



LAST  
**FIRST**  
CHRISTMAS

E.M. DENNING

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BY EM DENNING

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## CHAPTER 1

### EZRA

“Did you want to see a movie tonight?” Ezra slid his arm around Logan and pulled him closer. The winter chill bit at his cheeks, and Logan shivered next to him as they left the restaurant. Usually they stuck to their small town, but Ezra wanted to take Logan out on a nice date, something better than the diner or the hardware store.

Christmas was creeping closer, and Ezra wanted to make this year extra special for Logan. They’d come a long way since they first fell into a relationship, and with most of the big roadblocks out of the way, Ezra felt ready to take the next step.

“There’s two movies in the theater. One is a horror and Clark is in the other.” Logan snuggled closer to Ezra. Clark had dumped Logan in the worst possible way, then had crawled back weeks later looking to reunite, but by then Logan already belonged to Ezra.

“We could sit in the theater and heckle him.”

Logan laughed. “It’s not heckling if he’s not there to hear it. Then it’s just being a dickhead.” Logan paused and looked up at Ezra. “Which one of us is the older, more mature one? I thought it was you, but now I’m not so sure.”

“You make me young again.”

“You say that as if you’re old.”

“Okay, so no movies. What did you want to do?”

Logan's hand skated across Ezra's ass, and he gave it a squeeze. "I told you I didn't need a fancy dinner date. I'd have been happy with staying in."

"Well, maybe I wanted to show you off a bit. You are pretty gorgeous."

"Flattery will get you nowhere because it's too cold to fuck in your truck."

"You'd fuck me in my truck?" Ezra pulled Logan closer when he spoke. The streets were pretty deserted, but he didn't like the idea of anyone overhearing. What they did was only for the two of them. No one else. Ezra didn't share well, and he enjoyed keeping Logan and all they did together to himself.

Call him old or old-fashioned, call him greedy, but Logan was his. Not in a creepy stalker ownership kind of way. But Ezra cherished their intimacy, and he wasn't willing to share even a scrap of that with anyone.

Logan stopped and turned to face him. He slid his arms around Ezra's waist and brushed a kiss against Ezra's lips. "Don't you know, Ezra? I'd fuck you anywhere."

"Is that a hint?" The wind picked up and Ezra pulled Logan closer, doing his best to shield him from the biting cold.

"Absolutely." Logan looked up at Ezra with pleading eyes. "Take me home and warm me up."

Now that was an idea Ezra could get behind. But first, he smirked at Logan. "Your place or mine?"

Logan rolled his eyes. “You know I haven’t seen the inside of my apartment in a week.”

When their relationship had first started, it had been important for Logan to have his own space. He’d wanted to prove to himself that he could stand on his own two feet and Ezra had supported that decision. He still did. And if Logan never changed his mind, Ezra would learn to live with it.

The wind blew again, and Logan shivered. Ezra knew he should hurry him back to the truck and blast the heat, but the question had lived on the tip of his tongue for the past few months. Logan spent less and less time at his apartment and it seemed only logical that Logan move in with him for real.

But more than logic was the fact that Ezra hated being away from Logan. He wanted Logan’s home to be with him all the time. Not most of the time, or until he remembered he had an apartment and he should spend time there.

“Move in with me.” Ezra blurted.

Logan’s nostrils flared, and he didn’t look half as surprised as Ezra thought he would. Logan scowled at him. It wasn’t a real scowl which made Ezra smile because he knew the answer now before Logan spoke it.

“What took you so long to ask me that?”

“You wanted to be independent, and I respected that decision.” Ezra kissed his boyfriend quickly, then steered them toward his truck.

“I’d have moved in months ago if you’d have asked me,” Logan admitted.

“Why didn’t you say something?”

Logan shrugged. “You never asked. I mean, I was working up to it, but I guess I didn’t want you to think that I couldn’t hack it on my own anymore, or that I felt like I’d made a mistake. Because I enjoyed the novelty of having a place of my own in the beginning. I liked knowing that people saw me as a fully functioning adult. A job, an apartment, a boyfriend.”

“Fuck what other people think, Lo.”

Logan laughed. “Why is it so hot when you do that?”

“Do what?”

“Get all growly and protective.”

“I do not growl,” Ezra paused, noticing the tone of his voice. “Okay, so I growl a little. But only for you.” They’d reached the truck, and Ezra unlocked the door and pulled it open for Logan.

The drive back to their small town took a bit longer than normal because of the storm blowing in, but Ezra didn’t mind. Logan held most of the conversation, which wasn’t unusual for them. Logan often had a lot to say, and Ezra, well, he liked to listen.

“I’d like to be all moved in before Christmas.” Logan said.

Ezra glanced at him and took in his happy, love-struck expression before turning his attention back to the road. “Well, you should give the landlord thirty days’ notice, but we can get your stuff moved over in a day.”

“What about my furniture?”



“What about your furniture? I know you picked some of those pieces up yourself from thrift stores and online. You can keep whatever you want. We’ll make room.”

“I don’t want you to have to get rid of stuff for my junk.”

“It’s called compromise, Lo.”

“I hate it when you call me that.”

“You don’t.” Ezra grinned at him. The lights of their little town came into view. The Christmas season was just kicking into gear, and they had recently decorated the streets with Christmas lights.

Logan reached over and put his hand on Ezra’s thigh. It slid up far enough that Ezra shifted in his seat.

“Stop that.”

“Stop what?” Logan’s innocent act didn’t fool Ezra in the slightest.

Ezra cut him a look, and Logan’s mischievous grin widened.

“Lo,” Ezra let his voice deepen the way Logan liked it best, apparently. He’d meant it as a warning, but Logan took it as a challenge and his hand slid over the bulge between Ezra’s legs.

“Lo,” he cautioned. “I’m driving.”

Logan chuckled sweetly, and his hand retreated. Ezra didn’t know whether to miss the contact or be grateful for its absence. His touch didn’t vanish entirely. He still rubbed his

hand gently up and down the inside of Ezra's leg, coming close to his dick, but retreating each time.

By the time Ezra pulled into the driveway, his dick was so hard it ached. He popped his seatbelt free and turned his attention to Logan. The shit-eating grin hadn't left his face and Ezra wondered if it was because he'd finally bit the bullet and asked him to move in for real, or if he was that proud of the torment he'd caused.

Logan hopped out of the truck and bound up the steps. He fumbled with his keys but still got the door unlocked and inside before Ezra. Logan pulled off his boots and hung his coat on his coat hook. Logan had long ago started moving in by claiming things. His coat hook. His coffee mug. His spot, which was either next to, or sometimes on top of Ezra.

"Want to watch a movie?" Logan smirked as Ezra took his coat off. He made a show of it, unzipping it slowly, then shrugging out of it and hanging it on top of Logan's coat. It usually hung next to Logans, but he felt like making a statement.

"To be honest, Lo. Not really." Ezra took a step toward him.

Logan's Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed. "Have you fed the fish?"

Ezra nodded.

Logan tried to keep a straight face, but his trademark smirk appeared. "Want to play cards?"

"If we played poker, you'd lose." Ezra closed the distance between them with a single step and trapped Logan in

his arms. “You have the worst poker face.”

“Well, see. If I played poker, I’d play strip poker, and there are no losers in strip poker.” Logan wound his arms around Ezra’s neck at the same time that Ezra swept him off his feet. He carried him through to the bedroom and tossed him onto the bed. By the time he’d steadied himself, Ezra had peeled his shirt off and flicked the button of his pants open.

Logan laid there and gawked at him. “Fuck yes,” he whooped and stripped out of his own shirt.

Ezra climbed up the bed and blanketed Logan’s body with his. Logan captured his mouth and kissed him with all the passion of a horny twenty-something. Fuck, kissing Logan was the most amazing thing Ezra had ever experienced. Logan was eager, always, and generous with his affection. Ezra hadn’t thought of himself as particularly touch starved until he met Logan.

Logan was always reaching for him. Hugging him, kissing him. Simply invading his space to lean against him and steal his body heat. And Ezra had become addicted to it. It was to the point now that Ezra hated the nights Logan would decide he should sleep at his apartment because Ezra didn’t sleep for shit when Logan wasn’t there. The bed was too empty, the room too quiet. Laying next to Logan, holding him, talking to him until they had to force themselves to shut up and go to sleep. Those were all the things Ezra hoarded like gold.

Ezra ground his cock against Logan’s. The friction made Logan buck and cry out into Ezra’s mouth so naturally, Ezra did it again. Their kiss slowed and deepened, and

Logan's fingers danced over Ezra's scalp. Underneath Ezra, he had limited mobility, but he managed to swivel his hips and grind their cocks together again.

Logan did his best to entice Ezra to go further, to give him more. More tongue. More friction. More of anything, but Ezra refused to comply.

"Ezra, please." Logan whined, kissing his way down Ezra's neck.

"What do you want, Lo?" Ezra asked. "Tell me."

Logan huffed and relaxed underneath Ezra in the most dramatic way possible. "You know what I want."

"And what's that?"

"What I always want. I want you to fuck me." Logan stared Ezra in the face. "You're a bully."

"I'm a bully?" Ezra asked, smoothing his hands down Logan's sides as he shimmied down the bed. He kissed Logan's nipple, flicking his tongue over it just to hear the sounds he made. "You're the one who was rubbing my dick when I was driving."

Logan's laugh turned to a moan when Ezra dragged his hand over Logan's trapped erection. "Ezra, please, I'm dying."

Ezra stuffed his hand into Logan's pants and wrapped his hand around Logan's shaft. It was impossibly hard and hot, and Ezra liked the way the rest of Logan's body went pliant when he touched him.

“Is this what you want?” He asked, stroking slowly, teasing the head of Logan’s cock with the swipe of his thumb over the top, grazing the slit.

Logan whimpered. “Mean.”

“You love it.” Ezra didn’t give him a chance to make a rebuttal. He crushed his lips down against Logan’s and kissed him hard and deep the way he liked it best.



## CHAPTER 2

### LOGAN

For Logan, there wasn't anything better than being under the steady, comforting weight of his boyfriend. He loved wearing Ezra like a blanket. A blanket that did wicked things to him. Logan moaned and arched his back, thrusting his cock through the tight channel of Ezra's hand.

Logan's heart was feather light because Ezra had asked him to move in. Sure, he basically already lived there, but that wasn't the point. The point was that Ezra asked him to because he wanted him there.

Ezra's tongue delved into Logan's mouth, sweeping over his and taking all rational thought away. Whimpering shamelessly, Logan writhed underneath Ezra. The kiss broke and Ezra kissed his way down Logan's neck.

"Something you want?" He asked as he continued to tease Logan's cock.

"You," Logan panted. "Just you."

