body. She loved the way Alexandra didn't hesitate to touch her. Absolutely loved how sure she was when she ran her tongue over a nipple before taking it into her mouth and sucking even harder.

"I love when you tell me what to do like that," Alexandra whispered in her ears before dropping to her knees.

The sight of Alexandra on her knees in front of her made Blake's body grow even hotter. Alexandra kissed her belly, running her tongue from left to right before dipping into her navel and swirling her tongue.

"You on your knees in front of me is one of the most erotic things I've ever had the pleasure of experiencing," Blake hissed, her voice an octave deeper with arousal.

Alexandra looked up at her, eyes hooded, licking her lips before placing them on her mound, kissing her through her underwear. She ran her hands up and down Blake's thighs, placing small bites all over her mound. Before Blake could get used to the sensation of Alexandra's lips on her mound, her underwear pooled at her ankles, and she was pushed back to sit on the edge of the bed. Alexandra settled between her legs, pushing her back on the bed, spreading her legs with her feet still on the floor.

Alexandra ran her tongue up and down her thighs, placing small bites as she went. Upon reaching where Blake wanted her tongue the most, she blew on her clit and Blake felt it in her core. She was so fucking wet that she could feel it running down.

"Oh fuck," she groaned.

Before she could even process the jolt of electricity that ran through her body, Alexandra used her fingers to spread her nectar lips before wrapping her lips around her clit. Blake's body arched so hard she wondered if her back would snap.

“Fuck,” she cried as Alexandra continued her onslaught on her clit.

Blake wanted to come so badly. But at the same time, she wanted to enjoy the pleasure being given to her by a woman who she didn't even dare to dream about six months ago, being on her knees in front of her, fucking her so hard with her tongue.

“You taste so good,” Alexandra moaned as she ran her tongue the length of Blake's slit.

She looked up at Blake, licking her lips. Blake thought she couldn't get any more turned on, but that single move had her feeling ready to explode.

“I need you inside me now,” she hissed through gritted teeth.

Alexandra smirked at her with a raised eyebrow. “You are quite bossy tonight.”

“Well, I couldn't show you all my tricks in one night because then...” The rest of her response was cut off when Alexandra sank two fingers deep inside of her.

Blake threw her head back and screamed Alexandra's name. She curled her fingers just right, hitting Blake in that oh-so-sweet spot that she knew would make her come any second now. She tried to hold on as long as she could as Alexandra pounded away inside of her.

“Let go, Blake,” she heard Alexandra order, but with the roaring in her ears and the tingling feeling in her body clouding all her other senses, she wasn't sure.

All she knew was that she was a goner when Alexandra sucked her clit in her mouth once again, swirling her tongue over the sensitive bud. Blake had never come so hard as her body bowed off the bed.

“Hmmm, oh my god,” she cried. She grabbed Alexandra's head, holding her in place. “Please don't stop, please don't,” she chanted as waves after waves of pleasure ran through her body.

Blake was utterly speechless and there were no words to describe what she felt. She had never experienced sex that way with anyone before. Yes, she experienced amazing sex before, and quite a lot, but no one ever had such control over her body. She was utterly spent, but there was no way she was going to not have Alexandra's legs wrapped around her head before the night ended. With that thought, she found the energy that she would need for a very long night ahead of her. She opened her eyes to see Alexandra still on her knees in front of her watching her with eyes so heavily lidded that it made her pussy clench.

She sat up and reached for her, pulling her to her lips, tasting herself. She deepened the kiss as she pulled Alexandra in her lap. She broke the kiss, moving her lips to Alexandra's ears.

"It's my turn now," she whispered, biting down hard on Alexandra's ear lobe.

In one quick turn, she had Alexandra beneath her on her back looking up at her with pure want that made her ache. *It's going to be a long night indeed*, she thought as she entered Alexandra with two fingers in one swift stroke.

"Oh, so fucking tight," she gritted out as she began her onslaught on the woman writhing beneath her.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Alexandra laid facing Blake, taking in her features as she slept. It amazed her how beautiful she was and how Blake didn't place too much importance on how she looked. It was like the woman didn't even realize how beautiful she was. Having been in a relationship with Taylor who was Hollywood royalty, Alexandra had a fair amount of interaction with people from that scene who placed so much importance on the way they look on the outside, instead of how they were on the inside. Blake was beautiful inside and out. Her mind flashed back to their night before and she thought she would maybe have regrets about her proposal to Blake in the light of day, but on the contrary, she did not. She had wanted the woman and even looking at her now sleeping so peacefully, she felt the ache building between her legs. The things Blake did to her were oh so wonderful. Sex with Taylor had always been fulfilling and satisfying whenever they were together. She didn't see herself as a boring partner. They had tried many things over the years to keep their sex life interesting. But it seemed Taylor felt otherwise on that subject because why would she have felt the need to find pleasure elsewhere. That thought alone made her wonder if Blake felt satisfied being with her. If she found her lacking. Blake had admitted that she had been with plenty of women due to her aversion to relationships and her experience showed when she fucked her. That thought gave Alexandra an uncomfortable feeling in her stomach as she started to wonder if Blake agreed to the proposal out of pity instead of a mutual desire to be with her and fulfill the same yearning she felt.

"You are staring," Blake murmured in a sexy, sleepy tone that made Alexandra squeeze her thighs together to quell the need building between her legs.

"How do you know that? Your eyes are still closed," she answered, watching a slow sexy smile spread across Blake's

face as she opened one eye peeking at her.

“That’s one of my many superpowers,” Blake answered, both eyes now opened focusing on Alexandra.

“One of? I guess you will have to enlighten me on the others.” Her eyes roamed over Blake’s features, her thoughts still lingering on whether or not Blake was satisfied with her prowess in bed.

“I thought I did last night,” Blake replied, her voice an octave deeper as her eyes roamed down Alexandra’s body in a way that made her feel hotter than she already was.

The urge to know the answer to the question plaguing her mind intensified. She needed to know that Blake was getting as much as she was from the week they intend to spend together. She swallowed hard, trying to find the courage to voice her concerns without sounding all sorts of insecure to Blake. But how could she hide it when that was how she felt? She didn’t realize until this moment that Taylor’s cheating had affected her self-confidence this much. She sighed heavily. Blake, being the intuitive person that she was, didn’t miss a beat as concern overshadowed her relaxed features.

“What’s wrong?” she asked now fully awake as she rolled onto her side, propping herself up on her elbow, giving Alexandra her full attention.

She had always believed in being honest, and there was no need to lie to Blake. But Alexandra realized that she feared what the answer would be because she knew Blake would not lie to her. Blake was one of the most honest and straightforward individuals she had ever met. She took a deep breath, releasing it slowly through her nose as Blake patiently watched her, waiting on her to answer. “Umm...I have only been with Taylor as you know. That includes sex as well and well...she felt the need to cheat which makes me wonder if I was lacking in some aspect in the bedroom why she felt that need. And well, you are far more experienced than I am.” She paused, trying to get a read on what Blake was thinking, but the woman gave nothing away except for a slight nod, encouraging her to continue.

“I need to know if you find me lacking or boring when we are together. And please, I need you to be honest with me no matter what.” Her eyes searched Blake’s for any signs of pity.

When it seemed that it finally registered what she was asking, the look on Blake’s face was one of incredulity as if she couldn’t believe what Alexandra was asking her. Seconds passed as Blake’s eyes scrutinize her face. Those were agonizingly long seconds for Alexandra. Try as she might, she couldn’t get her heart to stop pounding. It mattered more than she cared to admit what Blake’s answer would be. She knew it would be one of the most honest answers she would ever get in this situation. Blake reached out and ran her hand slowly down her side, over her hips, and back up. She repeated the path, igniting the flame that was already building in her core. She pushed Alexandra, slowly following her so that she was now on her back looking up at Blake.

“It’s kind of disappointing that you even have to ask that question, but I understand how someone having cheated on you can make you doubt yourself.”

She then dipped her head and kissed Alexandra passionately, causing her to melt into the mattress. She moaned into Blake’s mouth as her tongue swept against her own. Blake broke the kiss, leaving Alexandra breathless.

“I hope that answered your question. If not, just know that I find you lacking in no way or form. In fact, you surpassed my expectations, and being with you was incredible.”

Alexandra released the breath she didn’t know she was holding as a shy smile took over her features. “Thank you for saying that,” she whispered.

“No need to thank me. I’m just being honest. It’s not the quantity that matters but the quality. And if you want to test that theory, I’m a willing participant.” Blake took Alexandra’s hand and placed it between her legs where she was dripping wet. She used Alexandra’s hand to rub up and down her slit, never breaking eye contact as she moved her body so that she now straddled Alexandra’s hips.

Alexandra wanted to explode as Blake's hot, slick pussy lips encased her fingers. She loved Blake's ability to give her control or to at least believe she had control of her in bed. But she had no doubt that even when Blake gave her control, she was the one still in control. Blake looked down at her licking her lips as she started rotating her hips in a sensual manner that made all the blood in Alexandra's body rush to one area. She groaned deeply.

"If you need to prove to yourself how fucking amazing you are in bed, now is the time to do that." Blake moaned, taking two of Alexandra's fingers and positioning them at her entrance.

She released Alexandra's hand, giving her free rein to continue. Alexandra was so incredibly turned on and more than anything she appreciated what Blake was doing to rid her of her insecurities. With that in mind, she plunged her fingers as deep as they could go inside Blake, causing the woman to scream, throwing her head back. She needed this. She needed to see Blake come undone at her touch after voicing her insecurities. She watched as Blake rose up and down on her fingers. It was so erotic watching Blake move on top of her. Seeing her fingers disappear inside her pussy, watching her juices run down.

"Gosh, you are so fucking sexy," she said as she sat up, covering Blake's nipple with her lips and sucking.

The move resulted in Blake rocking her hips faster against her. "Please don't hold back," Blake breathed out, her lips landing on Alexandra's neck, sucking hard on that spot that made her fill with need.

Alexandra lost the last bit of control she tried to hold on to, wanting to draw the pleasure out for Blake. She bit down hard on Blake's nipple as she started pounding into her relentlessly.

"Yes, just like that. Please don't stop." Blake panted in short breaths as Alexandra felt her pussy walls closing around her fingers. She wanted to see Blake come undone beneath her. She found the strength to flip them over without their bodies disjoining. She marveled at the surprised look on

Blake's face due to the change in position. She didn't miss a beat, picking up her previous pace as she continued to fuck Blake hard and fast. She leaned forward, crushing her mouth to Blake's, kissing her deeply. Alexandra was so wet and turned on that she could feel her own wetness running down her thighs. With the way her clit throbbed, she felt like she could come from just fucking Blake.

"Your pussy feels so good gripping my fingers," she said through breathy kisses against Blake's lips.

It seemed her words ignited something in Blake as she started to move her hips faster against Alexandra's hand. "I'm so fucking close," Blake hissed, throwing her head back into the pillow. She was so very beautiful, and Alexandra reveled in the fact that she could make a woman who always exudes control, lose control like this.

"I need you to look at me, Blake. I need to see you," she pushed out through gritted teeth. Blake opened her eyes and the emotions reflected at her, stole her breath away. Beneath her, Blake's entire body started to tremble as her orgasm ripped through her. "I...I'm coming! God, yes!" Blake screamed as her orgasm took over.

She didn't ease up until she could feel Blake's body melt beneath her. She slowed her strokes allowing her to ride out her orgasm. She collapsed beside Blake, her entire body humming with how turned on she was. She was so ready to come that a few quick strokes of her clit would get her off. But she knew Blake would definitely have a say about that. She looked over at the woman beside her who had her hand thrown across her face, chest heaving. When Blake turned her head to look at her, the pure lust in her eyes made her clit ache even more.

"I hope my current inability to move is proof enough that you, Alexandra Edison, are no slouch in the sack. And since I can't feel my limbs, how about you come up here as I definitely can use my tongue," Blake instructed, licking her lips for emphasis.

As if Alexandra needed any form of convincing. She rose on her elbows and slowly made her way across Blake's body, positioning her thighs around her head, bracing her hands against the headboard. She knew the wicked things Blake could do with her tongue and with how turned on she was, it wouldn't be long before she was screaming Blake's name. She looked down at Blake who watched her with eyes so dark with a look that said, *I'm going to devour you*. The first touch of Blake's tongue on her clit had her back snapping so hard she thought it might crack.

"Hmmm," she moaned as Blake swirled her tongue around her entrance before slipping inside. "God, I love when you do that," she purred as Blake repeated the process. She was so close she could already feel the fire building within her core.

Blake hummed in acknowledgment and the sound vibrated against her clit. She removed one of her hands from the headboard, using it to roll her nipples that were so painfully hard. The effects were immediate, and she could feel her walls starting to clench. Looking down, she saw that Blake had her eyes trained on her, watching her hand on her nipple. She loved the impact she had on Blake. She pinched her nipple even harder as Blake picked up the pace with her tongue. She was never shy in bed with Taylor, but God with Blake she felt so much bolder. The woman had that effect on her. Her thoughts were cut off when Blake sucked her clit hard into her mouth, causing pleasure to shoot through her body.

"Oh God, yes, yes!" she screamed as her orgasm hit her so powerfully that she almost toppled off Blake's mouth. She ground down harder against Blake's mouth as her orgasm ripped through her, leaving her breathless. "Oh fuck." She could feel the evidence of her state of arousal running down her thighs as Blake lapped at her lips like a starved animal. Blake moaned deep in her throat as she slowed her licks, bringing her down gently.

Alexandra could hardly find the energy to climb off Blake's face as she fell to the side totally and utterly drained. Blake turned on her side facing her, lips still wet with the evidence of Alexandra's orgasm. She leaned over, kissing her deeply so

that she could taste herself on her lips. She moaned into the kiss as Blake's tongue swept her entire mouth. She could feel the heat starting again between her thighs.

Blake slowed the kiss, nipping at her bottom lip as she whispered, "I wanted you to taste how fucking good you taste on my lips. So, fucking good and I don't want you to ever doubt yourself. Ever," against her mouth. Alexandra was at a loss for words and could only nod.

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Chapter Twenty-Six

“It’s so beautiful here,” Blake commented appreciating her surroundings.

They were having a late lunch at the 58 Tour Eiffel on the ground floor of the Eiffel tower.

After they finally managed to get out of bed, they visited the hospital to check on their patient who was doing extremely well. They were more certain than ever that he would make a full recovery. They didn’t have time to grab anything other than coffee before going to the hospital and by the time they were done, it was way past lunchtime. Alexandra knew it was a long shot to get a reservation so last minute, but luckily for her, when she called someone had just canceled their reservation. She wanted Blake to enjoy Paris as much as possible. She travelled to Paris many times, but it was so refreshing experiencing it with Blake, seeing the city through her eyes.

