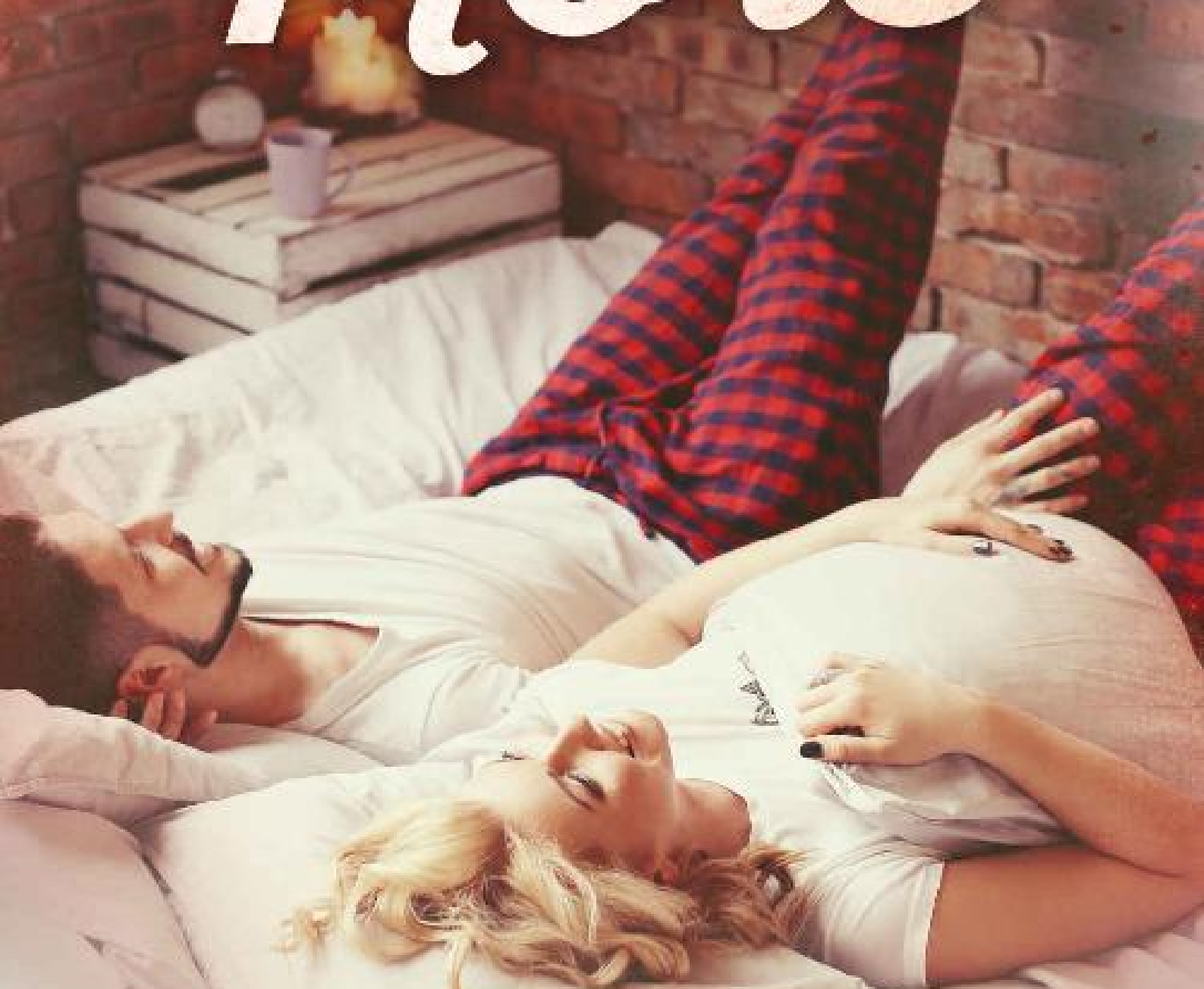


# *Just Once More*



USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
**S H A W H A R T**

JUST ONCE MORE

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SHAW HART

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**I blame the spiked eggnog.**

It's the reason for my pounding headache this morning and the astronomically bad decision I made last night.

See, I slept with my best friend, and sure, I've been in love with him for ages, but that doesn't change the fact that I just had a drunken one-night stand with the most important person in my life.

I know that we might have just messed up everything so when he wakes up, I suggest forgetting that this ever happened, but he surprises me.

He doesn't want to forget about it. Instead, he proposes that we do it again.

Just once more, he says, and like an idiot, I agree.

I only hope that once more is enough for me.

# ONE



Iggy

HAVE you ever woken up in terror, that heavy feeling of dread in your stomach?

Usually, it's because you hear some noise, a thump outside, or some kind of scratching sound. Sometimes it's because you just watched a scary movie and can't get it out of your head.

Yeah, I would kill for one of those scenarios right about now.

I am waking up in a panic this morning but not because of the scary movie we watched last night or any creepy sound.

It's because I'm naked in bed with my best friend.

I squeeze my eye shut, hoping that this is all some kind of bad dream. When I open them again, though, Jensen's naked torso is still an inch from my face, and I know this is real.

How did this happen?

I'd like to just blame all of this on the spiked eggnog that Jensen made for us last night, but I know it's more than that. I've been in love with my best friend for as long as I can remember. I'm pretty sure I loved Jensen when I was just a little girl before I even knew what love was.

I've done a great job of hiding those feelings. Jensen has never made even the slightest move on me, so I know he



doesn't feel the same way about me, and I'm not about to risk our decades-old friendship.

Or I wasn't until last night.

*I can't believe that I did this. How did this happen?*

Those drinks must have been really strong last night, especially if Jensen was on board to sleep together.

I squint against the sun streaming in from my bedroom window. It feels like I'm being stabbed in the eye and I recoil, half burrowing under the covers as I glance over at Jensen. My head is pounding, and I swear never to drink again if I can survive this.

Jensen is still fast asleep. He's sleeping on his back; his black hair tousled like someone has been running their fingers through it. It takes me a moment to realize that it was me running their fingers through his soft locks. That thought sends a secret thrill through me. I can't even guess the number of times I've wanted to do that over the years. Now I've done it, but I can't remember doing it.

I shove my own strawberry blonde hair out of my eyes so that I can get a better look at him. My hair feels like I've been in some kind of windstorm, and while Jensen looks like he's a male model, I'm sure that I look like I've been sick for the last week and just crawled out from bed for the first time in days.

I feel like I've been hit by a truck, and I should probably crawl out of this bed and drag myself into a shower, but I can't seem to find it in me to leave this bed. Not just yet, anyway. If this is my only chance to be like this with him, then I want to savor every moment of it.