"Just me?" Ezra seemed pleased at this answer. He kissed Logan's chest, and taking a nipple into his mouth, he tortured it with his tongue, lapping and sucking before moving to the next.

Ezra took Logan's balls into his hand and cupped them gently before teasing and toying with them just the way Logan liked. Ezra worked his way lower, kissing a trail around Logan's belly button.

“Just you, Ezra.” Logan’s heart beat so hard he felt it in every cell of his body. “You’re everything.”

“Lo,” Ezra said before taking Logan’s cock down his throat.

Ezra took Logan apart with practiced ease. He knew exactly where to touch, to kiss, how hard to suck. He flicked his tongue against the underside of Logan’s cockhead. A ragged moan tore off of Logan and a sudden desperation swept over him.

“Ez, please. Don’t tease me. Not tonight.” He reached for Ezra, smiling when Ezra returned to him to attack his mouth with a ferocity that set Logan on fire.

Ezra rolled away momentarily to grab the lube. “Hold your legs for me.”

Logan brought his knees up to his chest, exposing himself, opening himself for Ezra. Anticipation shook him until that first delicious contact. Ezra’s blunt fingers circled Logan’s hole until he whimpered, wiggling his ass, trying to get the fingers to go where he wanted.

“Behave, Lo.”

“Don’t want to behave. I want to be fucked.”

Ezra pinned him in place with a gaze, then slowly inserted his fingers. Logan was always open and ready for Ezra, and even on days he wasn’t into it, they still found a million different ways to slake Logan’s nearly constant lust.

Ezra’s mouth smothered Logan’s and his fingers retreated, leaving Logan achingly empty. Those five seconds felt like an eternity, but then Ezra’s cock was pressing into



him, slowly. Because Ezra was always careful with him. Logan exhaled and hummed a needy noise against Ezra's mouth.

Ezra buried himself deep in a long glorious slide that stretched Logan so fucking perfectly that it stole his breath. His chest tightened, and the world stopped. Suspended. Froze. Then Ezra moved and Logan gasped in a breath. He wrapped his arms and legs around Ezra, knowing that he could cling as tight as he needed to. His heels dug into Ezra's ass, urging him to go faster. Deeper. Harder.

They didn't stop kissing. Logan was so lightheaded he thought he might possibly die. It wasn't always like this between them. Sometimes it was slower, less urgent. Sometimes Logan remembered to breathe. But tonight, it was just what Logan needed. Joy burst out of him in every breath and every noise Ezra pounded out of him.

Logan broke away from Ezra's mouth and took a desperate breath. "Ez, please. Please, Ez. Touch me. I need... I need to fucking... I'm so close, Ez."

Without breaking pace, Ezra reached between them and grabbed Logan's cock and that ended it. Fireworks sang. Violins exploded... and so did Logan. His entire body shuddered and rippled as Ezra wrang his orgasm out of him. Even when Logan finished coming, Ezra still jerked him. His dick was so sensitive it almost hurt, but he didn't care. He rode the aftershocks and took pleasure in staring at Ezra, in watching the way his body moved, the way he looked at Logan like he was the answer to everything.

Ezra's rhythm faltered, and he fucked himself harder and deeper as he came. Logan loved watching him come. It was almost an ego boost knowing that he could bring such earth-shaking pleasure to someone as steady as Ezra.

Ezra collapsed on top of Logan.

"Oof," Logan said, his body once again relaxing, practically melting into the mattress.

Ezra breathed deep, his face buried in the crook of Logan's neck. Logan raked his fingertips over Ezra's scalp, almost like he was petting him. The thought made him smile.

"I could stay like this forever," Logan said, though reality was mean and wouldn't allow such a thing.

"You know you can't."

"Bubble burster."

Ezra's lips grazed the spot below Logan's ear. "Sorry."

"If you're really, truly sorry, you'll dish us up a big bowl of ice cream."

Ezra laughed and pushed himself up off of Logan. Careful as ever, he pulled out of Logan's ass and stole another kiss. "Did you want to eat it here, or in the bath?"

"With bubbles?"

"Is it a bath without one?"

Logan rolled off the bed, his eyes scanned for any mess he'd left behind, but thankfully, luckily, there was none. Ezra washed up in the sink while Logan got the water started. By the time Logan had cleaned himself up and climbed into the

tub, Ezra had returned with a bowl of chocolate ice cream and a spoon.

“Here, hold this for me.” He handed the bowl to Logan while he slid in behind him.

Logan leaned back against Ezra’s chest. The tub was small, and the fit tight, but Logan didn’t care. It was fucking perfect. Ezra took the bowl back from him, and using the only spoon, he fed Logan the first bite of ice cream before taking one for himself.

“This will be our first Christmas together.” Logan took another bite of ice cream as Ezra offered it.

“We’ll have to make it extra special, then.”

“Yeah? Any ideas?”

“Well, I don’t normally bother decorating, but I think this year I’d like a real tree. Did you have any traditions growing up? What did you do as a kid?”

Logan shrugged. He tapped Ezra’s hand and got rewarded with another bite of ice cream. He thought about it as he let the ice cream melt on his tongue, coating his mouth in chocolate.

“The usual things, I guess. Presents. Sitting on Santa’s lap. We had real trees, but we got them from the grocery store parking lot.”

“Then we’ll make a day of it. After we get you moved in, we’ll fill up the truck and pack a lunch and we’ll go tree hunting the old-fashioned way. We can make our own traditions.”

“Do you have any traditions?”

Ezra stuffed another bite of ice cream into Logan’s mouth. “Not really. I mean, usually your dad invites me over. Sometimes we eat at the diner. They do a big Christmas day spread for anyone who wants to stop in.”

Part of Logan felt greedy and wanted to keep Ezra all to himself. Though the people in town had rallied around him when Clark came sniffing around, he still sometimes felt self-conscious. People were nice to him now, but he had a hard time believing that he was really accepted.

“We could do that, if it’s something you liked. I mean, we could do our own private Christmas Eve thing here, and then spend part of Christmas day with Dad and we could go to the diner.”

Christmas as a kid had been okay. Of course, he’d been excited about it. What kid didn’t like presents? But then he’d moved in with his dad. His dad tried hard, but Logan probably hadn’t made things easy on him. Then he’d left home and the holidays he spent away from home were sad, lonely, and not worth remembering.

“What’s that face for?” Ezra kissed the shell of Logan’s ear.

“You can’t see my face. You’re behind me.”

“I can tell you’re thinking about something you don’t like thinking about.”

“It’s nothing. Just remembering some not great holidays. But they don’t matter anymore. Can’t change ‘em. So there’s no point in dwelling on them. I want to make all

new memories with you. We can bake stuff and decorate. We'll get a real tree and we can get presents for all our friends." Not that Logan had an abundance of friends. There was Huxley, who'd recovered from the injuries he sustained in the fire, and the people who worked at the diner with Logan. His social circle was small now, just as it had always been, but the people in it were important to him.

"We'll get you packed and moved tomorrow. Then we'll make a list of all the things we want to do this year to celebrate together. Sound good?"

Logan sighed happily. "It sounds amazing."

Ezra finished feeding Logan the ice cream, and he set the bowl aside.

"Is there anything you want to do?" Logan asked Ezra.

"Mmm. I was thinking maybe I could be Santa, and you could be my naughty little elf." Ezra's hand trailed down Logan's chest.

"Well. I never had a Santa kink before, so that's new." Logan melted into Ezra's embrace. "Can we make popcorn garland? I always wanted to do that. I don't know why. It looks tedious as fuck, but kind of zen, too."

"We can marathon corny Christmas movies and make popcorn garland. We can do whatever you want, Lo."

"You spoil me," Logan sighed. He shifted a little so he could kiss Ezra, because he was tired of not kissing him. Logan was low-key obsessed with Ezra. He supposed that's because he loved him and couldn't imagine a life without him.

And it was at that moment, when he thought that thought, and his lips touched Ezra's, that a thought popped into his head. He wanted to marry Ezra, and what's more, he wanted to be the one to ask. Logan deepened the kiss as a rush of giddy happiness flooded his body.

Ezra smiled through the kiss and pulled away.  
“Again?”

Logan turned a little more and wrapped his arms around Ezra's neck. “Again and always.” Christmas. He'd propose over the holidays. They were going to build the perfect life together, and it had to start with the perfect proposal.

“Insatiable.” Ezra shook his head, but indulged Logan in another kiss.



## CHAPTER 3

### EZRA

Ezra pulled into John's driveway. It looked like he'd just put the snowblower away because the driveway was clear, though not for long with the way the snow was coming down.

He thumped on the door and wiped his boots on the mat before stepping inside.

"Hey, Ezra. Are you staying for a coffee?"

"Sure." Ezra pulled his boots off and set them on the mat by the door. He met John in the kitchen. John poured him a cup of coffee and set it on the counter in front of him. They seldom sat at the table, Ezra realized, opting instead to stand around while they chatted.

"How'd the move go?" John asked.

"Uneventful. We did bicker about whose coffee table we were going to use. He seemed hell bent on only bringing the necessities."

"What did you do with the rest of his furniture? We could've stored it here."

"We talked about that. He didn't want to feel like this wasn't permanent. We loaded the furniture we decided not to keep in the back of the truck and took it down to the share shed."

"I actually wondered if you knew if Logan had any pictures of him and his mom. I thought it might be nice to put something in a frame for him."



Joh furrowed his brow. “Well, shit. I don’t know. Uh, his stuff is upstairs, and I know it’s from when he was a teenager, but I’d feel weird letting you go through his shit. But if you give me a couple days, I might have something kicking around. I’ll have a look and get back to you.”

“Thanks, man. Hey, ah. I wanted to talk to you about something.”

John eyed him with suspicion, and rightfully so. Ezra was being weird. He knew it by the way he couldn’t quite look John in the eyes. John waited, eyeing Ezra like he already knew what he was going to say, but wanted Ezra to be the one to say it.

“I want to marry Logan.”

John made a choking sound and managed to not spray his coffee all over Ezra.

“Sorry? What?” John thumped his chest and set his coffee aside.

“I thought... you had that look like you already knew what I was going to say.”

“I thought you were going to ask me over for Christmas or some shit. Jesus fuck, Ezra. Warn a guy. And for the record, I don’t care if you marry Logan, just don’t break his heart.” John narrowed his gaze. “And don’t call me daddy.”

“What about father?”

“Get out.” John pointed at the door. “Get out of my house right now.”

“I haven’t asked him yet, so don’t go ruining my surprise.”

John rolled his eyes. “As if I’d do that. Even by accident. It’s not like it’s something that would come up in conversation.”

“For the record, though, you are invited for Christmas. We’re going to spend Christmas Eve by ourselves, but on Christmas Day we want to spend time with everyone.”

“Let me know when and where and what to bring.”