“Why have you never been here before?” Her gaze lingered on Blake’s lips. So, fucking kissable.

Blake rolled her eyes playfully as she turned away from the view outside the window she sat by. “Miranda,” she replied in an exasperated tone.

But her eyes were soft and warm displaying her affection for the other woman. That was one thing Alexandra had picked up on; that Blake adored Miranda, and whenever she spoke about her it showed on her face and in her voice.

“We always vacation together, but she wants to honeymoon here and so she made me a deal that if she isn’t married by forty then we will come here for her big Four O. I know I could have visited without her, but I guess I didn’t want to come alone.” Blake shrugged. “The things I do for that woman.”

Alexandra could not help smiling as she said, “You are just the best friend anyone could ask for.”

Blake flashed her a soft smile. “I try to be.”

“So, why doesn’t Miranda just marry Trevor already?” Alexandra hoped that Blake didn’t think she was trying to pry into Miranda’s life.

Blake chuckled, shaking her head. “That’s a very good question. One you would have to ask the woman in question,” she added, taking a sip of the delicious wine they were having.

“I mean it is obvious that he adores her, and he is quite a catch,” Alexandra pushed, feeling more at ease to continue the conversation.

Blake smirked at Alexandra with a mischievous grin on her face. “So, if you were interested in men, guess you would be attracted to men who look like bad boys then?”

The change in conversation baffled Alexandra. “There is no chance of me ever being interested in men, but I wouldn’t be against sleeping with a female version of Trevor.”

“Ok then. Guess it’s fair to say that you are attracted to a little bit of bad. What is it that you find attractive about me?”

Again, with the change of conversations. Alexandra paused for a moment as there were so many things about Blake that she found attractive. And the more she thought about it, she realized that she found everything about the woman attractive, even her sometimes-serious personality. She ran her eyes over Blake’s features while running her tongue over her lips. Blake’s eyes moved to her lips and Alexandra was amazed at the immediate reaction that she had on her. She smirked at Blake whose eyes were now a shade darker.

“I find everything about you attractive. You are an absolutely stunning woman physically. You are sexy without even trying and you have one of the most beautiful personalities. I mean I could go on, but I guess you get the picture,” she answered honestly.

“You know you are quite the romantic. You know how to make a girl feel special,” Blake responded with a look in her

eyes that made Alexandra swallow hard.

“You are special.” She reached across the table, taking Blake’s hand in her own. Blake looked down at their joined hands, and for a moment Alexandra thought she was going to pull away. But in the end, she just held on tighter.

The next few days were spent between the hospital and sightseeing. Alexandra took Blake to see all her favorite places including the Louvre where she learned another thing about Blake who surprisingly knew a lot about art. She forced Blake, who was averse to a shopping spree, to embark on one with her.

“How many more stores to go. This is exhausting. I don’t know how people enjoy shopping. It’s torture,” Blake complained as Alexandra pulled her through the entrance of another store.

“Oh stop. It’s not that bad. I know you are secretly having fun. Shopping is therapeutic.”

“How is it therapeutic walking from store to store trying on ridiculously expensive clothing? I wouldn’t call spending tens of thousands on clothing and shoes therapeutic.”

Alexandra laughed. “Really now, coming from the woman who only wear designer shoes. Don’t think I haven’t noticed that about you. Besides I haven’t done any shopping in a long time. Therefore, I’m allowed to splurge a little. We’re in Paris baby. Shopping is a must.”

Blake’s eyes widened. “You call what you have spent so far a little? I wouldn’t want to see what you consider a lot.”

It was fun tugging Blake from store to store, who despite hating shopping, provided good company. Alexandra hadn’t felt that free in a long time. It was partly due to just being away from everything that happened back home but more than anything just being in Blake’s company. When she had asked Blake to give her the week, she was determined to just live in the moment. Just be in Paris with Blake. One of the best surprises came when they went lingerie shopping and she tried on a particular set.

“What do you think about this one?” Alexandra asked as she spun around to show Blake the red two piece set that barely covered anything.

Blake eyes ran the length of her body and the heat in them cause her center to ache painfully immediately. She squeezed her thighs together unable to help it. Before she knew what was happening, Blake had her pinned against the wall of the changing room. Both hands held firmly above her head. The act sent a rush of excitement pulsing through her body setting it on fire with need.

“This is what I think,” Blake whispered against her lips, her voice dripping with need. Before Alexandra could utter another word, Blake crashed their lips together in an all-consuming kiss that knocked the wind out of her. She went weak in the knees as Blake assaulted her mouth. Blake’s grip on her hands tightened as she used her thigh to push Alexandra’s legs apart. Liquid pooled between her thighs as her clit started to throb painfully.

Blake broke the kiss. “I’m going to fuck you really hard and fast, Alexandra. You need to be quiet. Can you be quiet for me love?”

Alexandra unable to form words could only nod. She couldn’t even begin to think about getting caught. Blake responded by ripping the lingerie from her body never breaking eye contact. Alexandra gasped, shocked by the sheer dominance Blake exerted. Before her brain could even process the savagery, Blake slipped two fingers inside her hard and fast. She didn’t have time to adjust to the sensation as Blake slipped in and out hard and fast.

“Oh fuck, Blake.” Remaining quiet proved to be difficult when her entire body felt like it was coming apart at the seams. Back arched, she sank her nails into Blake’s back closing her eyes as she saw flashes of light behind her eyelids. *How does she do this to me?*

“Open your eyes for me baby. I want to see when you fall apart on my fingers.” Blake rasped, her own desire evident. She saw the hunger and lust in Blake eyes like she could feel it

within the deepest parts of her body. It was enough to send her tipping over the edge.

“Argh...,” she shuddered as Blake’s fingers claimed whatever remained of her sanity. Blake moved quickly covering her mouth with hers to prevent everyone in the store from hearing them. Alexandra’s entire body froze, back arching hard as her blood sang in her ears as she felt Blake’s fingers rip her apart at the seams. She collapsed against Blake utterly spent.

In the end, she did get the lingerie set, but it was of no use as Blake had ripped it apart in her quest to fuck her relentlessly. Everything about their time in Paris was perfect.

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Chapter Twenty-Seven

Blake got up from the table where they were having dinner on the balcony of their hotel room, reaching for Alexandra's hand. "I have a gift for you." She pulled Alexandra flush against her body, kissing her deeply.

It was their final night in Paris, and they decided to have a nice quiet dinner in their room instead of venturing out. It was obvious to Blake that Alexandra felt the way she did, in terms of not wanting their time in Paris to end. But they had agreed that whatever happened in Paris stayed in Paris. When they returned home the next day, it would be as if nothing happened. Easier said than done, because there was no way she could not think about the mind-blowing sex they enjoyed. They fucked multiple times every night and at least once every morning. She knew Alexandra would have the same difficulties, but they were both adults and had agreed that they would have their time in Paris and that would be it. At least for now.

She walked them towards her bedroom without breaking the kiss. Alexandra whimpered against her when she broke the kiss once they were at the end of the bed.

"Wow, if that kiss is my gift. I must say it is one of the best gifts I've ever received," Alexandra said breathlessly as Blake ran her tongue over her pulse point.

"No, I can assure you that your gift is way better. I need you to go lay on the bed," she whispered against Alexandra's ear before pushing her tongue inside and swirling as she loosened her robe.

Alexandra moaned deep within her throat. Blake traced her fingertips across Alexandra's collarbone, pushing the robe down her shoulder as she went. She allowed the robe to fall to the floor while stepping back to admire Alexandra's body,

wanting to commit it to memory. She ran her fingertips over Alexandra's nipples before crashing her mouth to her right nipple and sucking hard.

"Oh fuck," Alexandra groaned, gripping Blake's head to her chest. Blake nipped and sucked hard as she moved across Alexandra's chest to give her left nipple the same attention. She released her nipple with a pop, raising her head to stare into Alexandra's eyes which were so dark and filled with need.

"Lay on the bed," she instructed before leaving the bedroom and moving towards the bathroom.

Blake removed the double-ended strapless dildo from where she hid it earlier between the towels. She had ordered it online with overnight shipping and paid the concierge to have it delivered to her room when they went out earlier in the day. She wanted it to be a surprise for Alexandra, so she had to be discreet. She wanted to experience as much as possible with Alexandra before they went home. And she had fantasized too many times about watching Alexandra fall apart as she pounded away inside of her. Just thinking about it had her dripping wet, and when she ran her finger along her slit preparing to attach the toy to herself, she wasn't surprised to know she wouldn't need the small tube of lube that sat on the sink. Blake eased the toy inside of her, moaning as pleasure rocked through her. No other woman had ever made her this aroused. It was scary and thrilling at the same time. She gave herself a few seconds to adjust to the feeling between her legs before putting on her robe, sliding the lube in a pocket, and went back into the bedroom.

Blake's breath hitch in her throat at the sight that welcomed her when she walked into the bedroom. Alexandra lay on the bed with her legs spread wide giving Blake a full view of her glistening cunt. She ran her fingers slowly through her folds, moaning deeply in her throat, smirking at Blake.

Two can play this game. She licked her lips, cocking her head to the side as she ran her eyes over the woman before her. She was everything she wanted in the bedroom and then some. *Not just in the bedroom.*

A sly smile took over her features as she slowly opened the robe before dropping it to the floor. Alexandra's eyes widened at the appendage jutting from Blake's body, a soft gasp escaping her throat. Her hand that was running through her slit immediately paused as all her attention was directed at Blake.

Blake ran her hands up and down the shaft. "This is your gift," she said, holding Alexandra's lust-filled gaze.

Alexandra swallowed hard. "I would think that's more a gift for you than me."

The dilated pupils filled with desire made Blake itch to get her hands on her. "No, definitely a gift for you." Blake placed one knee on the bed, then crawled between Alexandra's leg.

"Do you want me to fuck you, Alexandra?" she whispered, running her nose along Alexandra's own, who squirmed beneath her. "I want to fuck you real hard, but if it is too much, please just say stop," she added, lifting her head so that she could see Alexandra's eyes.

"Yes," Alexandra whispered softly, her voice filled with need.

Blake joined her mouth to Alexandra's in a brutal kiss that left no room for them to breathe. Alexandra moaned into the kiss, rotating her hips to get the friction she desired. Blake was so consumed with her need to fuck Alexandra that her hands shook as she moved one to massage Alexandra's breast. She broke the kiss to kneel between Alexandra's legs, spreading her wide as she went. Alexandra was soaking wet, and the sight made Blake's pussy clench around the end of the dildo inside her. She ran a finger along Alexandra's slit before placing it in her mouth to taste her.

"You taste fucking amazing," she breathed out, moaning deep in her throat.

"Blake, please," Alexandra whimpered, her voice hoarse with desire.

Blake used the dildo to run along her glistening folds. Alexandra screamed, her back arching off the bed due to the

sudden pleasure hitting her body. Blake repeated the process, a tiny bit enjoying torturing the woman.

“Please, I need you,” Alexandra begged, once again lifting her hips to give Blake access to her entrance.

“Patience, love. The wait will be worth it.” Blake lowered her head to suck hard, swollen nipples into her mouth.

“Oh God,” Alexandra screamed as pleasure rocked her body.

Blake knew she was so wound up that once she entered her, there was a slight possibility she might come instantly, but even so, she intended to fuck her relentlessly. Blake lifted a leg over her shoulder as she lined up the dildo at Alexandra’s entrance. She held Alexandra’s gaze as she slid slowly inside of her, giving her time to adjust as she knew she was very tight based on how she gripped her fingers when she fucked her.

“Hmmm...” Alexandra moaned deep in her throat when Blake was buried all the way inside her.

Blake gave her a few seconds to adjust before sliding back out slowly and pushing back in, this time a little faster and a little harder.

“Blake, please! I need you to go faster,” Alexandra whined.

That command was like music to Blake’s ears as she let go and started pounding inside Alexandra. “You are so fucking tight,” she said through gritted teeth as she felt the resistance each time she pulled out and went back in.

Alexandra wasn’t to be left behind as she lifted her hips, matching Blake stroke for stroke, the sound of sex filling the room. “You feel so good,” Alexandra moaned, using her hand to massage her breast.

Blake was so turned on that she could feel the evidence of her arousal running down as the extension inside her rubbed against her sweet spot. She wanted Alexandra to come first as she picked up speed, dropping her body weight to her elbows and resting them on either side of Alexandra’s head. Her skin slapped against Alexandra’s, who dug her nails into her back which Blake knew would leave marks for days. The thought of

Alexandra marking her only made her fuck her harder. She wanted Alexandra to remember this moment, and even though it would be their last night together, she wanted Alexandra to feel her between her legs for days.

“Oh fuck, I’m coming, I’m coming,” Alexandra yelled as her orgasm built.

She gripped Blake even tighter around the waist with her thighs providing more friction against both their clits, which pushed Blake over the edge as a mind-blowing orgasm ripped through her.

“Me too, baby,” she groaned out, dropping her mouth to Alexandra’s neck as they both rode out their orgasms.

Blake was totally spent, and it took a few minutes before she was able to roll off Alexandra who still breathed heavily beneath her as she ran her hands up and down her back. She lifted her head to look at her, hoping that she didn’t hurt her.

“Are you okay? I hope I wasn’t too rough,” she questioned, her voice apologetic.

Alexandra gave her a soft smile before raising up to give her a kiss so soft and tender. “I’m more than okay. I might not be able to feel my legs though,” she whispered, her warm breath washing over Blake’s lips.

Blake couldn’t resist dipping her head to steal another quick kiss before slowly easing out of Alexandra. Alexandra whimpered beneath her as her body relaxed into the mattress totally sated. Blake removed the dildo from between her legs throwing it on the floor before laying down and pulling Alexandra into her arms. Alexandra nestled into the crook of her arm while inhaling deeply.

“You are amazing,” Blake whispered, kissing her on her forehead.

“I wish we had more time here,” Alexandra responded barely above a whisper.

Blake almost didn’t hear what she said as her breathing slowed and she fell asleep.

“Me too,” Blake agreed, pulling Alexandra tighter against her, willing herself not to think about their return home. She wasn’t worried about them being weird around each other. She was more concerned about the fact that they would not be continuing the amazing sex she had experienced. Her desire for the woman had not been quenched.