My eyes drink in all his skin that is now on display. I should be used to seeing Jensen like this. We grew up together. We spent our summers swimming at the lake or the pool at his house. I've seen his chest a million times, but for some reason, it seems different today.

Maybe it's because this time we're in bed together. I roll over onto my side so that I can study him further. I always thought he was the most handsome man I had ever seen. He

was easily the hottest guy in our school. All of the girls were always chasing after him, but he never seemed interested in any of them.

Thank God for that. I'm not sure how I would have handled it if he had been interested in any of them.

I've never had to see Jensen with another girl. He didn't date in college or since we graduated. I've always been afraid to bring it up with him, but the one time I did, he just said that he was content with the way his life is now.

I guess I am too. At least, that's what I said back to him. The truth is that I'm happy as long as I have Jensen in my life. Sure, I'd love for us to be more than best friends, but if I can't have that, then I can settle for what we have now.

He shifts, sighing in his sleep. His bare skin brushes against mine, and my body goes haywire. Heat floods through my veins, and an ache settles between my legs. Jensen's hand drapes over my waist, and I can't take it. I immediately try to bolt off the bed.

My head is pounding as I try to stand on my wobbly legs. I grip my head between my hands as my legs threaten to buckle. It's then I realize that I'm still wearing my panties from last night.

*Maybe we didn't sleep together last night then...*

Why would I sleep with Jensen and then put just my underwear back on? Wouldn't I be sore too? I've never been with anyone, and I imagine that something besides my head would hurt after losing my v-card.

My sudden movement off the bed seems to have disturbed Jensen. I shouldn't be surprised. He's always been a light sleeper. I remember when we went camping when we were twelve. Every twig snapping or rustling of the wind against the tent woke him up. By the end of the weekend, we were both so sleep-deprived that we ended up sleeping the whole way home.

When his green eyes open and meet mine, I freak out. I'm not ready for this conversation. I have no idea how he's going

to react, and I don't want to mess up our relationship any more than I already have.

He opens his mouth to say something, and I hurry to cross my arms over my bare chest and spin on my heel. I sprint into the bathroom before he can say or see anything, slamming the door behind me as I go.

I just need a few minutes to get myself together, and then I'll be able to face him.

I hope...

## TWO



Jensen

WELL THAT WASN'T how I imagined waking up naked next to Iggy for the first time.

In my fantasies, we always woke up cuddled up with each other. She would smile at me, and I would lean down and kiss her sweet lips. We'd make plans for the day and then end up pushing all of them off to make love once again. She'd whisper that she loved me, and I would tell her I loved her too. Then we'd ride off into the sunset together.

Instead, I woke up next to a half-naked Iggy as she fled into the bathroom. I can practically feel her freaking out in there, and I sigh as I sit up in bed and scrub my hands down my face.

I was hoping that she would wake up next to me this morning and realize that she loves me too, but that doesn't look like it's going to happen. I probably should have seen it coming, though.

We were both more than a little tipsy last night. I didn't realize just how drunk she was, though, until we were already in bed. I had started to sober up by then, and as soon as I realized that she wasn't as sober as me, I put a stop to things. I don't want our first time together to be some drunken mistake for her. I want her to remember all of our times together.

I slip out of bed and grab my clothes from last night off the floor. I head down the hall to my own room and get dressed for the day. I could probably use a shower, but I'm not willing to wash the scent of Iggy off of me just yet.

I know Iggy better than anyone, and I'm sure that she's freaking out right now. She's probably trying to figure out how to convince me to pretend like nothing happened last night. I wonder if she even remembers everything that went on between us.

The night had started like any other. We had gotten home from work, cooked dinner together, and then settled on the couch. It was Iggy's turn to pick the movie, and she had put on some horror flick. That had caught me by surprise because it's almost Christmas, and that's Iggy's favorite holiday.

Normally, I can't convince her to watch anything else but the Hallmark channel and *The Grinch* for the whole month of December. I had broken out the eggnog, and she grabbed the amaretto and rum. One drink turned into two, turned into five.

The night gets blurry after that, but I remember her cuddling up against my side. From there, we both started to lean closer. The moment that her lips touched mine, I was in heaven.

I've dreamed about kissing Iggy since I was thirteen-years-old. She's the only girl I've ever wanted to be with, but I always thought she just saw me as a friend. After last night, I'm wondering if that's true.

When she took my hand and dragged me to her room, I was sure I was dreaming. When she had taken her shirt off, I thought maybe I had died and gone to heaven. Then she giggled, telling me she had always wanted to do this.

It was everything that I ever wanted to hear, but the delivery was all wrong. She was slurring her words, and I knew then that she was a lot drunker than I was.

I had shut things down then, and she had promptly passed out. I couldn't seem to pull myself from her bed, so I cuddled up behind her and fallen asleep too.

I hear the shower turn on in her room as I head down to the kitchen. We're going to need pancakes and lots of coffee if we want to make it through today.

We have a big meeting at work today. Iggy and I opened a toy company right after college. It had always been her dream, and I just wanted to be close to her. The company is Iggy's baby, and she runs it. I just help out with anything that she needs.

My phone rings as I get the coffee going, and I smile as I see my mom's name on the screen.

"Hey, Mom. You're up early."

"I wanted to catch you before work," she says, and I put the phone on speakerphone as I get started on the pancakes.

"What's up?"

"Just wanted to see if you had any news for me?"

I smile. My mom and dad know I've been in love with Iggy for years. They've been hoping I would propose to her already, but it hasn't happened. I can tell that they're getting impatient. Both of them want to see me happy and settled. Plus, they really want grandbabies.

"No, not that I can think of."

My mom sighs as I pour the first batch of pancakes onto the griddle.

"Are you two coming early for the holidays?" She asks.

"We should be there on the twenty-third. We have an office party and the charity one, so we won't be able to come before then."

"Your father and I are thinking about coming to town for the charity one. We know how much it means to Iggy."

"I'm sure she'll love that."

My mom and dad both love Iggy. She's been family since we were kids. Her mom was a single mom who worked two jobs to take care of them. Iggy spent more time at my house with my parents than her own, but I know that she loved her

mom to pieces. She was an amazing lady who loved Iggy more than anything. Unfortunately, she passed away when Iggy was twenty. Since then, Iggy has spent all holidays and breaks with my parents and me.

“I’ll let you know for sure soon.”

“Sounds good, Mom.”

“I’ll let you get to work.”

“I’ll talk to you soon.”

“Love you, honey. Tell Iggy that we said hi.”