“Just bring yourself. Logan is pretty set on doing everything himself this year. We’re going to go tree hunting on his next days off.”

“They sell trees down at the store.”

“We’re loading up the chainsaw and lunch and making a day of it.”

John grabbed his coffee. Ezra thought he wanted to have something to at least attempt to hide his smirk behind. “I didn’t know you were such a romantic, Ezra.”

“Well, yeah. I guess I am.” Ezra smiled at John, relishing the fact that it seemed to knock him off center. The two of them went way back and Ezra was used to John busting his balls about one thing or another. “You could stand a little romance in your life, you know. Pull your social skills out of the attic, dust off your dancing shoes and get out of the house. Maybe get a date. Maybe even get laid.”

“I’m fine, Ezra. Worry about yourself.”

“Ooh, did I strike a nerve?”

“I don’t need to go dancing or dating or any of that other shit. I’m fine.”

“Mmhm. If you say so.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“I wouldn’t be shocked if you got a visit from the three ghosts. The ghost of romance past, romance present, and romance future.”

John scoffed and rolled his eyes. “You annoy me.”

“You like it.” Ezra drained his coffee and put the cup in the sink. “I’ll get out of your hair. I want to head out of town to get a ring. Can’t buy one here or it will be all over town by noon that I’m popping the question.”

That got a laugh out of John. “Truer words were never spoken. Drive safe, it’s supposed to snow on and off all morning.”

“It’s winter. When is it not supposed to snow?”

“Don’t roll your eyes at me, young man.” John grinned.

“That’s horrible.” Ezra winced. “Please never do that again.”

“That was payback for calling me father.”

Ezra clapped John on the shoulder and motioned to the door. “I’m going to go. Thanks for the coffee.”

Ezra had pulled his boots on and was just about to leave when John appeared.

“Did you seriously come all the way over to ask permission to marry my kid?”

“Well... yeah. I did. Not because I really needed it, mind you. But you're his dad and the two of you have put a lot of work into your relationship recently. I didn't want to jeopardize that or make shit weird between you and me.”

“And if I wasn't okay with it?”

Ezra zipped his coat. “Well, I'd have given you time to get okay with it, but I wouldn't have put it off forever.”

John smirked at that, as if he approved. He gave Ezra a subtle nod and repeated his advice to drive safe.

The other night when Ezra took Logan out to dinner, he'd passed a jewelry store. It was easy enough to find again, though not so easy to find parking. Ezra ended up parking three blocks over. He stuffed his hands into his jacket pocket and made his way down the sidewalk. Dodging people reminded Ezra of how much he hated the city.

He couldn't imagine what it had been like for Logan to live in some place as sprawling as Los Angeles. Ezra would've died in a place like that. Too many people and cars. Too much sound and light. Small town life suited Ezra just fine. Until he wanted to do something like buy a ring. Then it sucked because his choices were to leave town or to have everyone know his business.

Ezra had never been in a jewelry store before. It was brighter than he'd expected. But he supposed that made sense. If he was trying to sell shiny rocks, he'd want lots of light for them to shine under.

There was a time when Ezra was young when he thought he'd marry a woman. Then he learned about his attraction to men and questioned if he'd wanted to marry a woman at all, or if that had been nothing more than his default programming. As the years went on, Ezra was happy by himself and the idea of marrying anyone of any gender hadn't appealed to him.

A painfully young employee with sharp cheekbones and a piercing through their eyebrow greeted Ezra. Their name tag read Charli, and listed their pronouns as they/them.

“Can I help you?”

“I need an engagement ring.”

“Certainly.” Charli beamed. “What style were you looking for?”

“Something for a man. So, a band maybe? But I want something nice. Something special.”

Charli grinned and gestured for Ezra to follow them down to the other end out of the counter. They bent and pulled a couple of trays of rings out of the glass display case.

“We have a variety of metals.” They listed them as they pointed. “And don't worry if you don't know the size you need, you can bring it in to be adjusted if necessary.” Charli dipped down and grabbed a second tray. “The other tray has more plain kinds of rings, simple bands, but these are more decorative.”

Ezra quickly scanned both trays. He knew Logan would be happy with a piece of bent wire and a promise, but Ezra wanted to get him something special. Ezra scanned the

rings until eventually he spotted a silver ring with a green inlay. The green reminded him of the trees that surrounded the cabin they'd worked on together.

“Can I see that one?” Ezra pointed.

“Absolutely.” Charlie plucked it out of the tray. “This one is silver with a [rare green turquoise material] inlay. If you look closely, there're tiny leaves engraved into the silver. We have others like it in other colors if you'd like to see.”

The ring reminded Ezra of nature, which made him think of their time at the cabin. His chest constricted, and he handed the ring back to Charli with a nod.

“I'll take that one.”

“You're sure?” Charlie smiled a little.

Ezra nodded, emotion momentarily stealing his words. “Yeah. I'm sure.”

He was as sure about the ring as he was about Logan. And it had been like that when he saw Logan, hadn't it? He'd taken one look at him and something about him just fit. Ezra had thought he'd wanted to help Logan, and he did. But now, with a bit of distance, he could look back and understand that he'd wanted to know Logan. That yes, he'd wanted to help him, but getting to know him had been the greater pleasure.

Ezra waited while Charli tucked the other rings away. He polished the ring before slipping it into a black velvet ring box. Charli rang up his purchase and tore the receipt off the till.

“Did you want a bag? Not everyone does.”

“No bag.” Ezra took the ring box, but handed the receipt back. “Can you throw that away, please?” He didn’t want to drop the slip of paper somewhere and risk Logan being the one to find it.

“Certainly.” Charlie tore the paper in half, crumpled it, and dropped it in a can behind the counter. “Did you need anything else?”

“No, that’s everything, thanks.” Ezra tucked the ring in the front pocket of his pants, re-zipped his coat and left the store a little lighter in the bank account, but ultimately pleased with his purchase.

Ezra went over the steps in his mind. He had permission. He had a ring. Now he just needed a little courage and the perfect moment to pop the question. He was sure that between now and Christmas, he could think of something.





## CHAPTER 4

### LOGAN

Logan arrived at the diner early. He shook the snow out of his hair and stomped his boots as clean as he could on the mat before going through to the staff room at the back. There, he flopped down in a chair and pulled his boots off, then replaced them with much more comfortable and workplace appropriate shoes.

The diner wasn't open for another hour or two, but Logan had agreed to come in early to help decorate the dining room for the holidays. He dragged the boxes of decor out into the dining room and put them on one of the tables. The front door chimed and Wendy walked in carrying a box of what had to be more ornaments.

“You don't have the music on!” Wendy gasped. “How can we decorate without the proper background music?” Wendy set down the box she was carrying and shed her coat. She opened the box and pulled out two headbands. One had a tiny Santa hat secured to it and the other one had candy canes that looked like antlers. She slipped the tiny Santa hat on her head. “This one's yours.”

Logan looked at it and did his best to frown, though it was hard to do with the way Wendy looked at him. “Not a chance.”

“You have to. Come on, Logan.” She held it out for him to take. “For me?”

“I'm not going to win this, am I?”

“If you say no, I’ll say it’s your uniform and I’ll make you wear it all the time.”

Logan sighed and stuffed the dumb candy cane headband on. “Better?”

Wendy’s face lit up. “You’re adorable. Can I take a picture? You can send it to Ezra.”

“I only send Ezra pictures that aren’t fit to be seen in public.”

Wendy’s smile faltered. “Gross. You are not stripping in here.” Wendy pulled her phone out. Logan did a peace sign and stuck his tongue out. Why? He didn’t know. Ever since he decided to propose to Ezra, he’d felt lighter somehow.

Except the secret was heavy on his tongue. He wanted to run around and blurt it out to everyone. He supposed it couldn’t hurt to tell Wendy—if he taped her mouth shut so she couldn’t tell anyone. She meant well, Logan knew this, but Wendy loved talking. And she wouldn’t mean to spread it around, but it would reach Ezra’s ears by dinnertime the next day.

And Logan still had to get a ring. Somehow. He had a bit of money saved, but there was only one little jewelry store in town and again, the gossip would hit Ezra before long.

Wendy disappeared into the back and a minute later, Christmas carols flooded the restaurant. Logan smiled to himself, even though he probably looked stupid in the candy cane headband. It was hard to hate it because it made Wendy so deliriously happy when she saw it was still on his head.

“Okay, boss lady. What’s the plan?”

Wendy cracked her knuckles. “Each table gets a snow globe. The booths get the evergreen garlands along the back of the seats like this,” Wendy paused to demonstrate where she wanted things placed. “I’m going to trim the front window with lights and some fake snow.”

“That’s it?” Logan waited for approval.

“That’s it. I might do more later, but it’ll do for now. After you get the snow globes and garlands taken care of, you’ll probably have to jump into the kitchen and get your day started. I really appreciate you coming in early to help me.”

“I don’t mind.” Logan smiled at her and got to work setting out the snow globes. He noticed that each one was slightly different. Some were whimsical village scenes. Others were of the North Pole and Santa. There was a penguin themed one. Eventually, he realized he was spending too much time shaking them and not enough time decorating. He quickly set out the rest of the snow globes and then dealt with the garlands.

He turned his attention to Wendy, who had already strung the lights and was working on the window, spraying fake snow from a can onto the glass. She appeared to be engrossed in whatever it was she was doing and he decided not to bother her and get to work in the kitchen instead.

Logan snapped a selfie of himself with the stupid candy cane headband and sent it to Ezra before tucking his phone away and getting to work. He got the coffee going and then started the morning prep. Before long, the diner opened and Logan was thrown into work. Too busy to think of much

beyond the next order of eggs and toast to think about getting a ring for Ezra.

At least until his lunch break, when he looked and saw he had a new text from Ezra. Ezra had found a sprig of mistletoe and took a picture with it. There was no caption because Ezra was a man of few words, but the gleam in his eye spoke volumes.

Logan whipped himself up an order of fries to split with Wendy. They sat in their usual booth near the register. Logan set the plate between them and Wendy squirted a heap of ketchup onto the side.

“What’s going on with you?” Wendy asked. She snatched a fry off the plate and swiped it through the ketchup.

“What do you mean?”

“You’ve been smiling. All day.”

“I’m... happy?” Logan furrowed his brow. He stuffed a fry in his mouth.

Wendy narrowed her gaze. “Hmm. Nope. Don’t believe you. Try again.”

“I’m happy and looking forward to Christmas?” Logan tried to keep his focus on the fries, but he could feel Wendy’s gaze on him.

“I don’t think that’s it either.”

“Ezra’s taking me out to get a tree tomorrow. And I don’t mean like, down to the parking lot of the grocery store. We’re going out with lunch and a chainsaw and everything. It’s going to be amazing.” If Logan could find a ring in time, it

would be the perfect day to propose. The thought had his smile widening.