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Chapter Twenty-Eight

Blake settled into the seat of the private jet beside Alexandra. She couldn't avoid the heavy feeling of melancholy that had set in since she woke up. She had awakened with Alexandra wrapped tightly in her arms, not an inch of space between them, and just the thought of not waking up like that together in the near future rocked her to her core. They had sex multiple times before leaving for the airport. It was as if they both wanted to have as much sex as possible before the inevitable. Alexandra woke up minutes after and had flashed her a devilish smile before sliding down her body, giving her a mind-blowing orgasm. She then returned the favor by fucking Alexandra hard and fast against the shower tiles. They didn't speak much during the journey to the airport. Instead, they used the time to enjoy a long make-out session, leaving them both hot and bothered by the time they arrived at the airport. The woman was intoxicating, and she couldn't get enough. But they agreed and she wouldn't try to pursue more once they touched down in Seattle. Maybe Alexandra felt the same as she did, because she hadn't said much since they settled down preparing for take-off. She looked over at the woman who had her eyes closed and her head rested on the back of the seat. Her features not as relaxed as Blake had become accustomed to. She sighed and turned her gaze toward the window as the plane started to taxi down the runway.

“I have something to show you.”

Blake was so caught up in her thoughts that she jumped when Alexandra spoke. She turned her gaze towards her, waiting for Alexandra to continue. Alexandra stood, extending her hand for her to take. Blake took her hand, and she could feel that pull that had only grown stronger. Alexandra led them to the back of the plane, opening a door that Blake didn't get the opportunity to explore on the trip to Paris. As they entered

the dimly-lit room, Blake realized that it was a bedroom furnished with a king-size bed and its own personal bathroom attached. She turned to look at Alexandra who gave her a cheeky smile.

“So, are you a part of the mile-high club?” she inquired, running her eyes over Blake’s body in a way meant to seduce.

Not that Blake needed any seducing, because already she wanted to throw her on the bed and have her way with her. “Can’t say I am,” she responded, holding Alexandra’s gaze. Alexandra’s composure slipped for a moment as if she wasn’t sure how to proceed. She took a deep breath, reaching for Blake’s hand.

“I know our agreement was for us to have our time in Paris, but technically we are still over European waters.” She stepped closer to Blake her lips barely a few inches from hers. “So how about you let me introduce you to the mile-high club?” she breathed out, her breath washing over Blake’s lips.

Blake didn’t need any convincing. She tugged Alexandra closer to her, joining their lips together. She poured everything that she was feeling into that kiss. She wanted Alexandra to feel how much she would miss their time together with the only way she knew how. Alexandra moaned into her mouth, running her hands under Blake’s top making her shiver.

As the kiss prolonged, the need for each other intensified and they started pawing at each other’s clothes as they moved towards the bed. They collapsed together on the bed once they were both naked. Alexandra flipped them over so that Blake was pinned beneath her as their hands roamed over each other frantically. Blake wanted to take her fast, but she needed something else at that moment. She wanted to savor Alexandra, savor their final moment together.

“Stop,” she pushed out through ragged breaths, gripping Alexandra’s hand that was heading towards where she needed her the most.

“What is it?” Alexandra lifted her head to meet Blake’s eyes.

Blake took this moment to flip them over so that Alexandra was now pinned beneath her. She ran her fingertip over Alexandra's bottom lip before slipping it inside her mouth. Alexandra wrapped her lips around it and sucked. She removed her finger, replacing it with her tongue, kissing Alexandra deeply in a slow, sensual manner. She broke the kiss to meet Alexandra's eyes once again. "I need this slow," she whispered.

Alexandra swallowed hard and nodded once. "Yes," she breathed against Blake's lips.

Blake joined their lips together in a soft tender kiss, nibbling on Alexandra's bottom lip before slowly slipping her tongue inside. She ran her hands along Alexandra's curves, trying to commit every inch to memory. She positioned her pelvis between Alexandra's thighs, rocking slowly, moaning deep in her throat when she was met with the wet feeling of Alexandra's desire for her.

She ran her lips across Alexandra's collar bone, nipping and sucking from one end to the other. "You taste so good," she whispered, moving her hand to cup one of Alexandra's breasts, tweaking her nipple.

Alexandra moaned deeply, lifting her hips against Blake's pelvis, seeking friction. Blake lowered her lips to the nipple she tweaked moments before, moving her hand to pull Alexandra closer to her. She sucked gently, savoring the feel and taste of the puckered bud.

"Blake, please," Alexandra cried when she sucked as much of her breast as possible into her mouth.

Blake knew it was torture for Alexandra, taking her time like that, but she needed this to be as slow as possible, given how much she wanted the woman. She kissed her way down Alexandra's stomach, running her tongue all over before dipping into her navel and laving it with attention. Alexandra's hips bucked against her as she nipped and sucked at an erogenous spot on her hip bone.

"Blake, I need you," Alexandra whined as she continued kissing down her body.

Blake lifted Alexandra's thigh, kissing in between before running her tongue all the way down to her toes, nipping and sucking each one of them. Alexandra watched her with such intensity before the pleasure grew too much and she closed her eyes, throwing her head back, enjoying what was being done to her. Blake switched to her other foot, giving it the same attention.

At this point, Blake also tortured herself with how turned on she was. She kissed her way back up Alexandra's body, settling her head between her thighs as glistening folds greeted her. Alexandra was so wet that Blake's mouth watered at the sight. She used her fingers to part Alexandra's folds, blowing softly along her entrance. Alexandra moaned deep in her throat.

"You smell so good," she groaned as she lowered her lips to Alexandra's sex.

Alexandra cried out when her lips made contact and Blake marveled at her ability to make the woman come undone. She always received a satisfying reaction from women she had been with. But there was just something about making a woman like Alexandra lose control in bed with her. She was a powerful woman in her own right.

"Please," Alexandra begged as she kissed her, slowly sucking her clit into her mouth. Not as hard as she normally would, but hard enough for her to feel her.

She savored the taste and feel of Alexandra against her tongue, committing it to memory. She knew Alexandra needed her release and with that in mind, she slipped two fingers inside, curling and pumping slowly.

"God, yes...yes," Alexandra hissed as she rotated her hips against Blake's tongue.

Blake increased the speed of fingers a bit to give Alexandra the release she craved as she continued assaulting her clit. The effect was instant as Alexandra's walls closed around her fingers, pulsing rapidly. The headiest of feelings swelled over her. She had fucked many women, but none gripped and fluttered against her fingers the way Alexandra did. She felt

the woman's orgasms to her core. She slowed her fingers, allowing Alexandra to ride out her orgasm. She looked up to see Alexandra's head thrown back in pleasure, and it was almost too beautiful to see. As she watched Alexandra's body relax into the mattress, it occurred to her that she had just made love to her. The thought gave Blake pause but surprisingly she wasn't disturbed by it.

She climbed up Alexandra's body before settling beside her, kissing her softly on the lips. Alexandra sighed against her lips in contentment.

"That was amazing," she said, her voice ragged from screaming.

Alexandra ran her eyes over her features, giving her a look that said so much that it was hard for Blake to really figure out what she was thinking.

"You will have to give me a few minutes to recuperate before I can return the favor," she informed Blake, running her hand over her breast.

Blake moaned, pulling Alexandra close to her so that they could cuddle. A few minutes later, Alexandra did return the favor. And Blake was left speechless because she thought she had made love to the woman, but Alexandra showed her what making love really was, as she had explored Blake's body in the most delicate way possible. They fell asleep in each other's arms and slept until the pilot announced that they would be landing soon.

The drive to Blake's apartment went by mostly in silence. Alexandra glanced over at Blake, taking in her features as she laid her head back with her eyes closed. She appeared calm and collected, but Alexandra wondered if she felt an inch of what she was feeling. But it wasn't fair to bring it up as she had wanted just their time together in Paris. She didn't believe

she was ready to be with anyone right now, because she truly believed that she needed to focus on herself. She needed to find out who she was by herself. She had lost so much of herself in her relationship. But then again, after being with Blake in Paris, it made her question if she needed to do that alone. She loved who she was with Blake. She was happy and carefree without the stress of having to keep up appearances for Hollywood. Blake brought out a side of her that she loved. The side that focused more on the smaller things in life that brought so much happiness.

She also challenged her when it came to work. She was already an accomplished surgeon for her age, but working with Blake had ignited her passion for surgery even though she didn't realize that that passion had burned low since her heartbreak. But at the root of it all, she didn't want to mess up the relationship she had built with Blake. She had been a good friend to her and helped her through her breakup without even knowing it. If she had a shot at a romantic relationship with Blake, she needed to find herself. Blake deserved the best version of her. But God the sex was so good. She groaned internally in frustration. She wondered if Blake realized that she made love to her on the plane. Their times together intimately were always passionate and intense but, on the plane, Blake showed her a totally different side of her. She made love to her painstakingly slow. It was marvelous and frustrating at the same time. Blake had taken her time to kiss every part of her body with so much care and reverent tenderness.

Alexandra didn't realize that they arrived outside Blake's apartment building until Blake looked over at her and said, "Home sweet home."

She blinked a few times as her mind registered what Blake said. She flashed her a soft smile, holding her gaze for a moment. "That was rather quick." Her eyes roamed over Blake's features, trying to get a read on her thoughts.

She always kissed Blake on the cheek when they said goodbye. She hoped that it wouldn't be awkward if she did likewise now. They agreed that Paris wouldn't affect anything,

and she would just behave normal, even if she wanted to jump the woman's bones. She reached across the seat, pulling Blake into a hug before kissing her on the cheek. Blake inhaled deeply, hugging her back.

"Thanks for Paris. Have yourself a good night," she whispered as she pulled away.

"Good night, Alexandra. Thank you for Paris."

Before they could say anything else, the driver came around to open the door for Blake after unloading her luggage from the trunk. Blake flashed her a smile before getting out of the car.

"See ya later, Doc," Blake said, leaning back into the car before closing the door.

Alexandra couldn't help the wide grin that came over her face as she watched Blake walk away. She had no doubt that Blake would make everything between them as normal as possible.

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Chapter Twenty-Nine

Alexandra stopped in her tracks at the sight of Blake waiting by the elevator. It was their first day back at work. They hadn't spoken much after she dropped Blake off at her apartment the evening before. They only texted each other when Alexandra reached home and informed Blake that she was home. Now looking at the woman standing so casually with an air of confidence that she found so sexy, she couldn't help it when her eyes traveled up and down her body. She felt that instant pull that she always felt in Blake's presence, but now it had meaning. She wanted Blake. Just as her eyes returned to Blake's face, she was met with stunning blue eyes that held her gaze with an intensity that made her breath hitch. A slow smile took over Blake's features as if she knew the impact she had on her. She swallowed hard, continuing her path to the elevator.

"Good morning, Dr. Westmore," she greeted Blake, returning in her smile.

"Good morning, Dr. Edison. How are you?" Blake returned, holding Alexandra's gaze.

Alexandra inhaled deeply as thoughts of grabbing Blake and kissing her senseless ran through her mind. *No. What happened in Paris stays in Paris.*

The elevator arrived saving her from her thoughts.

"After you."

Blake stepped aside, allowing her to enter the elevator first. Blake entered the elevator, standing just a few feet apart, facing her. The elevator became filled with tension as they held each other's gaze. Alexandra felt her blood heat at the intensity in Blake's eyes as they perused her body. It was sheer torture being trapped in such a close space with Blake where she could smell her subtle perfume that invaded her senses.

She knew Paris would come back to bite her in her ass, but she never expected it to be in this manner where her need for the woman only intensified. Blake's eyes scanned the ceiling of the elevator. It dawned on Alexandra that she looked for cameras as her eyes followed the path that Blake took. When her eyes landed back on Blake, it felt like she was closer to her than a few seconds ago. She couldn't help it as she reached out and grabbed Blake by her jacket, pulling her in, crushing their mouth together. Blake didn't miss a beat as she backed her up against the elevator wall, returning the kiss with equal demand and passion. They moaned in unison when their tongues met. It was a battle of wills as both women fought for control of the kiss. Alexandra figured Blake felt what she felt. The unmistakable desire that ignited whenever they were in close proximity.

The elevator slowed, prompting them to pull away from each other. They were breathing heavily as they adjusted their clothing. They had arrived at the floor Blake was getting off. Without a word, Blake exited the elevator, leaving Alexandra wanting. The door was just about to close when Blake stopped the doors with her hand.

"I thought what happened in Paris stays in Paris, Doc," she quipped, holding Alexandra's gaze with a smirk on her face.

Alexandra opened her mouth to respond but was at a loss for words. What could she say when that had been her intention then? Blake gave her a lazy smile as she stepped away so that the elevator doors could close. She slumped against the side of the elevator still trying to slow her beating heart. *This is not good.*

Luckily, Blake took her indecisiveness better than most.

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“Oh my God, I’m so happy you’re back. I missed you so very much!!” Miranda squealed, running towards Blake, throwing her arms around her neck.

Blake grinned, returning the hug. She missed her best friend even though she was quite distracted while in Paris. Miranda released her before sitting down in the visitor’s chair facing Blake’s desk in her office. Blake sat down beside her instead of going to sit in her chair. She had just arrived in her office when Miranda came in.

“So how was it? I don’t want Paris details as you know I’m saving that for the honeymoon or when we go together,” Miranda inquired, her voice filled with excitement.

God, she wished she could tell Miranda about her time with Alexandra, but she couldn’t break Alexandra’s trust like that. “It was more than I thought it could ever be,” she responded honestly with a bit of reverence in her voice.

Miranda apparently caught on as she raised an eyebrow looking at her skeptically. “Well, well. I guess being away has been really good for you. I haven’t seen you this relaxed in a long time,” Miranda stated, smirking at her.

Blake grinned and shook her head. The fact that she appeared relaxed was a gift as she was still frazzled by her encounter in the elevator with Alexandra.

“So, what was it like being away with boss lady?”

Blake knew Miranda could read her better than anyone if she tried to downplay it too much; she would suspect something. She schooled her features as best as possible as she pondered how best to answer without giving too much away.

“It was good actually. Really good. She was an excellent tour guide and she ensured that we had some downtime while we were there,” she answered honestly.

Miranda sighed wistfully. “I’m kind of bummed that we didn’t get to go together. Even though it’s my fault. I should

probably give up this stupid idea about waiting for my honeymoon.”

Blake nudged her shoulder. “I’m sure we will get a chance to go together, and I know it will still feel like my first time as it will be with you.”

“Aww, look at you, being all sentimental. Paris must have done wonders for you.”

If only Miranda knew the extent of what Paris had done to her. “What can I say? It was a really great experience, but as you don’t want me to give you any spoilers, then that’s all I can say. So, how has work been?” she finished as a way of changing the topic.