“I will. Love you, Mom.”

I hang up as I stack the pancakes onto the plate and set the table. Iggy still isn’t out of the bathroom yet, so I go in search of her.

“Iggy?” I call, knocking on the bathroom door.

I can hear her moving around inside, and I smile.

“Are you coming?”

“What?” She squeaks, and she sounds so shocked that I wonder what she’s doing behind this door.

An image of her touching herself in the shower, her curvy body wet and covered in suds hits me, and I clear my throat.

“I made breakfast,” I say, trying to pretend like there’s nothing special about this morning. “My mom called. She says hi.”

“Um...I’ll be right out.”

I nod and head back to the kitchen. I’ve just taken a seat when footsteps sound in the hallway. Iggy comes out in a pair of tight yoga pants and an off-the-shoulder maroon shirt. Her hair is still wet and dripping slightly onto her shoulders.

I look away from her tempting body and to the food on the table. I start to serve both of us, and she grabs her coffee, taking a big gulp.

“How’s your head?” I ask as I nudge the aspirin toward her.

“Pounding,” she says, and I unscrew the medicine and hand her two. “Listen, about last night.”

“Yeah?” I ask, and she refuses to meet my eyes.

“I think that we should just forget that it ever happened.”

Her words sting, but I can’t say that I’m surprised that she said them. I knew that Iggy would want things to go back to normal as soon as possible, and I can’t say I blame her. She’s the most important person in my life, and I can’t lose her.

She drains her coffee, and I reach for her cup to fill it.

“Thanks.”

We start to eat, and I study her. It’s obvious that she’s got a killer hangover so I don’t talk or try to broach the subject that’s on the tip of my tongue. As we finish the pancakes, though, I can’t stop myself from asking her the question that’s on my mind.

“So... last night,” I start.

“I thought that we were forgetting about that?”

“No, I never agreed to that. I want to talk about it actually.

Her eyes widen, and her coffee cup dangles from her fingers as she stares at me.

“It was fun,” I try, and she gulps.

It’s not exactly a promising sign, but I’ve come this far. It’s too late to turn back now, or maybe it’s just that I’ve been holding back my feelings for so long, and I can’t do it anymore.

“I think that we should do it again.”

Her face turns pale, and then Iggy does something I never predicted when I thought about having this conversation.

She runs to the trash can, bends over, and throws up.



# THREE



Iggy

THIS WHOLE DAY has felt so surreal.

I'm currently sitting on the couch, wrapped in a blanket, and doing my best to avoid meeting Jensen's gaze.

*He wants to do it again. Do what? Sleep half-naked next to each other? Make out? Have sex?*

*Oh god...*

I can't do this. I'm not prepared for any of this.

"Iggy? Do you want some more water or something?" Jensen asks.

"No."

"Do you want to talk about last night?"

"No."

"But we should," he says without missing a beat.

"Should we?" I ask sarcastically, and he gives me a look.

"We didn't have sex," he starts, and I cover my eyes, squeezing my eyes closed.

"Don't say that!"

"Say what? That we didn't have sex?" He asks in exasperation.

“Jensen!”

“Fine. We didn’t make love.”

“Oh my god!” I scream, and he tries to hide his smile. “I swear to god; I’ll throw up again if you don’t stop.”

He throws his hands up, and I burrow into the blanket more.

“Nothing happened,” he says, and I grumble.

“Something happened.”

“Okay, but not the thing that we’re not mentioning.”

I glance at him, and he relaxes against the back of the couch.

“I think that we should do it again.”

“Why?” I ask, and he looks down at the coffee table as he thinks about his words.

“Call it an experiment.”

“Sleeping together is an experiment to you?”

“I just want to see something.”

I wonder if maybe he’s still drunk. That’s the only explanation for what’s happening here.

“You want to sleep together.”

“Yes. Just once more.”

“Just once more,” I say, my words trailing off as my mind takes off in a million different directions.

I don’t know why he’s doing this. I don’t understand why he wants us to sleep together, but I also can’t find it in me to turn down this opportunity.

I’ve wanted to be with Jensen for so long, and now he’s offering me that. It’s hard for me to say no. Not when everything I’ve ever wanted is being offered to me on a silver platter.

“We would need rules,” I say, and Jensen blinks.

He seems surprised that I'm agreeing to this.

"What kind of rules?"

"Well, we can't let it ruin our friendship. We can let it turn things awkward between us. I mean, we live and work together. I don't want things to go badly, and then we have to tiptoe around each other all the time."

"Okay, deal. What else?"

"It really is just once."

He hesitates, and I wonder why he's not jumping to agree with this rule since it was his idea after all.

"Anything else?" He asks, and I chew on my bottom lip.

"I don't think so, but I would like the right to add more rules later on."

"Deal, but only if I get the same option."

"Deal."

He nods, and we stare at each other.

"We're not doing it now, right? I mean, we need to get to work."

"No," he says, "not right now."

For the first time since we woke up this morning, Jensen seems to be caught off guard. I want to talk to him. I want to ask him more about why he's doing this. I want to know if he could possibly feel for me what I feel for him, but I can't seem to get the words out.

My phone starts to ring, and I glance at the screen.

"I need to get dressed, and then I'll be ready to head to work."

He nods, and I stand, answering my phone as I head down the hallway.

"Hey, Aspen. What's up?"

"I was just wondering when you would be in today. Are you sick?" She asks, and I close the door behind me, making

sure that Jensen can't hear me

"I'll be in soon."

"Are you alright?" She asks.

Aspen was my first hire. She was also the first friend that I made here in Redwood, California.

It's a small town that I fell in love with when Jensen and I stopped here for a road trip a few years ago. We were headed back to college and got a flat tire. We had spent the afternoon while the tire was repaired wandering around the town, and I knew I wanted to come back after we graduated.

"Jensen and I slept together last night," I whisper.

"What?" Aspen asks, and I clear my throat.

I can't seem to get the words out a second time.

"You heard me."

"It's about time, Iggy!"

"Nope. It was a disaster."

"Oh, it wasn't good? I'm surprised. Jensen seems like he would know how to pleasure a woman."

"Oh my god," I groan. "It wasn't that! I mean, we were both drunk and didn't go through with it, and then things were so awkward this morning."

"Oh."

"Yeah, and now he wants to do it again."

"Well, that's good," she says, and I can hear the printer whir to life on her end of the line.

"I guess. We'll see. I'm getting dressed, so we'll be in soon."

"Okay, we'll talk about this then."

"We don't have to," I try, and she laughs.

"Yes, we do. Trust me."