“Aha!” Wendy pointed a fry at him. “That look—right there. What’s that look for?”

“It’s... my face.” Logan made a mental note to keep a lid on his excitement around Wendy.

“Fine. Don’t tell me.” Wendy pretended to pout. “No Christmas bonus for you. Aww, who am I kidding?” Wendy pulled an envelope out of nowhere and slid it across the table to Logan.

“Wendy...” Logan grabbed the envelope and opened it. Two hundred dollars in cash was stuffed on the inside of a Christmas card. “This is amazing, thank you.” Logan tucked the money in his wallet and carefully slipped the card back into the envelope.

“Get yourself something nice. You deserve it.” The front door opened and the usual lunch time ladies came in. Logan knew he had at least an hour before they decided to eat. They liked to sit and chat and drink coffee for a bit first.

“You finish eating, I’ll take care of them.” Wendy stood and went to greet the customers.

Logan almost felt bad for keeping his secret. Almost. With two hundred dollars in his pocket, maybe Logan could slip away and get something in town. But in town ran the risk of someone seeing him buying a ring. Logan would absolutely die if his secret got ruined.

Stuck at work for the next few hours, there was little Logan could do to solve his problem, so he threw himself into

work. Working at the diner had sort of saved Logan. Well, it helped. Because it had been Ezra who had taken a chance on him. He still remembered the way the town had snubbed him when he came back. Maybe not the whole town, but enough of it that Logan still sometimes felt unwelcome.

The feeling had faded over time, however, and working at the diner helped. Along with Huxley, who stopped in from time to time, Wendy had also become a friend to Logan. Then there were the regulars. Logan knew what everyone liked. That the Darling's daughter always wanted extra-extra pickles or that Mister Truman only came in every second Sunday and wanted a stack of pancakes and a bowl of fresh berries. He knew how half the town liked their eggs in the morning. He hoarded these scraps of knowledge and the sense of belonging they gave him.

It made him feel like he was a part of the town, like he was some vital little piece, not instrumental in the running of the town, but important nonetheless. Huxley came into the back and washed his hands and slapped a hair net onto his head.

It had taken Huxley a while to recover from his injuries, and he still only worked part time, but Logan was glad to see him up and about more often now.

“Catch me up, Logan. What's what?” Huxley scanned the tickets, then took the flipper from Logan. “It's snowing like a bitch out there.”

“It's winter, it's supposed to snow.” Logan remembered the holidays he'd spent in California with no love lost. He'd missed the change of the seasons. When summer bled away

into autumn. Warm days and crisp nights that eventually turned cold and biting as the snow reappeared.

“Cute antlers, by the way.”

Logan furrowed his brow in confusion until Huxley pointed at Logan’s head. Only then did he remember the candy cane headband. Grinning, he took it off and stuffed it on Huxley’s head.

“It’s yours now. Wendy said they were our new uniforms.”

“Get those things off me. I don’t do festive.” Huxley protested, but only a little.

“See you tomorrow, Hux.”

“You too, Logan. Say hi to that boyfriend of yours for me.”

“Will do.”

It was on the tip of his tongue to ask Huxley for advice, but he bit back the urge. Huxley had never proposed to anyone before. Not that Logan was aware of. It wasn’t like he’d have any grand ideas on how to do it. Besides, Logan wanted to think of something himself.

Logan took his apron off and tossed it in the bin of dirty laundry. He slipped into his winter boots and coat. On the way out the back door, he took the bags of trash with him to toss in the dumpster. He came around the front of the building just as a familiar looking truck turned the corner.

It rolled to a stop next to Logan, and he climbed into the warmth of Ezra’s truck. Logan had a car, but he hated

driving in the winter if he could avoid it. Ezra didn't mind picking him up from work. In fact, he'd insisted.

Logan climbed into the truck and leaned across the seat for a kiss. Ezra was only too happy to oblige. He was so happy that Logan could feel the smile on Ezra's face.

He pulled away to confirm his suspicion and buckled his seatbelt. "Someone's happy today."

"Because you're here."

"You're getting sappy in your old age." Logan grinned at Ezra's mock scowl.

"And you're getting sassy."

"What are you going to do? Spank me?"

Ezra's nostrils flared and Logan's body flushed hot suddenly.

"I just might," Ezra said. "If you don't behave."

"I am so not behaving." Logan mumbled under his breath as Ezra pulled away from the curb.





## CHAPTER 5

### EZRA

By the time Ezra walked into the bedroom to wake Logan, he'd already packed a lunch, sharpened the chainsaw, topped off the gas, and packed everything they'd need to hunt for the perfect tree into the truck.

Ezra tucked the little black velvet box into the inside pocket of his winter jacket. Today might be the day, and the idea had him so full of nervous excitement that he could barely sleep last night.

The pot of coffee he made to get them going finally finished, and he poured most of it into a thermos. The remainder went into a coffee mug that he carried into the bedroom with him. Logan was still sound asleep, though he had gravitated toward Ezra's vacant pillow. His entire body, except for a tuft of dark hair, lay buried in the blankets. Ezra almost didn't want to wake him, but he was eager to get going.

He set the coffee down on the nightstand, then gently peeled the blankets back. Ezra never could resist temptation when it came to Logan, and he gently raked his fingers through Logan's hair.

Logan's nose scrunched.

"Good morning, sleepy," Ezra whispered. "It's time to get up."

Logan mumbled something incoherent and didn't stir otherwise.

“Babe, come on.”

“The trees aren’t going anywhere.” Logan tried to burrow back down into the blankets, but Ezra had a firm grip on them.

“Logan, come on.” Ezra felt the way he used to on Christmas morning, when it was time to open presents and he was the first one awake, wide-eyed with excitement.

Logan pried an eye open. “Do I smell coffee?”

“You do, and if you get out of bed, I’ll even let you drink it.”

Logan sighed and tugged at the blankets again. “Ezraaaa,” he whined. After failing to loosen Ezra’s hold on the blankets, Logan sighed dramatically and rolled onto his back. “You’re so mean.”

“So mean. The meanest.”

Logan shoved himself into a sitting position and made grabby hands. “Caffeine please.”

It took a little work to get Logan moving, but once he had half a cup of coffee in him, he made short work of getting dressed. On the way out of town, Ezra stopped at a drive thru and ordered Logan’s favorite breakfast sandwiches.

It had stopped snowing sometime overnight, and the sun was out that morning. Heavy snow weighed down the evergreens. The snow sparkled in the sun and Ezra winced. Logan flipped the visor down and grabbed the two pairs of sunglasses Ezra kept in his truck. He slid his pair on and handed Ezra’s over to him.

“Where are we going, anyway? I assume you can’t just roll up on any old tree and chop it down.”

“You’d be right about that. Lucky for us, I know a guy.” Ezra made the familiar turn to go up the highway to the cabin. He felt Logan’s eyes on him.

“The cabin?”

“We have permission to cut whatever we want.”

Logan put his hand on Ezra’s thigh. “I like it up there.”

“It’s different in the snow,” Ezra said. “Prettier. Quieter.”

“Sounds perfect,” Logan said.

When Ezra glanced at him, his heart constricted. The sun sparkled off the frames of his sunglasses and a gentle smile made Logan seem ethereal. Otherworldly. Fucking beautiful. Logan didn’t even know how much Ezra loved him. There weren’t words for it.

He hoped, when it came time to ask, that he found the right words. Ezra had never been one for big speeches. He’d never practiced Oscar acceptances in the mirror and there had never been an occasion like this, where he wasn’t so much worried about saying the wrong thing as he was worried about not saying the right thing good enough.

It was hard to keep his eyes on the road sometimes, because all he wanted to do was stare at Logan. Yes, he was obsessed, but he couldn’t help himself. He wanted to make every moment of the holiday season as perfect as possible. For himself as much as Logan, too. Ezra couldn’t remember the

last Christmas he'd truly enjoyed. For the most part, it existed around him and he went through the motions.

The past few years, he hadn't really bothered to decorate. Not that he didn't want to participate, but it seemed like a lot of fuss to go through just for himself.

"It's like another planet out here." Logan's breath fogged the side window, so Ezra turned the heater up a bit.

"It's amazing, isn't it?"

"Look at all that untouched snow." Logan pointed to the untouched field they passed. "I forgot snow could be so pretty."

The snow and ice on the road kept Ezra from reaching a hand over to hold Logan's. He glanced out the window and took in the scenery. When was the last time he stopped to appreciate something because it looked nice? When was the last time he'd looked at something just to appreciate its beauty?

The turn off for the cabin came up around the next corner and he flicked his turn signal on and slowed to take the corner. Being with Logan had woken up so many things in Ezra that he'd let go to sleep. Things like staring at snowy landscapes and putting up a Christmas tree hadn't seemed important, but Logan proved him otherwise. Because anything that could put that sappy, dreamy, happy look on Logan's face was worth noticing.

"I was thinking I could go to the city tomorrow to do Christmas shopping."

“I have a small job in the morning, but I can reschedule.”

“Ezra, it would be impossible to shop for you, with you.”

Ezra furrowed his brow. “I could wait in the truck. I know you hate driving in the winter.” Ezra glanced at Logan and noticed the little frown on his face.

“I’m an adult. I should be able to do things like drive in the winter. If I don’t do things that make me uncomfortable, I’ll never be comfortable with them.”

Ezra groaned. “I hate how that makes sense. I want to protect you, Lo. That’s all.”

“I know,” Logan sighed. “It makes me feel... dumb, I guess. That I’m a fully grown adult man and I’m afraid of a bit of snow.”

“There’s nothing wrong with being afraid of things. Especially driving on winter roads. If you don’t let it control you, a bit of fear is healthy. It gives you a respect for the potential danger. Respect will keep you from getting over confident and putting yourself in dangerous situations that you could’ve avoided.”

Logan put his hand on Ezra’s thigh. “I love it when you get all gruff and protective. It means a lot to me that you don’t think I’m some kind of wuss.”

“You’re not used to driving in the winter. That’s all. There’s plenty of time for you to practice, but if you don’t feel ready, I can drive you and wait in the truck. Or you could ask your dad to take you.”

“I’ll think about it,” Logan squeezed Ezra’s thigh. “Oh, hey!” Logan reached for the satellite radio. “We need Christmas carols.”

“Need them, do we?”

“Yes, need. It seems only proper to sing carols in the truck on our way to chop down a tree.” It took Logan a minute before he found a station that played Christmas music. Ezra hadn’t planned on singing along, but one pouty look from Logan and he relented.

He’d never admit it to anyone, but those moments in the truck would be seared in his heart as some of his favorite moments ever. How was he supposed to put into words the joy Logan infused into his life?