Miranda groaned. “It has been crazy busy. I mean I love that we are busy. Having Alexandra here has been really good for us, and with what you two did in Paris, I think it will only get better.”

Blake nodded. “That’s good. At least we are on track to going back to our glory days.”

As Miranda was about to respond, her phone vibrated in her pocket. “Speaking of which, duty calls. I’ll catch up with you later,” she said, checking her phone. She gave Blake a quick hug before leaving.

Moving to sit down behind her desk, Blake’s phone buzzed on the desk beside her. She thought maybe she was also being paged just like Miranda. Her heart skipped a beat at the message on her screen.

Alexandra: Please come to my office now!!

A bit caught off guard by the text, Blake wondered what Alexandra needed her for, because they didn’t have a follow-up meeting until later as it pertained to their patient in Paris. Now that she wasn’t distracted by Miranda, her mind instantly went back to what happened in the elevator earlier. *So much for what happens in Paris staying in Paris.* She wasn’t going

to pretend that she didn't want to have her right then and there. She was very happy when Alexandra made her move. But it was a delicate situation and Alexandra had been clear about not wanting to get involved with anyone. As much as the sex was amazing, she needed to get control of her raging hormones that seemed to get out of control in the presence of the woman. She sighed, deciding not to respond and headed straight for Alexandra's office.

Blake knocked on Alexandra's door before opening it, even though her assistant told her she could go in. Alexandra looked up from her laptop and once she realized it was Blake, her eyes immediately darkened as she waved her in. She picked up the phone on her desk, her gaze never leaving Blake's.

"Melanie, please hold all my calls. Dr. Westmore and I aren't to be disturbed. We have a very important consultation for at least the next thirty minutes. Thank you."

She hung up the phone and walked past Blake, closing the door with the lock. Blake quirked an eyebrow, but Alexandra said nothing. Instead, she took Blake by her hand and led her to the bathroom adjoined to her office. As soon as they were inside, Alexandra closed the door behind them. Alexandra stood with her back pressed against the door.

"I have a problem, Dr. Westmore, that I need you to fix. Technically I could do it myself, but I much rather your expertise," she explained, her gaze locked onto Blake's.

Blake was a bit confused as to what Alexandra would need her help with that required it to be done in her bathroom and not in her office.

"Sure. What do you need me to do?"

"How about I show you." Alexandra reached for Blake's hand, then pulled her closer so that Blake's body pressed flushed against hers.

Blake didn't resist as that ever-present desire that she felt for Alexandra bubbled to the surface. Alexandra guided Blake's hand under her dress. Blake's breath hitched in her throat when her fingers skimmed warm, silky skin. Alexandra

guided her hand further, never breaking eye contact, watching Blake with lust-filled eyes. She guided Blake's hand all the way to her center and Blake could feel how wet she was through her underwear.

"This is what kissing you earlier has done to me, and I need you to fix it," Alexandra whispered against her lips.

Blake wondered if she would ever be able to say no to fucking this woman. She pressed her fingers against Alexandra's heat, marveling at the way her body trembled against hers. She wanted to dive right in, but she needed to be clear on what was happening between them.

"I thought this was only going to happen in Paris," she stated, finding the restraint to use the rational side of her brain.

Alexandra sighed. "I thought so too but God, Blake, I just wanted you to fuck me when I saw you this morning. I tried really hard to not end up here, but I'm not one for torturing myself when I can ask for what I want," she replied, her tone still filled with desire.

Blake could totally understand that as she felt the same. "If we continue Paris here, what would it mean?" she pushed through ragged breaths, massaging Alexandra where she grew wetter by the second.

"Do we have to label it now? Can't we just see where things go? Keep it casual," Alexandra groaned out as Blake increase the pressure on her center.

Blake ran her tongue slowly over her lips, watching as Alexandra's eyes tracked the movement of her tongue. She wasn't opposed to what Alexandra proposed, but she wanted to be sure that she was certain of what she offered. She had engaged in many casual relationships before and walked away easily when they ended. This should be no different if Alexandra changed her mind tomorrow or next week and called it off.

"So, no strings attached, right? No expectations? Just go with the flow? We fuck each other's brains out whenever we

want?” she questioned as she slipped a finger through the side of Alexandra’s underwear, running it along her slit.

Alexandra whimpered and held on tighter to her shoulders. Alexandra nodded. “All I asked is that you let me know when you start dating someone or when it no longer works for you. I mean, I have never had a casual relationship so I might suck at it” she added, inhaling deeply as Blake stroked her clit with feather-light touches.

“I don’t think you can ever suck at anything, Dr. Edison. And all I ask is that you extend the same courtesy to me. Now that that’s settled. I think it is time I solved your problem.”

Blake didn’t give Alexandra a chance to answer, sealing their lips together in a mind-blowing kiss. She had missed those lips last night when she went to bed and the elevator incident only made her miss them more. Alexandra moaned into the kiss, returning her passion. Blake had kissed many women, but she had never enjoyed kissing anyone as much as she enjoyed kissing Alexandra. And since Alexandra wanted her badly enough that she summoned her, locked them together in her office bathroom, and demanded what she wanted, she was going to ensure that she delivered. She broke the kiss then dropped to her knees. She looked up at Alexandra who stared down at her with pure undiluted lust. The sheer desire and passion she saw reflected at her made her skin heat and she could feel how soaked her underwear was already. She ran her hands up Alexandra’s thighs, pushing up her dress as she went. With each inch of flesh that appeared, she traced it with her tongue. Alexandra’s legs trembled with each touch. Once she reached her underwear, Blake wasted no time ripping it apart, tossing it to the side. Alexandra’s eyes widened at the action, but before she could comment, Blake surge forward, sucking her clit hard between her lips.

“Fuck yes. God, I missed you last night,” Alexandra admitted as Blake plunged her tongue as deep as possible as she could from that angle.

Alexandra’s taste intoxicated Blake, and she lost herself in pleasuring her. She never knew she could get so much pleasure from giving someone an orgasm. Alexandra had the sweetest

pussy she ever tasted. She moaned deep in her throat when Alexandra started moving her hips faster against her face. By this, Blake knew the signs that signaled that she was close to coming. She wanted to feel her pulse around her fingers, bringing two fingers into play, moving her tongue to Alexandra's clit and sucking hard.

"Blake, fuck, fuck," Alexandra cried as Blake felt her walls start to tighten around her fingers. She looked up, watching Alexandra throw her head back against the door, her mouth opened in a silent scream as she fell apart on Blake's fingers. Blake worked her fingers inside her, drawing out every ounce of pleasure until the orgasm faded and Alexandra went limp against the door. She gave Alexandra one last soft kiss on the top of her mound before rising to her feet to join their lips together in a slow, tender kiss.

"Thank you. That was incredible," Alexandra whispered, panting softly against her lips.

Just as Blake was about to respond, Alexandra spun them around so that Blake's back pressed against the door.

"Now it's my turn," she said, sliding her hand into Blake's pants. "Guess you wanted me as much as I wanted you," she stated matter-of-factly, feeling how wet Blake was.

"The evidence is too overwhelming for me to deny that statement," Blake answered through ragged breathing as Alexandra swiped her fingers through her folds.

Blake felt her phone vibrate in her pocket just as Alexandra was about to kiss her. She scrambled for it, knowing that it could be work since she was on the clock. She groaned when she saw that she was being paged to the emergency room.

"Duty calls," she breathed out, removing Alexandra's hands from her pants.

"I guess I owe you an orgasm." Alexandra stepped away from her, giving her space to adjust her pants.

"And I guess I owe you a pair of underwear." Blake smirked before bending down, taking up the underwear that she had thrown on the floor. She bundled it up, placing it in

Alexandra's hand and gave her a chaste kiss before exiting the bathroom. She hoped whatever the emergency, she could handle it without being distracted by how turned on she was. Fucking Alexandra was like a drug, and she was definitely addicted.

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Chapter Thirty

Alexandra smiled reading through her text conversation with Blake from the night before.

Blake: Have a safe flight! You should come over to my place tomorrow. I'll make us dinner.

Alexandra: Will you actually make me dinner or order takeout and present it as your creation?

Blake: I'm highly offended that you would think I'd be that disingenuous!!

Alexandra: My sincerest apologies for assuming such a thing. I look forward to your creation.

Blake: I already got the girl. (: I don't need to pretend. You'll pay for that comment when I see you.

Alexandra: And what do you have in mind as payback?

Blake: You will find out soon enough.

Alexandra shivered just thinking about what Blake considered payback. More than likely, it involved her being thoroughly fucked by the end of the night. Ever since Blake agreed to her proposal, they spent more and more time together. They agreed to keep their relationship... *sexship* a

secret because she didn't want word getting to the media. She knew because of her past relationship with Taylor and her own status people were interested in her personal life, unfortunately. Alexandra personally didn't want Blake dragged into her and Taylor's drama. Blake deserved better than that. She really enjoyed having Blake in her life and the sex just kept getting better and better. Blake also made her laugh a lot with her sarcastic nature and bluntness. She often got butterflies in her stomach when the woman was around and the pulse between her legs was often instant. They hadn't had sex in the last seven days. She went away on hospital business and stopped in L.A. to see her mom. Her mom mentioned that she seemed happier, and she was tempted to tell her about Blake, but didn't think it was the right time. Now she was a few minutes away from Blake's apartment and already she could feel her need for her intensely.

Before she could knock on Blake's door, it opened and the woman in question stood before her, looking her calm, sexy self, with that dangerous glint in her eyes that made Alexandra weak in the knees.

"Hi," she croaked out, her mouth suddenly dry.

"Hi," Blake responded, stepping aside to let her in. Alexandra's shoulder brushed Blake's as she stepped past her, and she could hear her inhale deeply.

Before she knew what was happening, Blake grabbed her arm, spun her around to face her, and smashed their lips together. She moaned into the kiss as they both fought for control. She relented control to Blake, allowing her to lead the kiss. If the kiss was anything to go by, it was clear that Blake had missed her just as much. Blake ran her hands across her shoulder, removing her jacket as she went. She broke the kiss, moving her lips to Alexandra's ears as she walked them backwards into the living room.

"I missed you," Blake whispered, nibbling on her earlobe before sucking it into her mouth.

"I missed you too," Alexandra whimpered as the back of her legs hit the sofa. Blake brought her eyes back to her face,

searching her gaze as if she looked for confirmation of the truth behind her words. She wanted to erase any doubts Blake had. “I missed you a lot, actually,” she added.

She fisted her hands in Blake’s hair, pulling her head down joining their lips together in another searing kiss. What she couldn’t convey in words she wanted Blake to feel through that kiss. The kiss became more urgent as they started to strip each other’s clothes. Luckily for her, Blake wore nothing but yoga pants and a tank. She rid Blake of her top, breaking the kiss to latch on to a nipple. Blake groaned deep in her throat as she sucked the puckered bud.

“I need you naked now,” Blake groaned out, pulling her up from her nipples.

She pulled Alexandra’s blouse over her head then went for her pants. In no time she was naked, and they collapsed on the sofa, hands roaming all over each other. Each touch urgent and desperate. Alexandra wasn’t surprised that she missed Blake, but the extent of the feeling was startling. They had talked yes, but it did nothing to quell that feeling of missing someone who you were away from for days. Simultaneously, they slid their hands between their bodies, bucking at each other as they entered wet, slick folds that were proof of their desire. Two hours later, they got a chance to enjoy the surprisingly very good meal that Blake prepared for them. Or not surprisingly, because Alexandra had a feeling that Blake would be good at anything she put her mind to. After dinner, they moved to the bedroom where they more than made up for the days that they were apart.

“Fuck, Blake, I love when you do that,” Alexandra panted as Blake swirled her tongue around her entrance.

Blake moaned as Alexandra’s essence flooded her tongue. She had woken up with Alexandra wrapped around her, her

leg resting against Blake's aching center. Blake's mind immediately flashed back to the night before. She had genuinely missed Alexandra a lot and was shocked at how intensely she missed her. Those seven days had felt like months, and she couldn't recall ever missing anyone she dated that intensely. She was so glad when Alexandra told her earlier that she was coming over that night. It was never her intention to attack the woman as soon as she entered her apartment, but she couldn't resist and once she opened the door, her need for her skyrocketed. When she awakened with Alexandra wrapped around her, she couldn't resist kissing her way down her body. She smiled when Alexandra opened her legs for her, rolling onto her back, giving her easier access to her destination.

"I could get used to waking up like this," Alexandra said, her voice sleepy, sounding even sexier than usual.

She chuckled as she said, "You and I both," as she reached where Alexandra was already wet, waiting for her.

"Blake! Blake!" Blake wondered why Alexandra was yelling her name, sounding kind of like Miranda. But she was so engrossed in sucking Alexandra's pussy that she thought Alexandra was yelling her name because she was close to coming. And with all the blood rushing in her ears from having Alexandra's legs around her head she couldn't form a coherent thought.

"Oh shit!" Alexandra yelled and started pulling away from her, shoving at her shoulders. Blake tightened her hold on her hips, keeping her in place, but Alexandra only increased her effort as she slid further up the bed pulling the sheet that was over Blake's head as she went.

"Blake, stop!" Alexandra yelled.

"What's wrong," she asked, sliding her head from under the sheet so that she could look at Alexandra.

Alexandra clutched the sheet to her chest, eyes wide staring off to the side. Blake turned her head in the same direction only to see a wide-eyed Miranda staring at them with a shocked expression. Blake groaned internally. She sighed sitting back on her haunches. She made no move to cover

herself up, because Miranda had seen her in the nude numerous times. She hadn't told Miranda about what was going on between her and Alexandra. She knew she might be upset that Blake kept it from her, because they practically told each other everything.

A sly smile took over Miranda's features as she plopped down on the bed between them. "Well, well...now I see what, or should I say who, has been occupying your time these days where I hardly get to see you on our days off?" Miranda stated, her eyes bouncing between them.

Blake wasn't surprised that Miranda would be unfazed by their state of undress and went directly into her interrogation. She didn't want Alexandra to be subject to said interrogation, but before she could say anything, Alexandra gathered the sheet tightly around herself, clearing her throat.

"I think I will leave you two to discuss your discovery, Dr. Hayes. I'm going to take a shower," she said as she got out of the bed being careful and ensuring that the sheet covered her delectable assets.

At least she doesn't seem ashamed or very concerned, Blake thought, watching her walk to the bathroom. Her eyes snapped back to Miranda after she cleared her throat loud enough for the entire apartment building to hear. Miranda's grin had only grown wider, and she had a smug look on her face.