I sigh as I hang up and try to decide what to wear. I have a feeling that today is going to be a long day.

## FOUR



Jensen

IGGY HAS BEEN DOING her best to avoid me all day. If I came into the break room, she headed to her office. If I went into her office, she went to the design offices. If I followed her there, she went to accounting.

Eventually, I just went to help with the charity event planning. The event is tomorrow night, so most things are in place, but we're still decorating.

Every year, we host an event for kids in the area. There are a lot of less fortunate families in the area, and since it's such a small town, there aren't a ton of resources for them.

When Iggy and I started Let's Play First, she said she wanted to give back to the area. We've been hosting a holiday event every year since. We give away presents and food and have a few craft stations set up, along with a Santa for the kids to see. It's always a big hit, and I know that this year is set to be our biggest event yet.

I'm so lost in helping to string the last of the lights that I don't see Iggy come into the empty warehouse.

"It looks great in here," she says, and I glance over my shoulder at her.

"Thanks. Are you ready to head home now?" I ask as I climb down the ladder.

“Yeah, whenever you are.”

I’m a little surprised that she came to find me. I thought for sure I was going to have to track her down. If she wants to go home, maybe she’s finally alright with what happened last night. Maybe she finally feels this thing between us and is ready for us to be more than friends.

I can only hope anyway.

I put the ladder away and then head over to where she’s waiting for me. She gives me a nervous smile, and my heart leaps in my chest. That has to be a good sign.

I rest my hand on the small of her back as I lead her outside and over to my car. We don’t live far from Let’s Play First, and there’s never traffic in Redwood so it only takes us a few minutes to get home.

“Your mom called me today at lunch. They were going to come out for the event and then drive back to Oregon with us, but your dad fell and hurt his wrist. I told them we’d just see them in a few days for Christmas.”

“How’d my dad get hurt?”

“He was hanging up some more lights and fell off the ladder. Your mom said they tried to call you, too, but you didn’t answer.”

“I’ll have to call them back after dinner and check on him,” I say as I pull into our driveway.

“I’ll make dinner, and you can call her back,” she says, and we head inside.

“Thanks.”

Iggy has always had my back. When my mom was sick, and my dad was out of town on a business trip, she came over and helped me cook dinner for three days. When I almost failed chemistry in high school, she stayed up late for two whole weeks to help me study for my final exam.

I’ve always had her back too. When Matt Adams started calling her Piggy our sophomore year, I beat the crap out of

him and made sure that no one even thought about calling my beautiful girl that.

I try to call my mom back, but she doesn't answer. I'm assuming that she's busy fussing over my dad. I'll try to call her back tomorrow. For tonight, I want to focus on my Iggy.

I head into the kitchen and see Iggy trying to open a bottle of wine. She gives me a self-deprecating smile when she sees me, and I walk over to her side.

"I thought that we might need this tonight," she jokes, and I shake my head.

"We don't."

"What?" She asks, looking a little nervous at how close we're standing.

"Maybe we don't get drunk this time," I whisper, and she stares up at me, her blue eyes so big and trusting.

"I'm nervous," she whispers back, and I nod.

"Me too," I admit. "Do you want to watch a movie or something first?"

"Like porn?" She asks, her voice raising three octaves in shock.

"What? No, you perv. Like an actual movie."

"Oh," she says, sounding more like herself.

"We can relax and take a little more time together," I suggest, and she shakes her head.

"No," she says. "No, I think any more anticipation would kill me."

She's so cute. I love that she's becoming more open about this whole thing.

"We can't have that."

We stare at each other for a beat, and I can feel all the love and lust I've ever felt for her building up inside me. It's like a cork, and with each beat of my heart, more and more pressure starts to build up inside me until I know I'm going to explode.



We both lunge for each other at the same time, our hands scrambling to grab hold of each other as our mouths meet in a desperate, hungry kiss.

Her lips are warm and pliable underneath mine, and our lips move together perfectly. I nip her bottom lip, and she gasps, opening enough for me to slip my tongue past her lips to taste her.

She tastes like chocolate and something else that is all Iggy. We devour each other until we're both out of breath. She pulls back, and I see that her lips are swollen and red from mine. That only has my cock hardening in my pants.

"Bedroom," she pants, and I nod, taking her hand and dragging her down the hallway.

I pause, wondering if we should go to my bedroom or hers. When we moved in, I had given her the master bedroom, and I always dreamt of sharing it with her, so I head that way.

I lead us over to the bed, and we both stop as we turn to face each other. She's watching me, her fingers brushing against her lips as I stare down at her. Seeing her fingers so close to her red mouth has my cock leaking in my pants, and I know that if I'm not inside her soon, I'm going to burst.

"Are you sure about this?" I ask her.

I want her to be one hundred percent on board with what's about to happen, and luckily for me, she nods, her hands going to the button of my jeans.

She pops the button, and I bite back a moan as I reach for her. I pull her into my arms and seal her mouth with mine. She moans and opens for me, letting me slip my tongue inside. I do my best to commit her taste to memory.

I want to take my time with her, but as soon as I peel her shirt over her head, something in me snaps. We both race to get the other naked, and then once I see all of Iggy's sweet curves on display for the first time, the need to claim her bears down on me.

I push Iggy back, and we both fall down onto the mattress together, bouncing slightly as our bodies roll toward each

other. Her hands land on my shoulders to steady herself, and I tug her against me, moaning as her bare skin brushes against mine.

Her hot center is rubbing up and down my length and driving me wild. With each pass of her pussy along my dick, I grow harder until it feels like if I don't get inside her in the next second, I'll explode.

Iggy moans, throwing her head back and tipping her face up to the darkening ceiling as she grinds against me. Her body writhes, her tits jiggling as she tries to use me to get herself off. I can't help but stare in wonder at her. I'm pretty sure that all the blood in my body has now drained to my dick.

Her tits sway in front of my face, and I reach up, cupping them as Iggy arches her back, pushing them farther into my palms. I roll her onto her back, and she cries out as I lean down, taking a nipple between my lips and sucking hard.

"You're so sweet," I moan against her plump flesh.

My lips wrap around the stiff peak of her nipple, and I tongue the bud until Iggy is a whimpering, quivering mess. She sags forward, and I catch her, rolling her beneath me and taking her nipple back in my mouth.

"Jensen," Iggy begs, her tone pleading, and I know she needs more.

It takes effort, but I pull my mouth away from her breasts and kiss my way down her body. I've been thinking about going down on Iggy since we were teenagers. I've imagined what she tastes like, what might make her moan. Will she clamp her legs around my head? Or thread her fingers through my hair?

Well, I'm about to find out.