Ezra didn’t have long to dwell on that because the cabin came into view. It was something out of a dream, or a magazine. Someone who lived on the other side of the lake had cleared the snow. They had an arrangement with the owner to keep it clear, but so much around the cabin was untouched. Pristine. Shimmering in the sunlight like it was something that sparkled in a dream instead of reality.

“Bundle up,” Ezra said, wrapping a scarf around his neck and slipping a beanie on his head.

Logan did as he was told with no witty comeback, the landscape truly enthralled him. Until he opened the door of the truck. “Monkey nuts, it’s fucking cold out here.” Logan slammed the door shut and pulled his beanie on, then put the hood of his winter coat over it. He zipped his coat all the way to the top and stuffed his hands in a pair of gloves.

“I told you to bundle up.”

“It’s not this cold in town.”

“We’re higher up.” Ezra said. “Have you ever walked in snowshoes before?”

To Ezra’s surprise, Logan nodded. “My school did field trips every year to this nature place. It was all snowshoes and cross-country skiing and stuff like that. No snowmobiles allowed.”

“That sounds nice.”

“It wasn’t bad. There was hot chocolate after.” Logan hopped out of the truck, and Ezra watched him shiver as the wind fluttered against the hood of his jacket.

It was colder than Ezra expected it to be. Colder than the forecast had predicted, in fact. But they had a thermos of hot coffee and a cabin to escape into if they needed shelter.

Ezra grabbed the chain saw out of the back and set it down, then he hauled out the snowshoes. They were lightweight aluminum ones that were easy enough to strap on. In less than a minute, they were strapped in and ready to go.

“Can I carry anything?” Logan asked.

Ezra fished a bundle of rope out of the back and handed it to Logan. “I’ve got the saw. You can carry the rope. We’ll hunt for a tree. Bring the coffee.”

“You get the big manly chain saw and I get to carry the coffee.”

“I can show you how to use the saw if you want.”

“Really?” Logan’s eyes lit up.



“Yeah, of course.”

Logan laughed. “I’ll be honest with you, Ez. I never really had the desire to use one before, and I’m not sure I do now. But you always look so fucking hot doing stuff like that, that it makes me want to do it, too.”

Ezra wondered if Logan noticed the flush of red that crawled up his cheeks or if the bite of the wind against his skin hid the blush. “We’d better get started or we’re going to turn to popsicles.”

“It’s fucking cold.” Logan’s gaze met Ezra’s, and he shot him a dazzling smile. “But it’s gorgeous out here.”

“We’ll warm up once we get moving.”

“What direction?” Logan slid the bundle of rope up his arm and let it rest on his shoulder. He clutched the thermos of hot coffee to his chest.

“Well, our place isn’t exactly huge, and the trail that circles the lake has some nice smaller trees, if my memory is correct.”

Logan looked at Ezra with a starry-eyed expression.

“What?”

“You called it our place.”

“That’s what it is.” Ezra said simply. The words were on the tip of his tongue, but the wind gusted and Logan shivered from head to toe.

“Holy fuck, if it gets colder, my nuts are going to burrow into my body and they might never return.”

The romance of the moment left in a whoosh and Ezra laughed, pointing his body in the direction of the trail. “Come on, then.”

Logan set off behind him. For a few minutes, the only sound was their snowshoes and the rustling of the wind, but then Logan started singing Christmas carols again. He was half out of breath and off key, but the sound made Ezra immeasurably happy, regardless. He couldn't wait to ask Logan to marry him.



## CHAPTER 6

### LOGAN

*“Jingle balls. Jingle balls. Holy fuck, it’s cold.”* Logan sang under his breath as he traipsed down the trail behind Ezra. The company was perfect. The scenery was stunning. However, the weather left much to be desired. “Has it gotten colder?”

Ezra turned to look at him. He gave him a sympathetic smile. “There’s a group of decent sized trees up ahead. We’ll pick one from there, then get you into the truck to warm up.”

“No need to rush. It’s nice.” Logan clenched his teeth to stop them from chattering. There were things that seemed romantic but actually weren’t. Christmas tree hunting, for instance. They could’ve picked one up from the lot in town and had it stood up and decorated by now. Ezra could’ve fucked Logan stupid in front of it several times over.

Pretty scenery. Romantic snowshoes. Fucking wind burn. Logan shook his head and tried to dislodge his circle of doom-like thoughts. It was a nice day. He was being a baby.

“There, what do you think of that one?” Ezra stopped and waited for Logan to trudge up next to him.

Logan looked at the tree Ezra pointed at and smiled. At first he worried that Ezra might have picked the first half-decent tree he saw just to please Logan and get him back where it was warm. But the tree was actually kind of perfect. It wasn’t too tall or too wide, and it looked like it would fit in the space they’d chosen for it.

“Let’s see it with the snow knocked off.” Logan trudged closer. Reaching through the branches the way he’d seen Ezra do with some trees earlier, he grabbed the trunk and gave it a shake.

Snow fell off the branches, and the limbs sprang back to life. Logan retreated to get another look at it. “This is the one.” Logan grinned. Getting close enough to kiss Ezra took some doing in the snowshoes, but it was worth it.

“Give me two minutes and we’ll be on our way back to the truck.”

Logan wanted a hot bath and a nap. Ten vats of hot chocolate. A foot massage. The chainsaw came to life with a single pull, and the roar of the small engine made him want to block his ears. He didn’t mind watching Ezra work, though. It never failed to get Logan’s motor running when Ezra did something with his hands. Even all bundled up, Ezra was fucking gorgeous.

The tree came down in less than a minute and the engine died. Ezra set the chainsaw down in the snow. “Pass me that rope.”

Logan slid the rope off his shoulder and tossed it over to Ezra, who tied it to the trunk of the tree. “This will make it easier to tow back to the truck.”

Ezra lifted the saw in one hand and held the rope in the other.

“You’re not going to do both, are you? Seriously?” Logan looked at the saw and the tree.

Ezra shrugged, but Logan stepped into his path and reached for the saw. “We’re partners, Ez. I get to help.” Logan tucked the thermos under his arm and took the saw from Ezra with the opposite hand. At first, Ezra held tight to the saw and Logan thought he was going to fight him on it.

Then Ezra leaned in and kissed him. It sucked because it was cold and they had snowshoes on and Logan shivered so hard he thought his bones might break. Then Ezra released the saw and motioned back the way they came.

“Let’s get you warm.”

“Fuck yes.” Logan set off in the lead, letting Ezra trail behind him. Logan reached the truck first, and he set the saw on the ground next to the truck. He hopped into the cab and turned the key, bringing the truck to life. Being out of the wind felt amazing, and even better was when the truck pumped warm air through the vents.

Logan cranked the heat and pulled his hat off. He watched Ezra lift the tree into the back of the truck with ease and secure it with the rope. Ezra loaded the saw last, then climbed into the driver’s seat.

“We’re a team, huh?” Ezra grinned at him, his cheeks pink from windburn. He pulled his hat off and tossed it on the seat.

“Someone had to go on ahead and start the truck. See,” Logan wriggled in his seat. “It’s all toasty warm for you.”

“For me?” The corners of Ezra’s mouth turned up in a knowing smile. “So thoughtful.”

Ezra reached into the back and pulled a small cooler out from behind the passenger seat.

“What’s this?”

“Lunch.” Ezra said. “It’s too fucking cold for a picnic, but I figured all that hiking would make you hungry.”

“Aww.” Logan crooned. “You brought me food. I love you.”

“I brought us food. To share.”

Logan clutched the cooler in his arms and narrowed his gaze at Ezra. He tried to keep the smile off his face, but one well-timed eye-brow-arch from Ezra had Logan’s grin splitting his face.

“Fine,” Logan sighed dramatically. “I guess I can share. There is an awful lot of food in here.”

Logan set the cooler between them. He helped himself to a sandwich Ezra had made. “I was thinking, should we get the fish a Christmas present?”

“The fish?”

“Lots of people get presents for their pets. We could get Harold and Gertrude a new castle or some fancy plants or something.”

Logan looked at Ezra when he didn’t respond right away. He had a sappy, romantic sort of dreamy look on his face. The softness in his smile and the affection in his eyes made Logan’s heart thud powerfully. One day, Logan wanted to marry him. If he had a ring on him, he’d propose right then.

“What?” Logan asked.

“You want to buy a Christmas present for our fish?”

Logan grinned. “Hell yeah. I want to get everyone a present this year. Hux and Wendy and Dad.” Logan frowned. “Maybe not the asshole from the hardware store or the gas station.” Logan still hadn’t forgotten how they’d treated him when he came back to town. He didn’t blame himself for his lack of festive feelings toward them.

Ezra rummaged around in the cooler and produced one of Logan’s favorite things. Double chocolate chip cookies from the bakery. He carefully unwrapped them and handed one to Logan.

“Do you think I’m petty because I’m still pissed at them?” Logan asked, taking a cookie. Fuck the sandwich, it was a picnic and he could feast in whatever order he wanted.

“I think it’s okay to not forgive people for things they never apologized for. And sometimes, even if they apologize, that doesn’t mean you have to forgive them.”

A knot of tension loosened in Logan’s chest. “So you don’t think I’m a bad person because I still think they’re shitty people?”

“I don’t think you’re a bad person, Lo. Your emotions are your own and you’re allowed to have them. Same with your opinions. If people want you to like them, they should treat you better.”

Logan bit into his cookie. Ezra’s gaze still lingered on him. Logan could feel it. He shot Ezra a mischievous grin. “I don’t know what you’re thinking, Ez, but it’s still too cold to fuck in your truck.”



Ezra tipped his head back and barked out a laugh. “Not what I was thinking. I’m too old and inflexible to fuck in the cab of a truck, and too sensible to do it in the middle of winter.”

“Well, see, you wouldn’t have to do much.” Logan raked his gaze down Ezra’s body. “I could ride you.”

“I am definitely getting a raincheck,” Ezra assured him.

Heat zipped up Logan’s spine. “I don’t mind a little frostbite if you don’t.”

“Not a chance, Lo. I love you, but it’s not happening.”

Logan rolled his eyes, but his balls were still burrowed up inside him trying to get warm, so he didn’t mind that Ezra wasn’t keen to take him up on his offer.

“We should get home then. The sooner we do, we can get the tree stood up and let it unthaw a bit before we decorate it.”

“And what do you suggest we do with that time?” Ezra popped the last bite of his cookie in his mouth, then buckled his seatbelt.

“I could think of a few things. Like, I’ve been meaning to catch up on my laundry. And there’s this book I wanted to read.”

“Well, as long as you’re doing yours, mind throwing mine in. I’m almost out of clean socks.”

“Is that all I am to you now? A sock washer?” Logan clutched his chest dramatically.