Blake sighed. "Let me throw something on and move your interrogation to the kitchen." She got up to grab some clothes from a drawer.

"So, how long has this been going on?" Miranda asked before they even made it fully into the kitchen. "I bought us breakfast," she continued, indicating to the takeout containers and coffee holder on the counter when she saw Blake moving towards the coffee maker.

Blake changed direction, walking the long way around the counter, giving herself time to think about how much she wanted to share with Miranda. Her secret was out and, in some ways, she was kind of happy about it. She didn't like keeping

things from Miranda. She grabbed one of the coffees from the tray, taking a grateful sip before sitting down on a stool facing Miranda.

“Since the night before Paris,” she answered honestly.

Miranda’s eyes bugged out. “What!” she yelled.

“Could you keep it down? Have you forgotten that we are not alone?” Blake hissed, through gritted teeth.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” she asked, lowering her voice.

Blake shrugged “It wasn’t only my secret to tell, and Alexandra didn’t want us telling people until there was something to tell. Plus, with the whole Taylor thing, she didn’t want word getting to the tabloids.”

Miranda quirked an eyebrow. “And what exactly is going on between you two? Are you secretly dating? I mean Paris was pretty much over a month ago.”

Blake wasn’t in the least bit surprised at Miranda’s question. She herself was starting to wonder what they were doing as it was starting to feel like not just any casual fling. They had been spending a great deal of time together, and her need for Alexandra was getting deeper and deeper. She thought that with all the sex they had been having since Paris, the flame would have started to burn low, on the contrary, it had only been ignited more.

She sighed. “It’s just casual, ok. There’s nothing really to tell and could you like not say anything to Alexandra to make her uncomfortable? I hope she isn’t freaking out about you knowing. And I know I don’t have to tell you not to mention a word to anyone.”

Miranda gaped at Blake, clearly taking offense to her statement. “I know you don’t honestly believe that I would tell anyone about this. This is your personal life, Blake. I would never betray your trust like that.”

Blake sighed, reaching for Miranda’s hand. “I know, I know. I’m sorry,” she apologized. Blake expected Miranda to still be affronted but rather, a moment of recognition took over her features.

“So, all those times when I thought you disliked her. It was a classic case of girl liking girl but instead of showing girl that she liked her, girl pretends that she disliked her,” Miranda quipped, grinning from ear to ear.

“Huh?” Blake questioned, totally confused by what sprouted from Miranda’s mouth before holding her belly and laughing hard. “Could you speak English please?” she requested, trying to contain her laughter.

“Come on, you know I’m right. When Alexandra just got here you didn’t like the woman or at least you acted like you didn’t,” Miranda insisted.

“That’s not true. It was never about not....”

“I must agree with Miranda on that one, Blake,” Alexandra stated as she joined them in the kitchen freshly showered and in pair of Blake’s sweatpants and hoodie.

Seeing Alexandra in her clothes gave Blake an instant rush, making all the blood in her body rush to one area.

“I borrowed some clothes if you don’t mind.”

“No problem,” Blake answered, her mouth suddenly dry as she stared at Alexandra.

“So, which was it? Did you dislike me or were you just pretending to dislike me because you had the hots for me?” Alexandra inquired, clearly enjoying having Blake on the spot like that.

Miranda snickered, her eyes bouncing between the two of them. Blake turned and glared at her. Blake turned back to Alexandra, wondering if she seriously wanted an answer. She couldn’t even put words to her feelings then. Maybe all along she had liked her more than she wanted to admit before they started spending time together. She thought back to all their interactions from the very first day Alexandra walked into the hospital and introduced herself as their boss. Even then, she had felt something for her, she would need to analyze whether it was like or dislike more. Alexandra decided to take her out of her misery.

“It’s ok. What matters is that you like me now,” she said, wiggling her eyebrows at Blake with a smirk on her face.

Blake couldn’t help smiling because she did like the woman. “Who says I like you now?” she quipped with a raised eyebrow.

“Well, based on what you were doing with your mouth earlier, I guess it’s fair to say that you more than like her,” Miranda chimed in.

Both women turned their eyes towards her. Alexandra cleared her throat, a slight blush taking over her cheeks. “I guess I should get going,” she announced.

“You don’t have to leave. You could join us for breakfast,” Blake said, not wanting Alexandra to leave.

Alexandra shook her head. “No. It’s ok. I’m sure you two have lots to talk about. I’ll call you later.” Alexandra leaned in, giving her a brief, sweet kiss on her lips which caught Blake by surprise because she wasn’t expecting Alexandra to be that comfortable kissing her in front of Miranda.

“Dr. Hayes, have yourself a wonderful day,” Alexandra said to Miranda, who grinned at them like a kid in a candy store.

“I’ll walk you to the door,” Blake offered as Alexandra started to move towards the door.

“Goodbye Alexandra,” Miranda shouted after their retreating backs with too much glee in her voice for Blake’s liking. She was not looking forward to returning to the kitchen.

When she returned to the kitchen after spending longer than expected seeing Alexandra off, because they couldn’t help stealing another kiss, Miranda was still grinning like a Cheshire Cat.

“Don’t even start,” she said, plopping down on the stool, opening up the breakfast that was now almost cold.

“Come on, Blake. Don’t be like that,” Miranda protested.

“Don’t be like what? There is nothing to talk about really. We had sex and it was amazing and we decided to continue

doing it. Until when? I don't know and yes, I like her. Ok? There," she answered, then shoved a piece of bacon in her mouth.

"Well, I'm happy for you, and you can deny it all you want, but there is more there. You two might be telling yourself that it is casual, but what I just observed was way past casual. The sexual tension was palpable," Miranda stated, opening up her breakfast as well.

"Just don't read too much into it. We are both enjoying what we are doing and if eventually it leads to more, then we will deal with it then."

Miranda nodded, holding Blake's gaze. Blake could tell she wanted to say something else, but decided against it after a moment. She knew her best friend so well.

"I hope it leads to more, because I think Alexandra is perfect for you. She compliments your personality," Miranda added after a beat.

Blake remained silent, not having anything to say about that, because she did agree with Miranda, but she just didn't want to discuss it. They finished their breakfast and Miranda insisted Blake give her details of their time in Paris, which she begrudgingly did.

Chapter Thirty-One

“Thanks for taking the time to see me, Blake. I know just showing up here was unexpected, but I just really needed closure,” April said, putting on her coat.

Blake nodded as she stepped behind her, opening the door to her apartment. April stopped by her apartment wanting to discuss why Blake went MIA on her and wanted to see if there was any chance of them trying to date again. She understood that they hadn't been exclusive, and Blake had every right to date whoever she wanted just as she had been doing over the last couple of months since Blake stopped showing interest in her. She admitted to Blake that despite her trying to date other people, she couldn't get Blake out of her head, and she needed closure. They spent the last hour talking. Blake apologized for just disappearing on her, but also informed her that she was currently seeing someone. At that moment, Blake realized that even though prior to sleeping with Alexandra she had been dating April, she had never once felt like she was being unfaithful to April. But the thought of being with anyone else while she was sleeping with Alexandra felt like she was being unfaithful.

“I'm glad we talked, and I hope you find someone who can give you what you need.”

April turned to face her after stepping out of her apartment. “I hope you find that someone too, Blake. You are a great person. Umm...do you mind if I hug you?”

Blake nodded and stepped outside the doorway, allowing April to hug her. Just as they were pulling away, April leaned in, capturing Blake's lips. Totally caught off guard, Blake took a moment to react before gently pushing April away.

She felt her presence before she saw her, turning her head to see Alexandra staring at them. Blake could only imagine

what ran through her mind at the scene before her. Before Blake could react, Alexandra turned and headed back in the direction of the elevator.

“Shit,” Blake muttered, attempting to go after her, but then realized that she stood barefoot in yoga shorts and a tank top.

“Blake, I’m so sorry,” April apologized.

“Yeah. I’ll see you around, April, but I really need to go.” Blake turned around and headed back into her apartment.

She needed to find Alexandra and explain. She rushed to find her phone, dialing Alexandra as she went to find something to wear. After three attempts at calling and no answer, she gave up, got ready, and headed through the door. Regardless of their arrangement, Blake didn’t want to do anything that would hurt Alexandra and the look on her face, though brief, was one of being hurt by what she saw. She knew Alexandra probably returned home, so she headed in that direction once she got in her car. She really hoped that things between them wouldn’t change because everything had been going so well. Blake wasn’t sure if it was because they hadn’t placed any expectations on each other, but being with Alexandra was so easy. She was happy being with her and Alexandra made her feel so special and appreciated. And the sex just kept getting better and better each time. Mind blowing in fact. She had never craved anyone so much. The drive to Alexandra’s penthouse went by in a blur and when she got there, she went straight up without notifying Alexandra.

Alexandra stormed off her penthouse elevator and tossed her bag and coat on the floor. She knew she had no right to be upset seeing Blake kissing someone else because, after all, Blake wasn't hers and they were not in a relationship. *I'm just someone she is fucking.* But she couldn't help the sense of betrayal that consumed her and all those unresolved issues with Taylor bubbled to the surface as she wondered what she was doing wrong. Why did the women she was with, whether or not it was casual, feel the need to be with someone else? That's why she had asked Blake to tell her when she got tired of their arrangement, just to protect herself from being made a fool of. It would have stung just the same yes, but at least she would have known instead of walking in on the woman she was with, in the arms of another woman. It was the last thing she expected to see when she decided to turn up at Blake's apartment unannounced. It had been a busy week for them at work and they hardly spent much time together, other than when Blake surprised her in her office on Wednesday in between surgeries with a quickie in her bathroom. She had missed her so much when she woke up earlier that she decided to surprise her, knowing that Blake would be home on a Saturday afternoon. She stopped boring a hole in her floor with her back-and-forth pacing in the same spot, and headed into the kitchen needing a glass of wine.

Alexandra almost dropped the bottle of wine she had retrieved from the refrigerator when she spun around and saw Blake standing there looking at her with so much intensity. She felt like a prey paralyzed at the sight of her predator. She swallowed hard. Blake walked towards her never breaking eye contact, coming to a stop directly in front of her with just a few feet between them.

"It's not what it seemed," Blake said in a solemn tone.

"Blake, you don't owe me an explanation. You are free to see whoever you want. I had only asked that you let me know

when that time came.”

She already regretted what she said, because she didn't want Blake seeing anyone else and only said that as a defense mechanism. Blake took a menacing step towards her and another until she was sandwiched between her and the refrigerator.

“Is that what you think? That I have been seeing other people behind your back?” Blake asked, her voice filled with hurt.

Alexandra opened her mouth to respond, but was thrown by the hurt expression on Blake's face.

“I would never do that to you. Especially not after all that you have been through with Taylor. I would never betray you like that. There's no one else, Alexandra. There's been no one else even before you and I started sleeping together. It's only you,” Blake confessed with so much emotion that it left Alexandra speechless.

She knew Blake would never lie to her, but she could see the truth written over her face. Still, she needed to understand why Blake kissed her ex. “So, what was that I saw?”

“April came over to talk about how things ended with us. I stopped seeing her once we started working together on Pierre's case and eventually, I stopped returning her text and calls with how busy I was. She just wanted closure even though there was no commitment. She was hoping we could try again, and I told her I'm seeing someone. She asked for a hug and then kissed me when we were pulling apart and that's what you saw. I didn't kiss her back and I did push her away as soon as my brain caught up with what was happening.”

Alexandra nodded. She had no reason to disbelieve Blake, and after everything with Taylor she should be a little more cautious, but Blake had given her no reason not to trust her. And she didn't believe that people should pay for the sins of others.

“Please tell me that you believe me,” Blake whispered. Her eyes implored Alexandra to believe her.

“I do believe you, Blake. I do.”

Blake sighed with relief, closing the gap between them, but just before she could join their lips together, she paused. Alexandra saw it for it was. Blake asking her permission to kiss her, which was new because the woman always took what she needed from her. She closed the gap between their lips, her body relaxing into Blake's. All the tension that had taken over her body melted away, with the relief she felt feeling Blake's lips against hers. They moaned in unison when their tongues met, deepening the kiss. Soon the kiss became urgent as the need they felt for each other bubbled to the surface. Alexandra's legs felt like jelly as Blake snaked her hand behind her neck, holding her in place as she took control, kissing her senseless. This was the Blake she knew. The woman who didn't ask for anything, took what she wanted from her, and gave her so much in return.

Soon Alexandra found herself leaning over the kitchen counter when Blake spun them around from the refrigerator. Alexandra's chest pressed flat on the counter as Blake leaned over kissing and sucking her neck, keeping her in place with her body. She moaned in pleasure as Blake ran her free hand underneath her blouse along her spine.

“I'm going to take you right here, right now, Alexandra,” Blake whispered in her ears, nibbling on the lobe.

Alexandra closed her eyes, savoring the way Blake made her feel when she took control like this. She loved their dynamic in bed. She liked being in control just as Blake, but it was like they knew when the other just wanted to let go and not be in control. Right now, she needed Blake to take the reins and bring her the pleasure that her body craved. More so, she needed Blake to erase all the insecurities plaguing her mind since seeing Blake in the arms of another woman. She shivered when Blake unzipped her pants, pushing her hand inside and massaged her through her underwear.

“You are already so ready for me,” Blake murmured as she drove Alexandra crazy with her hand.

“Blake, please,” Alexandra begged as a finger pressed hard into her clit, circling slowly. “Blake...” Alexandra’s words cut off when her pants and underwear were removed from her body before her brain could formulate words.

Blake slid her leg between her thighs opening her up to her as she used her hands to massage Alexandra’s ass cheeks. *Slap!* Alexandra was shocked when Blake’s hand landed between her thighs and ass cheeks. But it gave her a delicious feeling as Blake’s fingers dipped into her aching center. She moaned deep in her throat.

“That’s for thinking that I would ever betray you,” Blake said through heavy breathing.

Alexandra wished she could see Blake’s face because she loved seeing the intensity of her passion. “Please, I need you inside,” she whimpered, her center aching. Her clit was so hard, and she felt like she was going to combust any moment now.

“As you wish,” Blake answered, before sliding two fingers inside her from behind.

Alexandra moaned deep in her throat as electricity ran through her body.

“Oh, fuck yes...”

She didn’t get a chance to adjust to feeling so completely full as Blake withdrew and entered again. Soon, Blake was pumping hard into her, holding her in place with her hand wrapped around her neck with just enough pressure to keep her steady. Blake remained relentless as she pounded away inside of her, so much so, that the slapping sounds of sex filled the kitchen.

“You feel so fucking good, so fucking tight. I love the way you grip my fingers,” Blake said, through ragged breathing.