Iggy's legs are shaking, and her whole body seems to vibrate as I settle between her curvy thighs. Her pussy lips part, allowing me to see all of her. She's so wet and pink. She's tiny, and I wonder how I'm ever going to be able to fit inside her. My cock leaks at the thought of trying, and I do my best to stop from humping the bed beneath me.

My mouth waters at the sight of her wet flesh spread out before me, and I know I need to taste her. I want her taste on my lips when I take her for the first time.

I dip my head, bringing me eye level with her dripping core. I can't wait another second. I lick a path up her center, moaning as I lap up her sweet sugar. I don't want to miss a drop.

I bury my face in her sweet pussy, getting lost in her scent and taste. Iggy's thighs clamp down around my ears as I lick her, sucking her clit into my mouth and rolling my tongue over the bundle of nerves.

"Jensen!" Iggy cries out, her head thrashing on the pillow as she gets closer and closer to her first orgasm. "Don't stop! Oh, God! Please don't stop!" she begs me, and I double my efforts, driving her higher and higher.

*As if I could.*

I reach up, cupping her full breasts in my hands and rolling the peaks as I continue to lick her closer and closer to her release.

Her orgasm hits her suddenly. She screams, her whole body shaking as she comes against my lips and face.

I lick her through her peak, making sure to wring out every ounce of pleasure until she collapses back breathless on the bed.

Her eyes are dazed with lust and passion, and pride fills me at being the one to put that look on her face.

"Your turn," she says almost shyly as she reaches for my dick, but I stop her before she gets there.

"If you touch me right now, I'm going to embarrass myself."

Iggy looks confused for a second before recognition dawns in her eyes.

"Oh."

“Yeah,” I say as I slip between her spread thighs. My cock rubs along her skin, the inside of her thighs already drenched and glistening for me.

“Are you ready for me?” I ask, my voice coming out deep and husky.

“God, yes,” she says, hooking her heels around my hips and trying to pull me forward.

My cock lines up with her opening, and I meet her dark gaze as I slowly push into her. Her pussy is so slick and hot, and it clenches around the head of my cock as I sink another inch into her. She’s so tight that it’s almost painful, but that doesn’t stop me.

I don’t want to hurt her, but I know it’s a little inevitable for her first time. I’m just too big, and she’s so small. She’s nice and wet for me, and I thrust forward, squeezing my eyes closed tight as I try not to come instantly.

I do my best to distract her from the pain, staying perfectly still even though the pressure on my cock has me close to passing out.

When her grip on my cock finally eases a little, I start to move. It’s slow and tentative at first. I want to make sure that she’s used to me filling her before I take her harder.

Iggy sucks in a sharp intake of breath, and I rest my head against her chest, gritting my teeth as I try to stop from coming already. My lips find her nipple again and I suckle on one and then the other as Iggy adjusts to my size.

Sweat breaks out on my forehead, and I mutter a curse as I do my best to take things slow.

When her hips start to move with mine, begging for me to give it to her harder, faster, I snap.

“Oh god, Jensen!” Iggy cries out as I take up a hard, punishing rhythm.

I know that I should go slower and get her used to me stretching her like this, but my control snapped as soon as I sank inside her.

Iggy's moans grow louder until it's like a symphony just for my ears.

I can already feel fireworks starting at the base of my spine. My balls grow heavy with seed, and I know I'm close to coming already. I need to make this good for her, though.

I reach between us, my fingers finding her clit and rubbing over the sensitive nub in short, tight circles. Iggy cries out at the contact, her pussy walls clenching and pulsing around my thick cock.

"Jensen," Iggy cries out, and it's the only word on her tongue as she starts to come apart under me.

I bury myself deep inside her as I find my own release.

"Iggy, fuck," I grit out as my cock jerks and I come deep inside of her.

I kiss her softly, gently, as we both try to catch our breaths. I notice her wince when I pull out, and I head into the bathroom to grab her a warm washcloth.

"That was..." she says, dazed.

"Incredible," I supply, and she nods.

I clean up the small traces of blood from the inside of her thighs.

"Do you want me to grab you anything?" I ask, suddenly feeling worried that she could be in pain.

"No," she says sleepily, and I smile when I see that her eyes are already falling closed.

I slide into bed beside her, my arms wrap around her without a second thought, and I hold her tight against me as her breathing evens out.

Soon, I know that she's asleep, and I smile, burying my nose in her hair and breathing her in. She smells like me now, and I love it.

*Tomorrow I'll tell her that I love her and I want us to be more than friends, I promise myself.*

I close my eyes and fall asleep with a smile on my face.

## FIVE



Iggy

WAS it really just yesterday that I was waking up next to Jensen in a panic? So much has changed in just twenty-four hours.

I woke up before Jensen again this morning and smiled as I watched him sleep. It feels so natural to wake up next to him. My body is deliciously sore, and I stretch, trying to work out some of the tension in my muscles.

I snuggle down deeper under the covers as I replay everything that happened between me and Jensen last night. He was so gentle, so sweet with me. He made my first time perfect.

I think I fell even more in love with him last night. I didn't think that was possible but being with him in that way just showed me how amazing he is at everything. I know that Jensen has always loved me, but last night was the first time that I thought I saw that maybe he could be *in* love with me.

That leads me to this morning. The little love bubble that I was in pops when I wonder what is going to happen now.

Was last night enough for him? Was it enough for me? Will he want to stick to the rules that I came up with?

My phone buzzes on the table next to me, and I roll over as quietly as I can to answer it. It's Aspen letting me know she's headed to start getting set up for the event this afternoon.

“Crap!” I shout when I see the time.

Jensen shoots up in bed, his hair standing up a little in the back as he looks around with wide eyes.

“What?” He mumbles, still half asleep.

“It’s already after nine! We have to go!” I tell him as I scramble off the bed and into the bathroom.

I hear Jensen getting out of bed, and I turn the water on in the shower and grab my toothbrush. I brush my teeth while the water warms up, and I’m just stepping in when Jensen passes by the open bathroom door and heads toward his own room.

Part of me is disappointed that he didn’t even try to join me, but I know we don’t have time for any repeats of last night right now. We’re already running late as it is.

I hurry through my shower and then get dressed for the day. I grab an old t-shirt and a pair of yoga pants, tugging them on as I search for my shoes. I know I’ll be getting dirty as I help to prepare the event, so I’m wearing some older clothes. I have my outfit ready for tonight. It’s hanging on the back of my closet door. I grab it and then hurry toward the kitchen.

“Are you almost ready?” I call as I pass Jensen’s door.

“Be out in five!”