“That’s not all you’re good for.” Ezra winked at him, and Logan feigned indigence.

“Sir, excuse you.”

“Seatbelt.” Ezra gently reminded him.

Logan buckled himself in. He couldn’t wait to get home and curl up next to Ezra. Then tomorrow he’d drive himself to the city and buy a ring for Ezra. Maybe he’d pop the question on Christmas Eve and they could announce it on Christmas Day when they made the rounds to see everyone.

But Christmas was still two weeks away. Logan wasn’t sure he could wait that long. Logan finished his sandwich and let the silence swell between them as Ezra navigated back down the snow covered road. It was easy to be with Ezra. They could talk, or not talk, and nothing was ever awkward between them. Ezra was laid back and Logan appreciated that after the hustle and bustle of the life he’d left behind.

It hadn’t really been his life, though. A realization Logan had come to over the past few months. It had been a life he thought should be his, but it never fit him. The city was too busy. People lived at a breakneck pace there.

Coming back was the best thing Logan could’ve done. The small town life suited him. Even if they hadn’t exactly welcomed him back, Ezra had been there to catch him. Logan didn’t know where he’d be without him.

He reached across the seat and put his hand on Ezra’s thigh. In only a few seconds, Ezra brought his hand down and covered Logan’s with his larger, more calloused hand. One

day, Logan thought, Ezra was going to have a ring on his finger.

“What’s that look for?” Ezra asked him.

Logan blinked a few times. “What look?”

“You looked lost in thought.”

“I guess I sort of was,” Logan admitted. “I was just thinking about how much better my life is with you in it.”

Ezra shot Logan a smile and squeezed his hand. “I think about that a lot, too.”

Logan smiled at Ezra and returned the hand squeeze. If this day got any more perfect, Logan was going to fucking burst.



## CHAPTER 7

### EZRA

Chopping down a tree, it turned out, wasn't the romantic outing Ezra had thought it to be. The ring sat unused in his pocket. Logan shivered all the way home, unable to get warm. Ezra wrestled the tree into the house and Logan helped him get it into the tree stand.

"I need heat." Logan trembled as he slid his arms around Ezra's waist. "Bath with me?" Logan asked, his cheek pressed against Ezra's chest.

"Anything." Ezra wrapped his arms around Logan.

"I like the way you say that. Like you really mean anything. Like I could ask for the moon and you'd get it for me."

"I'd try."

"That's all that matters." Logan pulled away. "If I don't get warm, I think I might actually die."

"You get the bath started, I'm going to wrestle the tree into the corner and feed the fish and I'll be right in."

"Don't take long." Logan said over his shoulder as he walked away.

Ezra did as he said he would and he stood the tree in the corner before busying himself with feeding the fish. After he turned the thermostat up a bit, he stared at his jacket. The ring was still nestled in the box inside. It was killing him to hold on to it. Ezra had half a mind to pop the question right

then, but Logan deserved something more well thought out than a bathtub proposal.

He'd wanted to do it when they were tree hunting, but the cold made the entire experience less romantic than he'd guessed. Logan looked like a popsicle by the time they got back to the truck. Nothing said, love me forever, quite like freezing to death. So Ezra had waited even though a few perfectly proposal worthy moments had happened. He'd let them pass him by.

Ezra took comfort in the knowledge that there were sure to be a bunch of perfect moments between now and Christmas. He'd find a way to give Logan the proposal he deserved.

Ezra went to the bathroom, where Logan waited for him in a tub full of bubbles. "Oh, it's a bubbles night, is it?"

"It's a—Logan is cold and cranky—night," he said, wrapping his arms around himself.

Ezra stripped out of his clothes and shoved them in the basket on top of Logan's. Logan raked his gaze over Ezra's naked body. He had to admit that it was a bit of an ego boost to be as old as Ezra was and be able to attract someone as young and gorgeous as Logan.

He climbed into the bath behind Logan and pulled him into his arms. "Warm yet?"

"No." Logan went limp and pliant in Ezra's arms. "I'll never be warm again."

"Dramatic." Ezra kissed Logan's temple. He dragged his hand down Logan's chest, then up again. He lightly

gripped Logan's shoulder and held him.

"I could've frozen to death." Logan said, though Ezra saw him smile.

"Well, then next year we'll just get an artificial one."

"Never!" Logan gasped. "That's sacrilegious."

"Then we'll get a tree from the parking lot at the grocery store."

Logan nodded. "That's acceptable. I never knew how much work it was to get a real tree. And snowshoes, oh my god. My legs will never recover from that."

"You'll be fine," Ezra promised. "If you're still sore when we get out of the bath, I'll give you a massage."

"Ooh, yes." Logan turned his head, and Ezra captured him in a kiss. He'd never get enough of Logan. There wasn't a universe in which he thought Logan might not say yes, and it wasn't something Ezra directly feared, but every so often the idea would enter his mind that Logan was too young for him. Too good for him. Had too much life and traveling and things to do to settle down with someone like Ezra.

Kissing Logan was a good way to dispel those fears. No one who kissed Ezra the way Logan did had any intentions of going anywhere. It was like no matter how close they were, Logan wanted to be closer.

Ezra let his hand dip lower. Logan let out a needy sound when Ezra cupped Logan's cock with his hand. Logan, ever eager, arched into the touch, giving permission without needing to break their kiss.

Slowly, Ezra stroked. He took his time teasing Logan, driving him increasingly mad. Eventually, Logan couldn't concentrate on kissing, and relaxed into Ezra with a sigh. Elegantly, he stretched his arms above his head, then reached behind him and clasped his fingers together behind Ezra's head.

Though he couldn't see all of Logan through the bubbles, he saw enough. Damp and stretched, Logan was stunning. Breathtaking. Ezra tightened his grip slightly, the way Logan liked it best. He stroked him like that for a while. Water wasn't the best lube, but Ezra was mindful of the amount of friction between his calloused hand and Logan's cock.

Logan mewled and pressed back into Ezra. "Please."

Ezra chuckled and let go of Logan's dick. Logan's protest got cut short, however, when Ezra dragged his fingers down Logan's taint.

"Fuck. Shit." Logan cried out. As he lurched in the tub, water splashed over the edge, soaking the floor. "Warn a guy," Logan laughed as he relaxed in Ezra's arms again.

"Where's the fun in that?" Ezra did it again, but this time Logan had expected it and his reaction wasn't as violent.

"Ez, you're killing me."

"Did you want to take this to bed?" Ezra traced the shell of Logan's ear with his lips. His tongue. He closed his eyes and breathed deep, though Logan smelled of nothing but bubble bath.



Logan, despite the complaints of his sore, tired legs, was out of the bath before Ezra could blink. He had his hair half dried in a towel before Ezra levered himself up to his feet and stepped out of the bath.

Ezra didn't have time to think of drying off before he had an armful of horny boyfriend. Logan wound his arms around Ezra's neck and pulled him into a kiss. Logan ground against him, their damp bodies sliding together in a way that woke up every last nerve ending in Ezra's body.

With an inelegant grunt, he lifted Logan off his feet. Legs wrapped around his waist and Logan moaned into Ezra's mouth, deepening the kiss. Logan held him tighter as Ezra carried him through to the bedroom. He was too old and sore for wall sex, though the idea had flashed through his mind. Instead, he lowered Logan to the bed and followed him down.

He blanketed Logan's body with his own. Kissed him fervently as he pinned him to the bed. Logan writhed against Ezra, his fingers digging and scratching at Ezra's back.

"Please," he panted against Ezra's mouth.

Ezra could deny him nothing. He kissed his way down Logan's body. Stopping to lave his tongue against Logan's nipples. Ezra loved the way it made Logan squirm underneath him. The sounds it wrung from him, soft and needy, went straight to Ezra's cock. An eternity with this man would never be long enough.

"Ez-ra," Logan pleaded brokenly, his fingers tangling through Ezra's hair.

Ezra kissed the slight point of Logan's hipbone and dragged his mouth lower toward Logan's leaking cock. Logan's fingers flexed in Ezra's hair, urging him, pleading with him almost, to just give in and stop torturing him already.

Logan's skin was still damp from the bath and he smelled faintly of vanilla, almost good enough to eat. He continued his torture by smoothing his hands down the insides of Logan's thighs and gently easing his legs apart. They trembled under his touch, and Logan whimpered again.

"Ezra, please. I'm dying."

"Dramatic," Ezra replied, then he licked a stripe up the underside of Logan's leaking cock, swirled it around the head, and took him down in one long, slow slide. Were it not for Ezra holding him down, Logan might have shot up off the bed and hit the stratosphere.



## CHAPTER 8

### LOGAN

Logan didn't think about how weird Ezra had been acting lately. Nope. He didn't focus on the weird way Ezra always seemed to watch him. Or the way it seemed like Ezra was always holding his breath, waiting for something. But what? Logan had no idea.

So he didn't think about it. Instead, he thought about the way he fucking hated driving on winter roads. Going on straight stretches was fine. But taking corners freaked him out. Going uphill was okay-ish, but going downhill made him feel as though he were steering a two-ton-toboggan.

By the time he pulled back into town, he was a nervous wreck. Even if the slow winter drive hadn't done him in, the engagement ring he picked out for Ezra would've. The two added together, though, had Logan feeling like an absolute train wreck. He needed a shower and a drink. In that order. Or maybe at the same time.

Logan arrived home before Ezra and smuggled his Christmas present, already wrapped inside and tucked it under the tree. Logan wasn't sure what to get for someone who'd lived a whole fucking life already, but he'd found a cologne he thought Ezra would like. It was very woodsy and fresh. He also found a pair of lined work gloves which might not have been fancy, but they were practical.

He also bought a new castle for Harold and Gertrude. He had to stop himself from buying out half the pet store. They were just fish; he knew it. Most people didn't consider

fish real pets, but Ezra loved them, therefore so did Logan. He wasn't sure he wanted a cat, and a dog sounded like too much work. But fish were nice. They were quiet and not demanding. They were content to just exist.

After hiding the engagement ring, Logan grabbed a beer from the fridge and drank it in the shower. Tomorrow, he and Ezra planned to finish their Christmas shopping together. If they had time, they were going to bake some Christmas cookies.

Logan took a long drink of his beer, then washed the residue of the day off his skin. He wore a pair of Ezra's pajama pants and one of his shirts when Ezra came home. The clothes were too big on him, but he didn't mind. He loved the way Ezra looked at him when he dressed in Ezra's clothes.

"Dinner will be ready soon," Logan said when Ezra walked in.

Ezra took his boots off at the door and hung his coat on the hook. Then he came straight to Logan and kissed him hello, like he always did. Logan put his spoon down and wound his arms around Ezra.