Alexandra marveled at her ability to let this usually composed woman lose control like that. She loved when Blake let go with her. Soon her entire body set on fire as her orgasm built and built. She wanted to come and didn’t. Even though she had only been with one other person, she didn’t think no

one could fuck her the way Blake Westmore did. It was both scary and exciting as their future was so uncertain.

“Get out of your head, baby. I know you are close; I can feel it. I need you to let go for me,” Blake commanded as she removed her hand from her neck, bringing it down to rub her clit while she continued fucking her hard with her fingers.

Blake added a third finger and Alexandra was lost as her orgasm came with such force that she saw stars as she closed her eyes, riding the waves of electricity that took over her body.

“Fuck, Fuck,” she screamed as her eyes rolled back and she lost herself to the sensation of being thoroughly fucked.

Blake slowed her strokes, bringing her down from her orgasm by rubbing her clit gently when she was confident that she wrung every ounce of pleasure from her body. She sagged against the countertop totally spent. Her legs felt like jelly, and she wasn't sure if she could move. Blake pulled her into her arms, holding her tight against her chest.

“Let's get you into bed,” Blake whispered, kissing her on the back of her head.

“You may have to carry me. I can hardly feel my legs,” she mumbled, sagging against Blake. To Alexandra's surprise, Blake lifted her in her arms and headed in the direction of her bedroom. She wondered where the woman got the strength to carry her so effortlessly.

Three hours later, they were settled in Alexandra's bed having pizza and wine. After they had reached her bedroom, they cuddled together before she dozed off. She awoke to find Blake watching her sleep and immediately felt the ever-present desire for her. She wanted Blake, but this time she needed her to make love to her nice and slow. She reached for Blake, and they had spent the last hour making love to each other.

“This pizza is so good,” Alexandra moaned around a mouthful of pizza.

“Yes, they are one of the best in the area,” Blake answered, digging in also.

Alexandra loved these moments they shared. Simple moments that made her so happy. It was so easy being with Blake. She knew she really needed to start thinking about the future. How long before someone came along who had more to offer Blake? But at the same time, she didn't want to scare her off by talking about the future. What they were doing was working and they were both satisfied in more ways than one. Why mess with something that worked perfectly?

Her phone vibrated on the bedside table. She reached for it, sighing deeply when she saw who the caller was before returning it to the table. She could feel Blake's eyes on her.

"It's not important," she offered as an explanation for not taking the call.

The phone vibrated again, but she decided to ignore it. She tried to focus on the movie, but a few minutes later her phone vibrated again.

"Are you sure you don't want to get that? Seems someone needs to get a hold of you urgently," Blake said, turning her attention to Alexandra.

Alexandra sighed shaking her head. "It's Taylor. She's been calling wanting to talk, but I don't have anything to say to her," she admitted in a dejected tone.

Taylor had been trying to get a hold of her all week. She sent multiple texts begging Alexandra to talk to her. She ignored them because she wasn't ready to talk to Taylor or felt the need to. After a long time, she was in a good place and didn't want to disrupt the happiness she had found after her heartbreak.

"Maybe you should hear what she has to say. Maybe it will give you closure," Blake advised.

"I don't know, Blake. We haven't spoken in months. I know I have unresolved issues, but I don't think I need to talk to her to solve them. Time is all I need. I'm in a really good place right now and want to stay there," she admitted.

Blake nodded. "Well, I'm here if you need to talk or anything," she said, giving Alexandra a side hug.

Alexandra relaxed against her, using Blake's comfort to rid her mind of all things Taylor. She didn't want to deal with Taylor. Blake had slowly but surely healed her broken heart. Yes, it was still broken as it still ached when she thought about Taylor sometimes because after all, she was with her for a very long time. She didn't think she would ever be with anyone else, but life had taught her differently. She sighed and snuggled deeper in Blake's side, allowing her warmth to soothe her racing mind. This was good. This was easy.

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Chapter Thirty-Two

Alexandra couldn't help smiling as she headed from her office to the board room for the weekly department meeting. Not even the gloomy fall weather or impending storm could dampen her spirit. More often than not when she thought about Blake, she smiled. The woman was so wonderful and thoughtful without knowing it. Blake took her dancing over the weekend, and it was so unexpected, and she had a wonderful time. She mentioned to Blake earlier in the week after they made love for hours that she hadn't been dancing in a long time and she missed it. They went to an upscale, trendy club and danced all night. Blake was an amazing dancer. She knew what they were doing was no longer just casual. The way she felt about Blake was too intense and her need for her kept growing each day. They also spent all their free time together, and more often than not she caught Blake watching her and the intensity of her gaze made Alexandra know that she wasn't alone with her feelings. Maybe they needed to have a conversation about what they were doing. But why mess things up by talking about more or feelings? Maybe she was afraid that Blake wouldn't want a commitment and would end what they were doing. Then there was Taylor whose calls had increased significantly over the last week. Maybe she needed to just have that conversation so that she could get closure and move on with her life. *A life with Blake.*

“Alexandra?”

Her steps faltered at the sound of her name. She closed her eyes as the sound of that voice made her heart pound frantically in her chest. She wasn't ready to see or speak to Taylor. She wasn't surprised that she showed up after being repeatedly ignored. She took a deep breath to calm her nerves before turning around to face the woman she hadn't seen or spoken to in months. The woman who had broken her heart and made her doubt everything about herself. The woman she

was supposed to spend the rest of her life with. The woman who was once her everything. The woman who was just as beautiful as the day she last saw her. Except that she seemed a bit unsure of herself. Which wasn't a trait that she was familiar with. Taylor was nervous and there was underlying sadness in her eyes.

"Taylor, what are you doing here?" she asked with more control than she felt.

Taylor took a step closer. "We need to talk, Lex, and you have refused to take my calls."

Alexandra sighed. "We don't need to talk, Taylor. I have nothing to say to you right now."

Hurt flashed in Taylor's eyes at her words, but she just couldn't allow herself to care.

"Don't you think after everything we have been through; I deserve at least a moment of your time?" she asked, looking at Alexandra incredulously.

"I don't owe you anything as far as I'm concerned, but regardless now is not the time or place for this conversation," Alexandra defended, looking around as a few members of staff were lurking close by.

Taylor shook her head. "I know I messed up, but I can't believe you are being this way. What do you want me to do, get down on my knees and beg? Because I will if that what it takes," she argued, moving another step closer.

"Could you please just leave? I can't do this right now," Alexandra replied, shaking her head.

"I can't believe you are so willing to throw away everything we had because I made one mistake. Did I mean that little to you?" Taylor continued with righteous indignation.

Alexandra couldn't believe Taylor was taking that stance with her. Acting like the victim when she was the one who had cheated. All her pent-up anger bubbled to the surface as she took a step towards Taylor, her hands trembling as she fought

to gain control of her emotions. Emotions that she hadn't fully dealt with that were now surfacing.

“How dare you turn this around on me? You are the one who cheated on me, not the other way around. You didn't think about everything that you were throwing away when you were doing God knows what with Ashley and whoever else. So don't you dare play the victim.” By this point Alexandra was face to face with Taylor, her eyes brimming with tears as all the pain she felt from the betrayal surfaced. She wasn't done. She jabbed her finger in Taylor's chest.

“You destroyed me. You were my life. You broke our trust. Funny thing is that maybe if you had come to me and let me know how you were feeling, I would have allowed you to go and fuck whoever you wanted and come back to me once it was out of your system. That's how much I loved you. Because I understand that we had been together a long time and maybe you needed that even though I wouldn't understand why because I never felt the need to be with anyone else but you. But you chose to lie and cheat. So don't you dare stand there and act like I'm the one who destroyed what we had,” she finished, using her hand to brush away the tears that were streaming heavily down her face.

By this time a few doctors and nurses had gathered close by, and Alexandra looked around, her eyes landing on Blake who was giving Taylor a death glare. She turned her eyes back to Taylor who also had tears running down her face. How could she have done that to them when clearly, she was hurting just as much as Alexandra was? What was she thinking?

“I'm sorry,” Taylor whispered, her tone filled with anguish.

Alexandra sighed, feeling drained from the encounter. “Can we just not do this now,” she implored.

“I'm not giving up on us, Alexandra. I messed up and I'm willing to do whatever it takes to get you back even if it means moving here. I will show you every day if I have to until you give me a chance to explain. I love you too much to give up. I

will be waiting for you at home,” Taylor replied, her eyes begging Alexandra to agree.

Alexandra closed her eyes tight, trying to ward off the headache that was now at the forefront of her head. “Taylor, please just go. I’ll talk to you,” she said before turning and walking away. She was aware of the small crowd that had gathered, but didn’t have the energy to care.

Alexandra returned to her office. She knew she had the meeting to attend, but she just couldn’t face her staff right now. She was too mentally fragile. Why did Taylor have to show up at the hospital? Totally throwing her off guard. She wasn’t prepared to see her and now her emotions were all over the place. She wished she could go home, but she knew Taylor was serious when she said she was going to wait there for her. She checked her calendar seeing that she didn’t have any surgeries scheduled for the rest of day and sent a message to her staff canceling the meeting they should be having now. It was best if she hid in her office for the rest of the day and figured out how to deal with Taylor when she got home.

Blake’s body vibrated with anger as she stormed to her office after receiving Alexandra’s notification about canceling the meeting. She couldn’t believe Taylor showed up unannounced like that. She wanted to throttle the woman on Alexandra’s behalf. *My god*. The look on Alexandra’s face—so much pain. She had never seen her that broken before. She had felt so helpless standing there watching the encounter. She wanted to go to Alexandra, but had a feeling she wanted to be alone.

The whole encounter also had her on edge, because now that Taylor was in town declaring that she was there to fight for Alexandra, what did that mean for them? What would Alexandra do? It’s not like they had discussed their

relationship since they decided to have their extended Paris romance. *Shit*. What if Alexandra decided to give Taylor another chance? She would have no say in the matter as Alexandra hadn't made any promises to her and she never asked her for more. But everything was going so well between them. And did she really want more than what they currently had? *Yes, you do!*

This was why she didn't do relationships. Things could get so messy when feelings and commitments were involved. Because she and Alexandra were not in a relationship and right now, she felt so off-kilter. She thought it best not to make things more difficult for Alexandra by discussing their situation now. It would be best to wait until things had calmed down. She would take her cue from Alexandra.

One hour later, after trying to get some work done to get her mind off Alexandra, Blake decided to go to the emergency room to see if her services could be used there. As soon as she entered the emergency room, two paramedics burst through the doors pushing a gurney, shouting code red. Blake rushed to assist, but came up short when she saw who the patient was. After her momentary shock, Blake jumped into action. *It's just another patient*, she said to herself as she examined Taylor laying on the gurney with signs of a severe head trauma.

"Female patient, early thirties, car accident, visible head injury and broken ribs," the paramedic listed as Blake took over.

"We need to get a CT scan. Can someone alert neuro and let them know we have a patient who might need immediate surgery?" Blake directed as she helped the nurses who came over to assist pushing the gurney to the imaging room. *Shit, Alexandra needs to know*.

"Take her to imaging stat. I'll meet you there," Blake ordered, remaining on the elevator, continuing to the next two floors. She bolted off the elevator once the doors opened and jogged to Alexandra's office.

She knocked, but didn't wait for an answer before opening the door. Alexandra looked up at her as she entered.

“Blake, what’s wrong?” she asked immediately, concern evident in her voice.

She must not have masked her worry if Alexandra was able to detect that something was wrong. Then again, the woman was able to read her more these days. She was never one to delay the inevitable.

“It’s Taylor. There was an accident, and she is here and will probably need surgery,” she explained, watching what little color that was remaining in Alexandra’s face drain from it as her hand covered her mouth.

“What type of accident and how bad is it?” Alexandra asked, getting up from her desk and walking towards the door.

“It was a car accident. Seemed someone ran into the car she was in, hitting the side she was sitting on,” Blake explained as they walked out of the office heading towards the elevator.

Blake updated Alexandra on how bad it was based on what she could see while the elevator descended. They entered the imaging room just in time to see the images of Taylor’s brain injury on the monitors. From what Blake could see, it wasn’t good.

“She needs surgery immediately. Get her to an operating room and page Dr. Jefferson,” Alexandra said, sharing Blake’s sentiments.

As they exited the elevator, an intern rushed towards them and fell into stride with them. “Dr. Edison, I was just coming to get you. Dr. Jefferson is stuck in traffic due to the road blockage a few miles away, because of the deteriorating weather condition. And Dr. Peter’s is on vacation,” he informed them breathlessly.

Alexandra stopped in her tracks at his words. She sighed deeply then continued walking. Blake knew what that meant. That meant Alexandra would probably have to do the surgery. They entered the operating room where they could see the nurses and a resident doctor preparing Taylor for surgery. The resident saw them through the glass partition and came outside.

“Dr. Edison, I know due to hospital policy you can’t do the surgery, but you could walk me through the procedure. I have never done this type of surgery before, but I’m confident that with your supervision I can do it,” he announced with confidence.

Alexandra whipped her head around to him so fast that Blake thought she might get whipped lashed. She gave the resident an incredulous look. “You think I give a damn about policy? I’m not going to risk her life with a resident who has no experience cutting into a patient’s brain. I’m not going to let her die because of policy,” she hissed, shaking her head.

“Dr. Westmore, could you scrub in with me just in case there is any internal bleeding we are not aware of at the moment in other areas of her body?” she asked, turning towards Blake. Blake nodded and started scrubbing in. “You will watch and ensure that everything is recorded,” she instructed the resident who was clearly not happy with his role.

By now, news of the accident had spread throughout the hospital and the gallery in the operating room was packed. Blake watched as Alexandra operated on the woman who she was once going to marry. Amazed by her composure and quiet strength as she worked to save the life of someone she loved or maybe still did. She couldn’t begin to imagine what Alexandra was feeling. At that moment she realized that if it was Alexandra on the table, she didn’t know if she would have found the strength to do what she was doing.

“Almost there, baby. Just hold on for me,” Alexandra whispered as she went deeper into Taylor’s brain.

Blake couldn’t help feeling jealous at the term of endearment. The beeping sounds of the machines going off indicated that something was wrong.

“Dr. Edison, the patient is coding,” announced the surgical nurse.

“Come on, Taylor. I just need you to hold on. This is not how we end. Do you hear me? You can’t do this to me,”

Alexandra said, as she worked to stop the bleeding in Taylor's brain.

She probably just needed a few more seconds. The entire operating room and gallery were so quiet. Everyone on edge watching what would probably be one of the most talked-about surgeries in the hospital for weeks to come. After what seemed like forever, finally, the machine started beeping normal.