I head into the kitchen and make us some scrambled eggs. I’m just wrapping the eggs up in a tortilla with cheese when Jensen rushes into the kitchen.

“Ready?”

“Yep, let’s go,” he says as he takes his breakfast burrito from me and leads the way outside.

The drive to work is quiet, but I don’t really notice until we are parked and walking into the warehouse. I wonder if I should have tried making conversation with Jensen instead of forming to-do lists in my head for today.

Aspen is the first person I see when I walk in, and before I can say anything to Jensen, she’s dragging me away from him and over to where we’re setting up a photo booth in the corner.



“I’m surprised that I beat you into work this morning,” she comments as I help her start to organize the props for the photo booth.

“Yeah, Jensen and I overslept,” I admit.

“Any reason why that happened?” She asks in a knowing voice.

I can feel my face heating, and Aspen cheers.

“Freaking finally! You two are so perfect for each other,” she gushes, and I smile.

“It was just a one-time thing,” I whisper, and she sighs.

“Why are you two so bad at this?”

“What?” I ask as we empty the prop box onto the table.

“You two are meant to be together. Everyone can see that. You’re perfect for each other. Do you know how rare that is to find your true soulmate? And you two have known for years, but you just won’t do anything about it.”

I stare at Aspen, and she blinks back tears.

“Aspen, are you okay?”

“Yeah,” she says with a snuffle, and I feel like the worst friend ever. I’ve been so wrapped up in my own drama that I didn’t even notice that Aspen was going through something too.

“Aspen,” I start, but she shakes her head.

“I’m fine. Really.”

“When you want to talk,” I start, and she nods.

“I know. I’ll come and find you,” she promises.

I wrap my arm around her waist, and she does the same to me as we study the photo booth area.

“You need to talk to Jensen and tell him how you feel,” she says quietly, and I nod.

“I know, and I will. Right after the event.”

“We should get moving. The event starts in two hours, and there’s still a lot of work to be done.”

I nod and follow her over to the next station. As we hang the last of the decorations and set up the tables for people to eat at, I think of how to broach the subject and tell my best friend that I’ve always been in love with him and that I want more than just one night with him.

## SIX



Jensen

I HAD this morning all planned out. I was going to wake up next to her and tell her that I knew we were only meant to sleep together once but it wasn't enough for me. I was going to tell her that I love her, that I've always loved her, and that I need her as more than a friend.

Instead, I woke up to Iggy shouting that we were late. We ended up rushing out the door, and I didn't want to have such a big conversation while she was obviously preoccupied with thoughts about today.

I've barely seen her since we got to work. She's been running around, making sure that everything is perfect for tonight. I've been helping where I can, but I haven't had a chance to be alone with her yet.

I'm not sure that right now is the right time anyway. I don't want to distract her. I know how important today is for her, and I don't want to ruin that. Today needs to go off without a hitch. I'll just have to tell her how I feel once this is all over.

It's almost time for the doors to open. I saw Iggy leave a few minutes ago to get changed, so I do one more loop around the warehouse to double-check that everything is perfect.

Food stations all set up? Check.

Decorations out of the way but still making the place look warm and jolly? Check.

Photo booth, arts and crafts table, and game stations set up? Check.

Santa ready in his char?

*Crap. Where's Santa?*

I glance around the back of the warehouse, but there's no sign of the impersonator. I head up to the big chair for Santa and see the note there.

SOMETHING CAME UP. *Sorry to cancel last minute.*

I CURSE under my breath as I read the message. He just left? Without telling anyone? I groan as I see the Santa suit in a crumpled ball behind the chair and wonder what we're supposed to do now.

It's too late to call a different agency to see if they could send someone else over. The doors are supposed to be opening in five minutes, and I know that Iggy will be so upset when she finds out what happened.

I glance around the warehouse, wondering if one of our employees could put the suit on, but most of the people here are younger, and they're already busy with their assigned sections.

Iggy walks through the door in her sparkly red dress, and my heart lodges in my throat. She's so damn pretty. She looks like a Christmas angel. I've never seen anything so beautiful in my life.

She looks over at me, her blue eyes meeting mine, and she smiles. My heart kicks against my ribs, and I smile back.

I know then that I'm going to put the Santa suit on. Sitting for the next six hours while little kids plop down on my lap and tell me what they want for Christmas this year isn't how I

want to spend my afternoon, but if it makes Iggy happy, I would do it in a heartbeat.

She comes my way, and I grab the Santa suit from the ground as she joins me.

“Is everything alright?” She asks, and I nod.

“Yeah, Santa had to bail, but don’t worry. I’ve got it covered.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yep. Don’t worry about a thing.”

She doesn’t look convinced, but Aspen calls for her. Iggy holds up a finger, and I check my watch. The event is set to start now, and I know that the kids must be eager to get in.

“I need to go open the doors, but we should talk later,” she says, and I freeze.

*She wants to talk? Is that a good sign or a bad sign?*

I never imagined that Iggy would be the one to say that. I thought that I would have to track her down and pin her beneath me so that I could tell her that I loved her. Iggy would always rather avoid having difficult conversations, hence why she hid in the bathroom yesterday morning after we woke up in bed together. If she wants to talk, does that mean she wants to go over what happened last night? Or is it something else?

“Okay,” I say slowly, and she smiles before she heads over to help Aspen welcome everyone inside.

I watch her go for a moment before I grab the Santa suit and hurry to tug it on. The beard itches as I settle it over my face, and I sigh as I sit down in the chair and paste on a smile. I greet the first child and try to listen attentively as they tell me what they want for Christmas this year, but really all I can think about is what Iggy could want to talk to me about.

## SEVEN



Iggy

I THINK my ovaries might explode.

Seeing Jensen with the kids is cuteness overload. If I wasn't in love with him before, seeing him being so kind and patient with all the kids would have made me fall head over heels for him.

“Thank you so much for coming,” I tell the last of the guests as they head out.

I'm tired after running around all day, but it was so worth it. I love seeing so many families that are struggling looking so happy. The kids had a blast, and I know that it helped some of the less fortunate families in our town.

“I'll close up here,” Aspen says. “I know that you have more important things to do.”

She gives me a meaningful look, and I smile.

“Thanks for all your help today,” I say as I pull her in for a hug.

“Of course. I'm always happy to help.”

I wave goodbye and smile, thanking our other volunteers as I go in search of Jensen. He disappeared a few minutes ago, and I'm sure that he's itching to get out of that Santa suit.

I walk slowly through the warehouse and then over to our office buildings. All of the lights are off except for the one in

Jensen's office, and I know that he's inside.