He couldn't wait to ask Ezra to marry him. To spend the rest of his life with him. There were a million things he wanted to do and experience, and Ezra sat wrapped up in all of them. Now that he had the ring, all he had to do was ask and hope Ezra said yes.

Logan stilled mid-kiss. What if Ezra said no? He didn't want to think of a world in which Ezra didn't say yes to him. It simply wasn't possible. Call him an optimist, but after the whole thing where his ex-boyfriend ran off and married

someone else behind Logan's back, he figured the universe owed him.

There was no way Ezra would say no. Especially if Logan could pull off the perfect proposal. Which he would plan. As soon as he decided what the perfect proposal looked like.

"Dinner's going to burn." Logan kissed the corner of Ezra's mouth and pulled away. Ezra's hand lingered on Logan's hip even when he turned and pretended that it was imperative for him to stir the food that was in no actual danger of burning.

"How was the drive?"

Logan shuddered. "Slow and mildly terrifying, thank you. But I didn't end up in a ditch somewhere, so it's nice to know that my anxiety is, in fact, full of shit."

Ezra's hand tightened on Logan's hip. It was stupid, the way his body responded to the way Ezra touched him. All it seemed to take was a look sometimes, and Logan was ready to climb Ezra like a tree. But when Ezra touched him, Logan fucking melted. His desire turned him to goo and Ezra had to know this, because he frequently did things like touch Logan's hip, or graze his lips across the back of Logan's neck. Or both at once, as he did right at that moment.

"What are you doing? You're distracting me." Logan was keenly aware of Ezra's hand sliding under the hem of Logan's shirt.

"Maybe I want to distract you." Ezra's lips grazed Logan's earlobe. His knees liquified and his cock turned to

concrete.

“I’ll burn dinner.” Logan protested weakly as Ezra gathered him close.

“Will it keep?”

It took Logan a moment to think of what the question was. Ezra made it impossible to keep his head on straight when he did things like this. “No, it’s... pasta.” Logan somehow got a hand between him and Ezra and he gently eased him back. “The noodles will get soggy.”

“No one likes a soggy noodle.” Ezra smiled, pleased with himself and his terrible joke. “I’ll have a quick shower without you, then.”

“Tease.”

“You love it.” Ezra brushed a kiss against Logan’s cheek, then skirted around him and shut himself into the bathroom.

By the time dinner was ready and served, Ezra had emerged from the shower. Logan loaded their dinner onto plates, and they settled in front of the TV to eat. Ezra turned on a Christmas movie for them to watch. They’d watched at least one a night since the day they’d brought the tree home.

“Do you think they’ll save Christmas?” Logan jokingly asked. They always saved the day, got engaged, and found the true meaning of Christmas. It was a rule. Some people might’ve thought Christmas movies were stupid because they were all the same, but that’s what Logan loved about them the most. They were predictable and safe. Everyone went home happy at the end.

The ones he liked best were the ones with the dramatic Christmas Eve proposals. He'd never admit it, but he was definitely living vicariously through them. The joy of the characters became his own joy because he could imagine himself getting down on one knee. The look on Ezra's face would be elation and joy, and they would live happily ever after.

It was the only thing that kept Logan from jumping the gun and asking Ezra now. Logan put his half finished dinner aside and snuggled into Ezra's side.

"Are you cold?" Ezra asked a few minutes later. He rubbed his hand up and down Logan's arm. "You're shivering."

"Am I? I guess I am chilled."

"Here," Ezra said as he pulled the blanket off the back of the couch and draped it over Logan. "Are you feeling okay?"

"I'm fine, just cold. I'm a bit tired, I think."

"You should've asked your dad to drive you today."

"No, I wanted to do it. It was fine. I'm probably just overtired. I'll be fine after a good night's sleep." Logan tucked the blanket up against his chin and snuggled into Ezra's side.

He didn't make it to the end of the movie. Heck, he doubted he made it another ten minutes before his eyelids were too heavy to keep open anymore. He snuggled closer to Ezra and fell asleep.

The next morning he woke up feeling like a can of smashed assholes. His bones hurt. Fever throbbed in every



joint in his body. Even his skin hurt.

Ezra came into the room dressed in a pair of pajama pants and a t-shirt. “Hey, Lo. How do you feel?”

Logan wanted to cry. They were supposed to go to the Christmas craft fair later and Logan wanted to make cookies to decorate with Ezra later. But there was no way he could get out of bed feeling like death warmed over.

“Like shit.”

Ezra’s brow furrowed, and he came to Logan’s side. Leaning down, Ezra kissed Logan’s forehead.

“What are you doing? Kissing me better?” Logan tried to laugh. “I hate to break it to you, but it didn’t work.”

“My mom used to check my temperature like that,” Ezra said. “You have a fever.”

“Ugh,” Logan groaned. “I feel like a reindeer shit.”

Ezra ignored Logan’s colorful comparison and raked his fingers through Logan’s hair. “I’ll get you something for the fever. Be right back.”

Logan used the bathroom, then crawled back into bed. Ezra brought him a couple of pills and a large glass of water and Logan dutifully did as he was told. Then he slept. Sort of. He slipped in and out of consciousness. His body throbbed down to his bones.

Vaguely, he remembered Ezra coming back to check on him. Ezra poked him awake a couple of times to get him to drink something. Whenever he was awake, all he could think about was the fact that he was letting Ezra down. They had

plans and Logan was ruining them. Even sick, he understood how irrational he was being, but he couldn't help it.

Somewhere around dinner time, Logan woke drenched in sweat.

“Oh, gross.” Logan pushed himself into a sitting position, which wasn't easy considering he felt like he'd gotten hit by a bus.

The bedroom door opened, and Ezra stepped inside. “Hey, you're awake. Looks like your fever broke.”

“I feel like death. Worse than death.”

Ezra came to Logan's side and helped him to his feet. “Let's get you into the shower and I'll change the sheets. There's soup for dinner and some biscuits. I called Wendy, and she has you booked off tomorrow.”

“I'm sorry.”

“For what?” Ezra helped Logan into the bathroom. Logan's legs felt like jelly. He leaned against the wall and took a piss while Ezra got the shower going.

“For being sick. We had plans.”

“Logan, honey, don't be sorry. You're sick. It happens.”

“But the craft fair was only today.” Logan's stupid chin wobbled. “And we were going to decorate cookies. I bought cookie cutters and everything.” Logan finished peeing and washed his hands.

Ezra, suddenly stark naked, wrapped his arms around Logan and pulled him into an embrace. “We can decorate

cookies when you're better."

"But the craft fair was only today. I wanted to get something special for our tree." To his absolute mortification, tears rolled down his cheeks. "This must be how they feel in those cheesy movies when they think that they're going to lose the town to the big, bad corporation."

Ezra smoothed his hands down Logan's back and kissed his sweaty hair. "All is not lost, Lo. We can still get a special ornament for our tree."

"Promise?"

"Yes. Now, come on. Let me get you rinsed off. You'll feel better once you're cleaned and have something in your stomach."

Logan nodded against Ezra's chest and let himself be steered into the shower. Ezra let Logan lean against him the whole time he washed him. Were it not for being sick as hell, his dick might've responded to all the attention he was getting.

The shower helped him feel a little more human. Ezra wrapped him up in a big, fluffy towel. "I'll get you something to wear so you can eat while I get the bedding changed out."

"What kind of soup?" Logan asked. His body still ached a bit, and exhaustion sat heavy on his shoulders, but he was definitely hungry.

"Chicken noodle. I had groceries delivered so I could make it for you."

"Why didn't you just go to the store? Delivery is so expensive here."

Ezra looked at him like he'd grown a second head.  
“You were sick. I wasn't going to leave you when you might've needed me. Plus, Wendy brought the stuff for me, so it didn't cost anything.”

“You stayed?”

“Of course I stayed. Silly rabbit,” he said with more affection than Logan could handle, and he almost burst into tears all over again.



## CHAPTER 9

### EZRA

Whatever mysterious illness had laid Logan out, Ezra had been determined not to get it. He did all the right things. Washed his hands frequently. Took extra vitamin C. Stayed hydrated. But it was inevitable. As Logan recovered, Ezra fell ill.

On Christmas Eve, Ezra finally recovered enough to go shopping with Logan, but calling it fun or romantic would be a stretch. They were both run down from being ill. Though Logan had regained the spring in his step, Ezra could tell he felt disappointed about the way their holiday plans had been ruined.

Ezra, however, wouldn't be knocked down so easily. They could still do some of the fun things they'd planned to do together. Ezra dropped Logan off at home and helped him carry their bags into the house.

"I forgot something at the store." Ezra brushed a kiss against Logan's cheek. "I'll be right back."

Logan furrowed his brow. "You forgot something? That's suspicious."

"It's a surprise. I won't be long. Don't start wrapping without me." Ezra kissed him again. "Promise?"

Logan rolled his eyes and pretended to be put out. "Fine. I promise. But don't take too long."

"Twenty minutes. Set a timer." Ezra scooped his keys off the counter and rushed out the door. Logan called out

behind him, telling him to drive safe.

Shopping for last-minute baking ingredients had been a bust and Logan had tried to hide how upset it had made him that they couldn't make the Christmas cookies he'd wanted to make.

Ezra pulled into Janine's driveway and left the engine running. He took the steps two at a time and knocked on the door. Janine answered, wearing a festive apron and a fuzzy garland headband.

"Janine, I can't thank you enough for this."

"It's no big deal. I was happy to do it. The ingredients are packaged up in jars. All you need to do is follow the recipe card in the lid and you're golden." Janine turned and grabbed a box from a table beside the door and handed it to Ezra. It had a few different mason jars, decorated to look like snowmen, if Ezra wasn't mistaken.

"Each jar makes a different kind of cookie. Everything you need is in the box."

"This is too much." Ezra cleared his throat. His stupid emotions had been out of control since he'd been sick. He blamed it on how run down he still felt.

"Bullshit. Go home and make cookies with your boyfriend. Tell him Merry Christmas for me."

Ezra nodded. "Merry Christmas, Janine. Thanks again for this."

"I was happy to help. Drive safe, Ezra."

Ezra returned to his truck and set the box on the passenger seat. Because he was feeling silly, he went so far as to fasten the seatbelt around the box to make sure his little snowmen were secure.

When he arrived back home, Logan was waiting for him with his arms crossed over his chest. “You’re late. It took you twenty-three minutes.” Then Logan saw the box in Ezra’s grasp. “What’s that?”

Ezra handed the box to Logan, and he bent to tug his boots off. “Those are cookies. Or, what will be cookies. The directions are in the jar under the lid.”

Logan looked at the box, then at Ezra, then at the box again. “What? How?”

“Janine says Merry Christmas.”

“Janine? Oh, pie lady ex-girlfriend, Janine?” Logan glanced at Ezra and arched an eyebrow.