"The patient is stabilized," the nurse announced.

Alexandra sighed with relief.

Blake released the breath she didn't she realized she was holding. She didn't want Taylor to die. Taylor dying would only hurt Alexandra further, and that was the last thing she wanted. She didn't want Alexandra to be hurt anymore than she already had. Deep down she sensed that the dynamic of their relationship would change.

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Chapter Thirty-Three

Alexandra took her time checking the monitors in Taylor's room. The rest of the surgery went well, and she hoped that Taylor would make a full recovery. The next few hours would be critical, and she needed to be monitored carefully. Taylor was in an induced coma to aid in reducing the swelling in her brain. Alexandra looked at the woman lying there in bandages and her heart ached. Despite what had happened, she still cared deeply for Taylor and the thought of her dying rocked her to her core. She didn't know where she got the strength to perform the surgery but all she knew was that she needed to save Taylor's life. Nothing else mattered in those crucial hours. She had done her part and now it was up to Taylor to do her part and survive the surgery. She held Taylor's hand in hers.

"I need you to fight. Okay? I need you to be the fighter that I know you are and survive this," she said as tears ran down her face.

She needed to be strong, but she held it all together to ensure she was in the best mindset to perform the surgery. Now all her emotions were hitting her so hard, she couldn't stop the tears that streamed down her face. Her feet felt unsteady, and she pulled a chair closer to the bed and collapsed in it. She would stay with Taylor until she woke up.

There was a light knock on the door and Alexandra turned to see her mom walking into the room holding her hands out for Alexandra to collapse into them. She held on to her mom as sobs rocked her body. She needed her mother's strength more than anything. Her mom rubbed her back as she allowed some of the stress to leave her body.

"I came as soon as I heard, honey."

Alexandra nodded against her mom's shoulders. She knew her mom would have dropped everything to be there.

"I heard that you had to do the surgery yourself. I'm so sorry you had to go through that," Victoria said, before kissing Alexandra on the top of her head.

Alexandra stepped back from her mom, giving her a confused look. "How did you hear about that?" she asked, wondering how word would have reached her mom so fast.

"Oh, honey. Don't worry about policy if that is your concern, or the board for that matter. You did what you had to do to save a patient's life. Many would have crumbled under the circumstances, but you held steadfastly and did your best," she reassured Alexandra, rubbing her cheek.

Those words meant a lot to Alexandra because they were from her mom, but truth was, she didn't give a damn what anyone had to say about her doing the surgery. Taylor's life meant more than any policy. It was just as if a partner had to deliver their wife's baby, the only difference was that she was an expert surgeon. One of the best in the world.

"The next few hours are critical. I'm hoping there are no irreparable damages or memory loss, but I'm confident that if we have no seizures over the next twenty-four hours and the swelling goes down that she will make a full recovery. We won't know, though, until she wakes up," she informed her mom, turning her gaze back to Taylor. Her mom pulled up a chair and sat beside her.

Victoria ran her hand over Taylor's blanket-covered leg. "I called her parents on the way here. They should be here soon."

Alexandra winced. "Oh." She hadn't spoken to Taylor's parents since the breakup. They reached out a few times, but everything was just too raw then and she didn't want to deal with anything concerning Taylor.

"I'm sure they will be happy that you did the surgery. You are the best after all," her mom said, giving her that loving smile that always made her feel like a little girl.

There was another knock on the door and Alexandra looked up to see Blake enter, holding a takeout bag from Palmettos.

“Dr. Devereaux, it’s good to see you again,” Blake greeted her mom, coming to stop at the end of the bed.

Blake’s eyes landed on Alexandra’s hand entwined with Taylor’s. Even though she tried to school her features, her discomfort was obvious, and Alexandra understood why.

“Blake, it’s good to see you again too,” Victoria responded, giving Blake a warm smile.

Her mom was a fan of the woman after all. Blake cleared her throat as she lifted the bag.

“I brought you something to eat. I know you may not feel like it, but you need to eat. So, I brought you some soup. There is enough for both of you,” she explained, holding Alexandra’s gaze.

Alexandra swallowed hard she couldn’t even begin to think how everything seemed to Blake and how she must be feeling. But she didn’t have the energy to focus on that right now. She needed to focus on Taylor. She smiled at the thoughtful gesture though.

“Thanks, Blake. It means a lot.”

Her mom looked from one woman to the other. Her eyes asking questions Alexandra didn’t want to think about.

“Let me know if you need anything else. A change of clothes or anything,” Blake responded, never breaking eye contact with her before she turned and left the room.

Alexandra sighed. “We’ll talk about it later,” she told her mom before she could ask any questions about what she just witnessed. Her mom wasn’t oblivious and could see the tension that was between her and Blake.

Blake burst through her office door, fighting to gain control of her emotions. She knew once she saw Taylor on that gurney that it would impact her relationship...*arrangement* with Alexandra. But now, after overhearing Alexandra talking to Taylor when she went to ask her if she needed anything, it was all the proof she needed that, things would change. As to how they would change, she had no idea, but the thought of things ending with Alexandra had her feeling things she had never experienced before. She didn't know what to make of her emotions. Was it jealousy? But how could she be jealous of a woman who was fighting for her life? Plus, not like she and Alexandra were in a relationship, and if this tragedy did bring them back together, Blake didn't know how she would react. She couldn't be mad at Alexandra if she chose to go back to Taylor.

Stop being negative.

But Blake was a realist, and she knew the effect that trauma and tragedy had on relationships. Some relationships are destroyed—*like your mom's*—whereas others are rekindled and made stronger. She knew she had to prepare herself mentally and emotionally. But why though? Not like they made any kind of promises to each other. She explored numerous casual relationships that ended, and it was nothing. If this was the outcome with Alexandra, then she would do what she did best. Survive. But this time it may not be that easy; not when her chest felt like it was tightening just thinking about what this could mean for them.

“Hey, how is Alexandra doing? I saw you coming out of Taylor's room,” Miranda inquired as she burst through Blake's office door, without knocking of course. Thus, not giving Blake enough time to try and mask the emotions that were brewing inside of her. And knowing Miranda, she wouldn't miss a beat, resulting in the concerned look she now shot her.

She tried to control her voice as much as possible as she said, “She's holding up the best she can. Her mom is here now, so at least she has the support she needs.”

Miranda nodded. “That's good to know.”

They existed in comfortable silence for a moment before Miranda asked, “And how are you holding up?”

Blake did what she did best and tried to appear as if nothing was bothering her, but she knew Miranda would see through it but what was she supposed to say. “Why are you asking me that?” she questioned, trying not to sound defensive.

Miranda sighed and leaned her head back, working out some kinks in her neck before returning her gaze to Blake. “I am asking because I know you. You and Alexandra have gotten close over the last few months, and I see the way you two look at each other when you think no one is looking. I know you will try to protect yourself by shutting down and acting like it doesn’t bother you or you are not concerned about what this means for the two of you,” Miranda responded with conviction. She knew Blake better than anyone.

Blake couldn’t deny any of what Miranda said. But what was she supposed to do? Not like she could go and make any grand declarations to Alexandra. “Regardless of what Alexandra and I share, I have no say in what happens in the future. We made no promises to each other.”

Miranda shook her head. “Blake, we always have a say in matters of the heart. My advice to you is to keep an open mind and don’t push Alexandra away thinking that is the inevitable. Give her and yourself a chance.”

Blake nodded. She just didn’t want to think about her current situation. Regardless of what Miranda advised she needed to protect herself.

Chapter Thirty-Four

It took three days for the swelling in Taylor's brain to go down. Alexandra spent most of those days by her bedside talking to her, letting her know she was there. She held on to Taylor's hand, waiting on her to fully wake up from her medically induced coma. They had removed the drugs and were waiting for her to rouse from her sleep. She rested her head on the bed, resting her eyes because she was tired—so very tired. She hadn't slept more than a few hours since the accident.

“Hmmm... Hmmm... Alexandra?”

Her head snapped up looking towards the door, but no one was there. She turned her gaze back to Taylor who was struggling to keep her eyes open.

“Taylor? I'm right here.” She got up from the chair she was sitting in and sat on the side of the bed so that she was in Taylor's line of sight.

“I have a terrible headache. Where are we?” Taylor asked, her voice hoarse from not being used for days.

Alexandra wasn't surprised at the headache and confusion. “You were in an accident. We are in the hospital.”

“I don't remember being in an accident,” Taylor mumbled, her eyes closing briefly.

“Don't try to think too much now. Just try and get some rest,” Alexandra advised, feeling relieved that Taylor remembered her. Her concerns about memory loss from the trauma subsided. If she didn't remember the accident that was totally normal and would probably come back to her in a few days.

But then Taylor asked, “Was anyone else hurt in the accident? Are Susan and Aileen, Okay?”

Alexandra's mind began to rock wondering why Taylor was asking about their...her friends who she had last seen about six months before the fallout. She didn't want to push to Taylor, but that question had alarm bells going off in her head.

"Hon, what is the last thing you remember? Do you know what year we are in?" she asked, trying to keep her tone as neutral as possible.

Taylor gave her a contemplative look as she thought about the questions.

"I believe we are in 2021 and the last thing I remember was us being on the Yacht with our friends in the south of France," she answered.

Shit that was over a year ago. Alexandra didn't want to think the worst, but if that was the last thing Taylor remembered, then that would mean she didn't remember at least a year of her life. Before she could reply, Taylor had dozed off, giving Alexandra time to process what Taylor's last memory meant. It meant that Taylor didn't remember their breakup, because that was the last vacation they took together with their friends. There was a possibility that her memory loss could be temporary. She would have to run some tests to confirm. Until then, she needed to ensure that Taylor wasn't informed of anything that could traumatize her and delay her recovery

She slipped out of the room and went to find her mom and Taylor's parents who had stepped out to get coffee in the cafeteria.

"Sorry," Alexandra apologized, bending to pick up the phone that had fallen from the person she bumped into.

She was met with the most intense pair of blue eyes as she came face to face with Blake. She hadn't spoken to Blake much since the accident other than when Blake brought her food that first day. She was racked with guilt.

"Hi, Alexandra. How are you? How is Taylor?"

Alexandra couldn't ignore the formality in Blake's tone, and she could not blame the woman given the circumstances.

“I’m sorry we haven’t spoken in days,” she apologized, needing to let Blake know she cared.

“It’s okay. Given the circumstances I understand,” Blake replied, her tone devoid of the warmth she had gotten used to over the last couple of months.

“As for how I am doing; Taylor just woke up, so that has me feeling a bit better. I was on my way to find her parents and my mom. Maybe I should have just called now that I think about.” She wondered if she should tell Blake about Taylor’s memory loss. She knew she could trust Blake.

“It seems that Taylor has lost at least a year’s worth of her memory. The last thing she remembers is our last vacation with her friends. I will need to run some tests to determine the extent of it. Please keep this between us until we know more. With the paparazzi’s lurking around, we don’t want any leaks until we know more.”

Blake almost reached for her hand, but pulled back. “I’m sorry to hear that and of course, I won’t say anything. She has the best doctor, so I’m sure that she will get her memory back soon.”

There was a brief moment of silence where they stood there staring at each other. There was so much Alexandra wanted to say, but right now her emotions were all over the place.

“I guess you should get going. Let me know if you need anything,” Blake said, reaching out this time and giving Alexandra’s hand a quick squeeze, before stepping around her and continuing in the direction she was going.

Alexandra watched Blake walk away feeling more overwhelmed with all the thoughts consuming her mind. She knew the situation must not be easy on Blake. If the tables were turned, she knew the impact it would have on her.

She found their parents and explained everything to them. Alexandra’s mom being the intuitive woman that she was, pulled Alexandra aside to discuss what that would mean for her and Taylor.

“There is a possibility that she only remembers from that period of her life, because subconsciously she doesn’t want to remember your breakup. If that is the case, she is going to expect you to react a certain way with her and as my daughter who was hurt terribly, I need you to not let your emotions cloud your judgement. I know almost losing someone can make us rethink certain decisions, but please don’t sacrifice your happiness if it comes to that,” her mom advised.

“I have to be there for her mom. At least to help her remember depending on what the test results say,” Alexandra replied as the weight of her mom’s words hit her hard.

Her mom pulled her into a hug. “I’m not saying not to be there, honey, but a lot has happened since the breakup. Just please take everything into consideration as you adjust to the circumstances.”

Alexandra knew her mom was right, and she valued her opinion more than anyone else’s in the world, but how could she not be there for Taylor. She could have died.

She returned to Taylor’s room, allowing her a few minutes with her parents before taking her to get a CT scan done and some additional testing. The tests results indicated that Taylor’s memory loss may be temporary, but they were not one hundred percent conclusive. However, there was a strong possibility that she would recover her memory. As for the timeline, they were not sure. The main thing was that there appeared to be no permanent brain damage that would affect her motor skills or cognitive ability.

She brought Taylor back to her room unable to leave her side. She settled in the chair beside the bed. Taylor turned towards her, eyes questioning.

“I’ve really lost a year of our life together?” Taylor asked, taking Alexandra’s hands in hers.

She looked at Alexandra with so much love that it made her heart hurt knowing that a lot has changed between them.

“Don’t think too much about it. Allow your brain to heal and I’m sure in time it will all come back to you. For now, you

need to focus on resting,” Alexandra replied as confidently as possible.

“Thank you for saving my life. Mom told me that you had to do the surgery.”

Alexandra had informed Taylor’s parents not to tell her about their breakup. She didn’t want Taylor learning anything that could cause any setbacks.

“No need to thank me. I would have done anything to save your life,” she replied, earning a smile from Taylor.

“I know you would have. When do we go home to L.A.? Maybe being in our home will help my memory loss,” Taylor asked, her tone hopeful.

Alexandra didn’t know how to respond to that without letting on that they were no longer together. “I do not recommend traveling so soon. You have to stay here for a few more days so that we can monitor you. I’ll let you go home as soon as it is safe.”

Taylor cocked her head, giving her a confused look before asking, “Aren’t you coming home with me?”

Alexandra didn’t know how to answer to that. Guess her silence spoke volumes.

“Is something wrong? Something just feels off about us. Did we have a fight or something before the accident?”

“Taylor, I don’t want you focusing on anything but your recovery. I will monitor you over the next few days, then we will decide the next steps,” she provided, dodging the issue at hand as much as possible. Luckily, a nurse came in to tend to Taylor, preventing the conversation from continuing.