I take a deep breath as I raise my hand and knock. I was so confident earlier about having this talk with him, but now that I'm standing in front of his door, about to actually go through with it, my nerves start to hit me.

This is a lot of pressure. If things go wrong during this talk, or if we start dating and things go south, I'm losing more than a boyfriend. I'm losing my best friend, my roommate, and my business partner. Hell, I'm losing my family.

My stomach starts to hurt, and I feel like I might throw up as Jensen answers the door. He smiles at me, and I want to turn and run, but I force myself to stay put and return his smile.

"Hey, I figured that you were itching to get out of that suit," I say as he lets me into his office.

He's got the jacket off, leaving him in the pants, suspenders, and his plain white t-shirt. The hat and beard are thrown on his desk, and I swallow as I turn to smile at him.

"You make a pretty sexy Santa," I comment, and he grins at me.

"Is that one of your kinks?" He asks, and I laugh.

"I didn't think it was, but maybe," I say.

I think it has more to do with seeing him half-dressed after he just saved my event and was so cute with all of the little kids.

"Did you want to have that talk now?" Jensen asks as he takes off the suspenders and the bright red pants.

"Sure," I say distractedly, my eyes zeroing in on the bulge in his black boxers.

"What did you want to talk about?" He asks, and I tear my eyes away from his lower body.

He's smirking at me, his green eyes twinkling, and I know I've been caught.

Maybe it's seeing him like that, so happy and relaxed even though he just caught his best friend ogling him, that has me

calming down. If he didn't have feelings for me, then my checking him out would have been weird. He would have gotten tense, but instead, he's acting like it's normal.

"I wanted to talk about last night. About our just once more rule," I start, and his smile fades.

"Yeah? What about it?"

"Well, I was thinking that maybe we were rash in setting that rule."

"Is that so?"

"Yeah, I thought that maybe it should happen more than once. What do you think?" I ask, and my breath stalls in my lungs as I wait to see what he'll say to that.

"I think that you're right."

"Good."

I smile, but I know that Aspen won't be thrilled to know I didn't tell him that I loved him. Maybe agreeing to sleep together is enough of a step forward, though.

"I wanted to talk to you too," he says, and I glance over at him.

"About what?"

"It's something that I need to tell you. Something that I should have told you a long time ago, actually," he says, and he looks so nervous that it has me feeling anxious and panicky.

"Is everything alright?"

"Yeah, it's just..."

"Jensen?"

"I love you, Iggy. I've loved you for as long as I can remember and as so much more than just a friend. I know that this might be a lot for you, but I've wanted it for so long."

I stare at him, wondering if maybe I'm hallucinating.

"What?" I whisper, and he gulps.



“I’ve wanted to tell you for years, but I was afraid. I couldn’t ruin our friendship. I couldn’t lose you, but now that I’ve had you, well, I don’t think I can go back to the way things were between us.”

“I…”

“I know that you might need time to adjust. I just couldn’t go on without telling you. I couldn’t hold back the words anymore.”

He looks so worried, and I just want to ease his concern.

“You wouldn’t have lost me,” I say, and he blinks, his shoulders relaxing slightly. “I’ve been in love with you for as long as I can remember too. I just didn’t know how to tell you.”

“Really?” He asks, his green eyes wide and filled with wonder.

“Really.”

He takes a step toward me, and my heart starts to race as his familiar cedar scent washes over me.

“What does that mean for us, then?” I ask, and he smiles softly down at me.

“It means that you’re mine. It means that we’re together. I want to take you out on dates. I want to hold your hand and kiss you whenever I like,” he says, and I grin.

“What are you waiting for then?”

That’s all it takes, and then his lips land on mine.

Jensen’s hands cradle my face as he kisses me, his tongue slipping into my mouth to tangle with mine as he backs me up against the wall next to the door.

I cling to him, my hands gripping his forearms as he presses the hard lines of his body up against mine. I’m getting lost in his touch and taste when he breaks away. We’re both panting, and I frown. I don’t want to stop. I never want to stop kissing him.

“I love you, Iggy,” he says, and it’s like he needs to hear me say it to prove that he’s not dreaming this.

“I love you too, Jensen.”

Just like that, his mouth is back on mine. He kisses my lips and pulls back. My mouth tries to chase his, but he moves faster, evading my lips as he starts to trail a line of kisses down my neck. I moan, arching against him as he pushes the strap of my red dress out of the way.

His hands move to find the zipper of my dress, and I arch against him to give him more room. He tugs it down roughly, and I whimper in need as we both work to slide the silky fabric off of me.

We both react as soon as we’re standing before each other in our underwear. I reach for him as he unhooks my bra. My whole body tingles with sensations as he wraps his hands around my tits and pushes them up for his mouth.

His lips wrap around one of my nipples, and my mind blanks. I’m not thinking anymore, just feeling.

His teeth scrape against the sensitive bud of my nipple, and I gasp, the sound so loud in the quiet office building. He does it again, and I thread my fingers through his hair and hold him to me.

“Jensen,” I moan, and he switches to my other breast, giving it the same attention as the last. “I need more.”

Jensen kisses me once right between my breasts before he moves lower. He drops to his knees before me, and the sight has my whole body burning up with need.

He reaches for my panties, dragging the soaked material down my legs. Cool air caresses my damp skin, and I shiver as I lean back against the wall.

“Eyes on me, Iggy,” he says, and I can feel his warm breath over my drenched folds.

I stare down my body at him and what I see almost takes my breath away. He’s staring up at me like I’m the most

precious thing he's ever seen. His eyes have darkened with want, and I love seeing him look at me like that.

He's a breath away from my core, and I know he can see that I'm dripping wet for him. His eyes are filled with so much heat that it has my pulse skittering under my skin. Our eyes stay locked on each other as he leans forward and runs his tongue up my slit in one slow, sure movement.

He uses two fingers to spread my lips, and I wiggle against his mouth, wanting him deeper. His tongue feels like it's everywhere, but when he wraps his lips around my clit and sucks, I give up trying to pay attention to his movements.

My legs almost give out, but Jensen braces a forearm across my hips, holding me in place as he continues to devour me. He works one long, thick finger into my snug channel, and I cry out at the sensations.

He works his finger in and out of me, curling it slightly and hitting a spot that has me feeling like I'm flying. I'm so close to coming now that I can taste it.

"That's it, Iggy. Come all over my face," he growls, and I gasp as my release rushes over me like a wave.

Jensen buries his face between my legs and uses his tongue to wring out my orgasm. I'm shaking, panting, and breathless as I come down from my high and meet Jensen's green eyes.