Over the next couple of days, Taylor regained most of her strength and was able to move around on her own which was really good. She hadn’t regained her memory and it was becoming harder and harder for Alexandra to sidetrack questions Taylor asked as it pertained to their lives over the year she was missing. Not only did she have Taylor’s feelings to consider, but she also had to think about Blake who she had barely seen or spoken to in days. She was trying to protect the

woman who had hurt her and probably hurting the one who had helped her heal. She just hoped in the end things would work out for the best. She opened the door to Taylor's hospital room and was shocked at what she saw.

"Taylor, what's wrong?" She rushed to Taylor's side as the woman sobbed into her pillow laying on her side. She was crying so hard that she struggled to breathe. She knelt beside the bed so she could be face to face with Taylor.

"What happened?" she asked again, her voice filled with worry as she looked into Taylor's eyes. Taylor closed her eyes and cried some more. Alexandra wondered if she had regained her memory.

"Is it true?" Taylor managed to push out between sobs, hiccupping as she tried to control the sobs that were rocking her body.

"Is what true?" Alexandra questioned, her voice laced with confusion.

Taylor adjusted and retrieved a phone from the other side of the bed before handing it to Alexandra. On the screen was an article about their relationship and how Taylor had cheated. Alexandra closed her eyes, cursing whoever had given Taylor a phone.

"It is true. You could never lie to me. So, the fact that you have not answered means it is true," Taylor answered for her as more tears ran down her face.

"Taylor, you need to calm down. Okay, hon." Alexandra implored.

"How could I have done that to us?" Taylor cried as more sobs rocked her body.

Alexandra got up from the floor and went to lay behind Taylor, holding her while she let it all out. "It's alright, Tay. Please just calm down and we will talk about it," she said, trying to get Taylor to calm down.

Taylor cried until she fell asleep. Alexandra felt so torn about everything. She even felt guilty about everything. When she found out about Taylor, she left L.A. and not returned any

calls or texts from Taylor. She was so hurt that she really didn't consider how the breakup had affected Taylor. But now, seeing her like this, broke her heart. Her mind ran a thousand miles as she laid there with Taylor in her arms. It was familiar comfort, but she didn't get the same comfort as she once did because now, thoughts of another body in her arms plagued her mind.

After discovering details of their breakup, Taylor withdrew into herself and was diagnosed with depression after having a psychological evaluation done. She barely ate and spoke mostly only to Alexandra, her eyes often swollen and red-rimmed with tears. She spent most of her time in bed sleeping. Alexandra grew very concerned. The psychologist recommended that she took Taylor home. Being in a familiar environment could improve her mental health. She suggested that Alexandra provide her with as much support as possible despite their history, because she was a key part of Taylor's recovery. Despite their breakup, Taylor remained locked in a confusing world that never included her cheating.

Alexandra's heart tore between wanting to help Taylor and leaving Seattle. But she had made a promise to be there for Taylor, and she had to keep that promise. Despite everything they had been through, she still cared for Taylor deeply. The love they once shared still echoed in her mind. But she also had to consider what this would mean for her and Blake. She had grown to care deeply for Blake, and even though they made no commitments, the thought of hurting Blake made her chest hurt. Not like she could ask her to wait until she figured things out with Taylor. No one would agree to that, and Blake owed her nothing. And with everything so uncertain, it wouldn't be fair for her to even ask that of her. Blake deserved better than that. Then again, who said that Blake even cared that much to wait on her? She knew the woman cared about her, but to what extent she wasn't certain. She needed to talk to Blake sooner rather than later.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Blake's stomach churned as she stared at the text message on her phone. The message haunted her and the feeling of melancholy that consumed her ever since Taylor's accident increased.

Alexandra: Hi Blake. Please come to my office as soon as possible. Thanks

Blake felt in her gut that as soon as she crossed the threshold into Alexandra's office everything would change. Her instincts had never failed her before.

Fear of the unknown scared her, and not knowing where things stood with Alexandra had her twisted up in knots. She hated having no control over her life—caught between a rock and a hard place as she waited on Alexandra to determine how they moved forward. *You could always initiate the conversation. That would be insensitive of me or maybe I'm just afraid of her answer. No. The least I can do is give her time. She deserves that much.* She sighed heavily as she got up from her desk. She read the message one last time before heading to Alexandra's office. Her legs felt lethargic as she made the short journey to the elevators. She thought about taking Miranda's advice and being as open with Alexandra as she could, but at this point, it all depended on what Alexandra wanted. She would respect whatever decision she made.

Blake paused at Alexandra's half open office door, admiring the woman who stood at her windows overlooking the city. She allowed herself a moment to observe Alexandra from behind. Even from behind she is beautiful. She admired Alexandra's delicate exposed neck. Her hair was up in a messy bun on top of her head. Blake missed sucking that neck. *Now*

is not the time to be thinking about that. She knocked lightly on the door, alerting Alexandra to her presence.

Alexandra turned and locked her gaze with her, and for a moment they just stood there staring at each other. Alexandra gave her a small smile that didn't reach her eyes, further intensifying the sinking feeling in her stomach. Even before they had been intimate, Alexandra always gave her the most genuine smiles.

"Blake come in and close the door please," Alexandra instructed, stepping away from the window, coming to sit on the edge of her desk, clasping her hands in front of her.

"Hi," Blake greeted, standing in front of Alexandra.

"How are you?"

Blake couldn't help but notice how tired Alexandra seemed. She still looked immaculate, but Blake could see the signs of exhaustion in her features. "I'm doing well. Busy with work. How are you doing?" Blake ensured that her tone remained as normal as possible.

"I'm happy you are doing well. I'm doing as well as can be given the situation."

This was the most awkward conversation they had ever had. Her eyes scrutinized Blake's features. Blake knew that look well and as usual, it made her feel things she would rather not be feeling now. She needed Alexandra to get to the point of the meeting, sooner rather than later. *Just rip off the band-aid already.*

"So, what's up?" she cut to the chase needing to know.

Alexandra sighed. "I'm going back to L.A. for awhile to support Taylor with her recovery. I'm not sure how long I will be away. In my absence, I would like you to take over the Chief of Staff position if your colleagues agree. I will inform them at the meeting later today."

Blake felt nothing pertaining to her potential new role. All she could focus on was the fact that Alexandra was leaving. She schooled her features as best as she could, hoping to prevent Alexandra from seeing the turmoil happening inside of

her. She wasn't surprised as she knew it was a possibility that Alexandra would leave.

"I'll be more than happy to fill in while you are away as long as your decision was strictly based on my professional history," she replied as nonchalantly as possible despite feeling like her world had been turned upside down.

"I'm highly offended that you would think that I would leave my hospital in your hands based on nothing but professional merits. My decision is based on the fact that you are not afraid to do the right thing even if it is not the popular decision, you are highly respected by members of staff, and you love this hospital," Alexandra stated, unable to hide her disappointment in Blake's assumption.

"In that case, as I said, it will be an honor and I will do my best," Blake intoned, feeling terrible for making Alexandra upset.

"I also wanted to talk about us."

"There's nothing to talk about really. You made no promises to me, and you have to do what you have to do," Blake jumped in.

Alexandra reached out, taking her hand in hers, pulling her a bit closer to her. "Don't do that. Don't disregard what we share in an effort to protect yourself or to hide what you are really feeling. You are human just like me, Blake, and this situation is eating me up inside. And whether or not you want to admit it, I know you feel at least some of what I am feeling. Yes, we may not have made any promises to each other verbally, but we made promises with our actions. I care about you too much to not acknowledge that or to be callous with how I handle the situation. And you are right; I may not have told you how I feel, but I want you to know that you mean so very much to me."

Blake couldn't even begin to put all she was feeling into words. There was so much she wanted to say, but what would be the point when Alexandra was leaving.

In the end, she asked, "When are you leaving?"

She could see the disappointment flash across Alexandra's face.

"In a couple of days. I will need to go over a few things with you as it pertains to the role," Alexandra answered, her eyes saying so much.

"Okay. My schedule is up to date, so just let me know when you want us to meet," Blake responded, still trying to avoid speaking about anything concerning their personal relationship. She just felt so raw and just needed time to process everything.

"Blake, I..." Alexandra's phone rang, cutting her off. She reached for it on her desk. "I'm sorry, Blake, but I have to take this," she apologized, her tone dripping with melancholy.

Blake secretly thanked the stars for ending the conversation. "It's alright. We'll catch up later," she replied, before turning and heading out of the office. She could feel Alexandra's eyes on her retreating back.

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Chapter Thirty-Six

The next couple of days went by so fast that Blake didn't know when the next day started or ended. As planned, Alexandra had informed her colleagues that Blake would be interim Chief of Staff, and no one objected. They were thrilled that one of their own was going to be filling in instead of someone from outside. Between her scheduled surgeries, Blake spent all her free time with Alexandra going over the day-to-day operations of the hospital. Their time together was filled with tension that was palpable from a distance. There was an unspoken agreement that they wouldn't discuss their personal relationship as they worked together to get everything that needed to be done in a small amount of time. Blake knew she would be lying to herself if she said that it was easy to be around Alexandra and not be able to kiss her. She caught Alexandra many times staring at her and when she would question why she was staring, she would say it was nothing. Blake also couldn't disregard how sad Alexandra had been and it pained her to see her like that. She knew she was being a coward, but how could she make things any harder for Alexandra and what would be the point when she had made her decision. Alexandra was probably on her way to the airport now and she didn't know when she would be back. They hadn't said goodbye to each other as Blake had volunteered to assist on a surgery in an effort not to see Alexandra before she left the hospital. She just didn't have it in her to say goodbye to her. Now here she was sitting in her living room regretting that decision.

She was so deep in thought that the knock on her door caused her to jump. She thought about ignoring whoever it was. She wasn't in the mood for company. Besides, she knew it wasn't Miranda. Miranda was currently at her parents' house and furthermore, she wouldn't have knocked. *And Alexandra is on her way to L.A.*

The knocking continued. Blake sighed as she got up to open the door. Her heart started to beat frantically in her chest when her eyes landed on Alexandra. “What are you doing here?” she asked, her voice stronger than she felt.

“May I come in?” Alexandra requested, instead of answering Blake’s question.

“Yes, sorry come in.” Blake stepped aside to let Alexandra pass her.

She took a few extra seconds to close the door, giving her much-needed time to calm her nerves. She turned around to see Alexandra standing while waiting on her. Unlike her, Alexandra didn’t hide her feelings, and Blake could see the sadness in her eyes.

“I thought you would have been on your way to the airport by now,” she inquired, stopping in front of Alexandra. It took a moment for Alexandra to answer as her gaze captured Blake’s and held her captive.

Alexandra closed the gap between them, reaching up to cup Blake’s jaw in her hand. Blake couldn’t control her body as she closed her eyes and melted into the touch. It felt like forever since Alexandra touched her. The sensation both familiar and foreign at the same time. Alexandra used her thumb to caress her cheek with so much tenderness.

“I understand,” Alexandra whispered.

Blake opened her eyes wondering what Alexandra was referring to.

“Why you have been so distant,” she explained. Blake remained silent as there was no use denying it.

“Life has a way of leading us on a different path than we intended or expected and then in order to move forward, we have to make a choice. I made a very difficult choice in choosing to go back to L.A. knowing what I’m leaving behind here.” Alexandra paused, closing her eyes tightly for a moment. When she opened them, Blake could see that they were glossy. Her heart constricted a little more in her chest.

“I need you to know that my leaving is not easy for me, especially with the way things were between us. You are so very special to me, and I will always cherish our time together. If I could, I would ask you to give me time to work through everything with Taylor. But that wouldn’t be fair to you, and you have already given me so much time and understanding. You deserve better than always waiting on me to sort out my feelings. I want you to be happy, Blake, even if it is not with me. I just couldn’t leave without letting you know how I feel, and I sincerely hope that whatever happens in the future you will be a part of my life. Regardless of everything else, your friendship means a lot to me.”

Blake wanted to tell Alexandra that if she asked her to wait, she would wait. But instead, she said, “I want you to be happy also, and I really hope that everything works out for you in L.A. I will always be here for you.”

Alexandra looked like she wanted to say more, but in the end, she closed the gap between them, pulling Blake into a warm embrace. Their bodies melted against each other as they held on to each other tightly. Alexandra pulled back slightly, leaving their faces only a few inches apart. Her breath washed over Blake’s lips, heating her blood as her heart pounded frantically in her chest. No one had ever made her heartbeat this way. Blake wasn’t sure who made the first move when their lips collided together in a passionate kiss that made her heart beat even faster. Blake poured everything that she wanted to tell Alexandra but didn’t have the words to say into that one kiss. It was as if both of them were trying to use that kiss to say how they felt. But more than anything it was a kiss goodbye. There was nothing soft about the kiss. No tenderness—just passion and desire. That one kiss held so many meanings and spoke volumes. Alexandra slowed the kiss before pulling back and resting her forehead against Blake’s.

“I have to go,” she whispered, in a strained tone.

Blake couldn’t help but to lean in giving her one last tender kiss before releasing her. “Take care of yourself, Alexandra,” she said as she stepped back, putting distance between them.

“You too, Blake.”

Blake's heart clenched in her chest when she saw the tears in Alexandra's eyes. There was so much she wanted to say. *What if I ask her to stay with me?*

Alexandra gave her hand one last squeeze on her way to the door. Blake couldn't turn around to watch her leave and didn't turn to face the door until it closed softly behind her. She couldn't control her legs when they moved towards the door where she rested her forehead against it with her right palm flat beside her head. For the first time in a very long time, she allowed her tears to fall freely, because no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't hold them in. *If it's meant to be she will come back to me.*

Both women faced each other on either side of the door not knowing that their palms were lined up perfectly together. They both believed that they were doing the right thing even though nothing about it felt right or fair. In the end, all they could do was move forward.

“Goodbye. I love you.”

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Coming Soon

*WHEN WE'RE MEANT TO BE – PART 2 THE
CONTINUATION OF BLAKE AND ALEXANDRA'S
JOURNEY.*

AFTERWORD

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Skye Von Triessen

Skye lives in North York, where she is maybe one of few who loves the long winter season. Despite being born on a beautiful island where it is warm all year round, she absolutely despises the summer months in her current home country. Skye spends her days as a corporate analyst and spends her nights dreaming up stories she desires to put on paper but oftentimes don't.

Her favorite thing to do is to lay in bed in the dark on Sundays doing absolutely nothing but watch TV shows or read a good book. She absolutely loves food and despite her many attempts is unable to lower her monthly food bill to a reasonable amount which is hard to do seeing that she believes in eating the best quality food no matter the cost.

More than anything she believes that life is too short to be anything but happy.

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