He leans back on his knees, and I sink down to the soft carpet. My whole body is flushed as I run a finger down his chest to the tent of his boxers.

"Your turn," I purr, and his eyes flare.

"Iggy," he starts, but I push on his shoulders until he gets the message and leans back against the floor.

His cock is straining against the material of his boxers, and I lean down, kissing him through the fabric.

"Fuck," he hisses, and I smirk.

I was nervous that I wouldn't be good at this or that Jensen wouldn't like it, but I have a feeling that I could lay here and blow on him, and he would love it.

I reach into his boxers, pulling his stiff length out and giving him a few pumps with my hand. His cock is huge, so big that my fingers can barely wrap around ,and it seems crazy that this thing has fit inside me.

“Iggy, you don’t have to,” Jensen pants, but before he can finish, I lean forward and wrap my lips around him.

I know that Jensen was going to tell me that I don’t have to do this, but the truth is that I want to. I want to make him feel as good as he makes me feel. I want to drive him wild.

I wrap my hand around the base of him and try to fit as much of his cock into my mouth as I can. I only manage a few inches, but he doesn’t seem to mind.

I work my hand and mouth together in unison, and Jensen moans, his back hitting the floor with a thud as his half-lidded eyes stare at me in wonder.

“Fuck, that’s so hot,” he groans, and I double my efforts.

I can feel his length swelling against my tongue, and I suck harder. He bites off a curse, and I look up at him from under my eyelashes.

“I want to come in that pussy,” he says, and I nod.

That’s all it takes, and he’s pulling me up and laying me flat underneath him.

I gasp at how fast he moved, but he doesn’t seem to notice. He’s already lining the head of his dick up with my opening, and he looks up, his eyes meeting mine as he starts to sink into me.

“Fuck,” we both groan at the same time as he bottoms out inside of me.

“You’re so goddamn tight,” he grunts, and I nod.

His hand grips the back of my knee, and he opens me up wider as he pulls back and slams into me again.

He picks up a punishing rhythm, and I can only moan and cling to him as he fucks me. It’s like he’s trying to brand my

pussy. It's like he wants to consume me, and the thought of that has my release growing inside of me.

"Don't stop!" I call out as I start to reach my peak, which only seems to spur him on.

"Never," he growls, and I dig my nails into his biceps as I start to come.

"Jensen!" I scream, and he buries himself as deep as he can inside me as he finds his own release.

I blink, coming back down to Earth a second later, and I smile as I realize that Jensen is peppering kisses all over my face and telling me how amazing I am and how much he loves me.

"I love you too," I say as I wrap my arms around his neck and kiss him back.

"It feels so surreal to hear you say that," he admits, and I smile.

"I know."

"My parents are going to be so happy."

"Let's not talk about your parents while you're inside me," I suggest, and he laughs.

"Deal."

"Take me home?" I ask, and he grins.

"As you wish."

We tug our clothes on, and he takes my hand, leading me out to the car. As I climb into the passenger seat, I smile to myself.

It seems crazy that I was so scared to tell Jensen how I felt about him. I have a feeling that it's going to be the best thing that I've ever done.

As he takes my hand and we hit the road, I know we're going to be just fine.

## EIGHT



Jensen

FIVE YEARS LATER...

“ARE YOU ALL PACKED? We need to leave for your parents in a few minutes,” Iggy says as she finishes packing her toiletry bag.

“We’re good to go,” I say as I cradle our sleeping son in my arms.

Iggy turns and smiles at us. She’s about six months pregnant with our second child and is just starting to show. I reach out, rubbing her swollen stomach, and she grins.

“You missed her kicking earlier,” she comments, and I laugh.

“Yeah? Is our daughter going to be a soccer star?” I ask, and she shakes her head.

“No, they were pretty light. Nothing like this guy here.”

When Iggy was pregnant with our son, Dean, he would kick all the time. We used to joke that he was going to be an athlete and was just practicing. So far, we might have actually been right. He loves playing peewee sports.

“How are you feeling?” I ask my wife, and she yawns.

“Tired but happy. I’m excited to see your parents and get some family time in.”

I nod. We still run Let’s Play First, and we just had the annual charity holiday event yesterday. It went perfectly, and I know that Dean and Iggy both had a blast running around, but it tired both of them out.

“You can nap in the car. I’ll drive,” I tell her as I grab the first bag.

Iggy and I got married right after Valentine’s Day. I didn’t want to spend another moment without her wearing my ring; luckily, she felt the same way.

We had our wedding here in Redwood and invited all our family and friends. After, I took her on our honeymoon to Paris. Iggy had always wanted to go, and we ate and slept our way through half of France before we had to come home.

Right after we got back, we learned that Iggy was pregnant, and we welcomed Dean just after the New Year.

My parents were thrilled that we finally admitted our feelings to each other. They had been telling both of us to tell the other that we loved each other for years. My mom claims that she always knew that I loved her, so she wasn’t surprised when we announced that we were together, and neither of my parents were shocked when we decided to get married like a month later.

They were over the moon when we told them we were expecting. They ended up buying a house here in Redwood, not far from us, and they spend half of the year here and the other half up in Portland. They’ve been talking more and more about making the move to Redwood permanent, and now that we’re expecting our second kid, I have a feeling that this may be our last Christmas up in Oregon.

I start to load the car, getting Dean situated in his car seat before I run back inside for the rest of the bags. Iggy is busy getting the snacks and drinks in everyone’s cupholders, and I kiss her on the cheek as I help her buckle up.

“All set?” I ask, and she nods, her eyes drooping already.

We're almost into the third trimester, and she's been getting sleepy a lot more lately. I've been trying to get her to cut back on her hours at work, and now that the holiday party is over, maybe she actually will.

Aspen has stepped up to take over more duties, and we started a daycare center on the floor below our offices. I know we both love being able to pop down to see Dean whenever we want. It's crazy to think that he'll be starting school in just a few months. I'm going to miss not having him one floor down.

I lock the front door and jog back to the car, slipping behind the wheel. When I turn to my wife, I can't help but smile. She's already fast asleep, and she looks gorgeous. The sun is hitting her hair, making the strawberry blonde locks glow in the sun.

I glance in the rearview mirror and grin when I see Dean is fast asleep, too, his mouth open slightly as he dreams.

It's crazy to think that fear could have held me back from having this life. I don't know what caused us to sleep together that first night. Maybe it was the spiked eggnog, or maybe it was just the right time. Either way, it was the Christmas miracle that I needed to get over my fear and go after the woman that I love.

It's what led me to my happily ever after.

I smile to myself as I back out of the drive and head off into the sunset.

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