“That’s the one. When you saw that half the stuff we needed was gone, you looked sad. I sent Janine a quick text message asking to borrow some ingredients. She went a bit above and beyond, I must admit.” The speed at which she whipped up the jars was all by itself a Christmas miracle.

Logan set the box down and lifted one jar out. “I felt like such a sulky little kid. Upset over baking cookies.”

Ezra took off his coat and then slid in behind Logan and wrapped his arms around him. “Getting sick derailed a lot of our plans, but we can still have an amazing Christmas together. And we can still start new traditions.”

“Except getting sick. Let’s not do that next year.”



“Agreed.” Ezra kissed Logan’s cheek. “Should we wrap first or bake first?”

“Bake. Then we can eat and wrap.” Logan set the jar down and turned around. He put his hands on Ezra’s shoulders, then slid them up into his hair. “You do the nicest things for me. Thank you.”

Logan slanted his mouth over Ezra’s and kissed him sweetly. The ring Ezra bought was currently sitting safely tucked into his pants pocket. He thought about asking now, when Logan was already super impressed with him. But before he could decide, the moment was gone. Logan pulled away and carried the jars into the kitchen, happily humming Christmas carols.

“What kind did you want to make first?” Logan asked.

“What kinds are there? I didn’t really look, to be honest. But I’m not picky. Whatever kind you want to start with will be fine.”

“There’re cookies that you press little pretzels into to make reindeer. That’s so cute.” Logan fussed over the cookie selecting while Ezra washed his hands.

They made the reindeer cookies first. Ezra turned Christmas music on in the background and they spent the day in the kitchen, baking cookies and cooking dinner. Half a dozen chances to pop the question passed Ezra by. He’d wanted to plan something big and spectacular. Something like in the movies they’d watched. Maybe not a horse-drawn sleigh and dancing elves, or anything that involved parachutes, but something worthy of Logan.

So Ezra decorated cookies and sang carols and cooked dinner with Logan. They wrapped presents and tucked them under the tree to be delivered tomorrow when they went to the diner to see everyone.

Ezra thought briefly about tucking the ring into the mashed potatoes he'd heaped onto Logan's plate, then decided *that* was a stupid idea. Still, the ring burned a hole in his pocket throughout dinner. They ate at the table for a change, instead of in front of the television with plates balanced on their laps.

Ezra was painfully aware of the box in his front pants pocket. He tried to work up the courage over dinner to ask Logan, but it had been hard for Ezra to get a word in edge-wise with the way Logan carried on about the cookies.

Logan was on his feet the minute his plate was empty. "What about Christmas Eve bubble bath?"

"You just want me naked," Ezra grinned at Logan and stood up from the table. He carried his plate into the kitchen and put it in the sink.

"I'll get the bath started if you wouldn't mind putting the ham away?" Logan brushed a quick kiss against Ezra's mouth. "You don't mind, do you?"

"Not at all."

Logan's smile was ear to ear and absolutely radiant. He turned to walk away, but Ezra stopped him and pulled him back. He cupped Logan's face in his hands and slanted his mouth over Logan's.

Ezra kissed him soft but deep, licking his way inside Logan's mouth. Now. This was the moment. It wouldn't get better, because each moment with Logan was a gift. Ezra pulled away and Logan looked at him with soft, starry eyes.

"I love you, Logan."

Logan slid his arms around Ezra's waist. His expression was pure happiness, like all the joy in Ezra's world lived inside Logan.

"I love you, too, Ezra. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me."

The Christmas music Ezra had put on earlier still played quietly in the background. Their television sat on the fire log channel. The tree lights blinked and flashed, and Ezra caught their reflection in Logan's eyes.

He kissed Logan again, because he wanted this one perfect memory to live in his mind forever. Carefully, he snuck his hand into his pocket, and pulled out the ring box. When he pulled away, he slowly went down on one knee, just the way he'd always pictured it, but in his mind his knees complained a lot less.

Logan looked down at him with wide eyes and an alarmed expression. "Ezra?"

"Logan, I've thought of a million different ways to do this. I wanted to create some elaborate scheme and do the big romantic gesture. I've waited for the perfect moment, but every moment with you is perfect. I want more moments with you. A million of them. Marry me, Logan."

Logan smiled softly as he slipped a hand into his pocket. From it he withdrew a little velvet box, and he popped it open. “I wanted to ask you.” Logan sniffled and Ezra was suddenly terrified that he’d ruined everything.

Ezra reached for Logan and tugged him down because it was easier than him getting to his feet. “You wanted to ask me?” Ezra swiped a tear off Logan’s cheek. “Then why are you crying, Lo?”

“Because I wanted to ask you. I had it all planned.” Logan laughed as another tear slid down his cheek.

“So ask me,” Ezra said. He pulled the ring he bought for Logan out of the box and held it carefully in his hand.

Logan’s Adam’s apple bobbed when he swallowed. He swiped at a tear and turned the ring box he held toward Ezra. Logan gently tugged the silver band free, and he looked at it, studied it like it held the universe.

“I don’t think you know just how much you’ve done for me, Ezra. When I came back here, I had no one and nothing. I didn’t know what I wanted, or how to get it even if I did.” Logan raised his gaze and stared into Ezra’s soul. “You looked at me like I mattered, like I was worth helping. You never made me feel bad or stupid about my decisions. And when I fell for you, somehow, you fell right back. You’re the best thing in my life, Ezra. I want to spend the rest of our lives together.” Logan paused and presented Ezra with the ring. “Will you marry me?”

“Yes, Lo. I’ll marry you.”

Logan slipped the ring onto Ezra's finger then held his hand out to Ezra. "In that case, I suppose I can be convinced to accept your proposal."

Ezra slid the ring onto Logan's finger. "I love you, even when you're sassy."

Logan linked their hands together, twining their fingers. He leaned in and kissed Ezra, a smile blooming on his face. "I have one more question for you," Logan smirked at Ezra. "Do you need help up?"

"Brat," Ezra shot back. "But, yes, actually."



## CHAPTER 10

### LOGAN

There was a possibility that Logan had gotten carried away with the amount of bubble bath he put in the water. When Ezra sank into the water, bubbles rose over the edge of the tub. He looked up at Logan, who had yet to get in, and raised an eyebrow.

Logan shrugged and climbed in, laughing when the bubbles spilled over the edge.

“Less is more, Logan.”

“No. Less is less and more is awesome,” Logan argued, sinking back against Ezra’s broad chest. Wrapped up in Ezra was Logan’s favorite place on the planet. Logan watched Ezra scoop up a handful of bubbles. He held his hand out, palm flat. Logan leaned forward and taking a breath, blew the bubbles off Ezra’s hand.

“We’re making a mess.” Logan didn’t really care. Bath mats and towels existed for a reason. Ezra wrapped an arm around Logan and tugged him tight against his chest. A kiss brushed the shell of Logan’s ear, making him shiver.

“Merry Christmas, Lo.”

Logan felt like a sentimental fool when he lifted his hand and stared at his engagement ring. “It’s beautiful.”

“So’s mine.” Ezra’s hand skimmed down Logan’s slippery chest but stopped short of his cock. Logan might’ve called him a tease, but Ezra spoke again. “I hope I didn’t steal your thunder. I had no idea you were going to propose.”

“Do you know how much easier it is to ask someone to marry you ten seconds after they asked you first? I’ve had your ring since the day I got sick.”

“When you went out of town to shop,” Ezra mused.

“I didn’t want to buy something here because this town gossips and I didn’t want you to find out.”

Ezra chuckled. “That’s why I didn’t buy yours in town. We almost should’ve. It would’ve given them all something to talk about.”

Logan shut his eyes and relaxed against Ezra. “Do you want a long engagement or a short one? Big wedding? Small wedding?”

“I’m okay with whatever you’re okay with.”

Logan frowned. “Don’t do that. Don’t defer everything to me. I want us both to be happy with the decisions we make, and we can’t do that if one person doesn’t have an opinion.”

Ezra’s arms tightened around Logan. “Sorry, you’re right.”

“I know. So what’ll it be, husband-to-be?”

“Small town, smaller wedding. Maybe just your dad, Janine, and Wendy and Hux from the diner.”

“Deal, but I insist we get to dress up. I really, really want to see you in a suit.”

Ezra’s teeth grazed over Logan’s earlobe, and a shiver rocked up his spine. “I really want to take you out of a suit.”

“Honeymoon at the cabin?” Logan almost couldn’t think with the way Ezra’s hands were suddenly all over him,



smoothing down his chest and caressing the insides of his thighs. One deft hand wrapped around Logan's cock.

"Anything you want," Ezra said, tearing a moan out of Logan when he stroked his cock slowly from root to tip.

"Anything?" Logan asked, arching his back, chasing Ezra's retreating touch.

"Anything," Ezra promised.

That was one of the things Logan loved best about Ezra, how careful he was when he spoke. He never said things he didn't mean. Every word that came out of his mouth was a word he meant to say.

"Kiss me," Logan said, turning so he could gain access to Ezra's mouth.

"That's all you want? Just a kiss?" Ezra's lips grazed Logan's in the barest of touches.

"Ezra, don't tease—" Logan's whine got cut short when Ezra's mouth captured his. It wasn't the best angle for kissing because Logan had to crane his neck around, but it was still perfect because it was Ezra. Logan never thought he could have something this great. This big and bright and fulfilling with someone as gorgeous and thoughtful as Ezra.

Ezra broke the kiss and Logan looked into his eyes. There was a definite hunger there simmering below the surface. Gentle fingers danced across Logan's skin under the water. Logan's eyes fluttered shut.

"You're so fucking beautiful, Lo." Ezra's hand skimmed up Logan's chest, and he cupped Logan's cheek.

“I need you,” Logan whispered. He opened his eyes and looked at Ezra, letting him see the truth of his words.

“Then you’ll have me.” Ezra’s gaze softened and his lips curled into a tentative smile. “In another life, I’d be younger and fully able to stand up with you in my arms, toss you over my shoulder and carry you to bed. But in this one, I’m too old and worn out for that.”

Logan brushed his nose against Ezra’s, then carefully stood. “You’re not old. Well, you’re older than me, but that doesn’t make you old. It makes you perfect.”

Ezra scoffed and stood with a wince. “I sound like a rice krispie when I move.”

Logan grabbed two towels off the rack and passed one to Ezra. “If you’re trying to convince me you’re old, it’ll never work.”

Ezra dragged the towel over his hair and scrubbed the excess water out of his hair before drying the rest of his body. His gaze clashed with Logan’s, and that’s when he realized that he’d stood there and stared at Ezra without drying himself off.

Logan quickly scrubbed himself dry, then practically threw himself at Ezra, winding his arms around Ezra’s neck. He brushed the tips of their noses together. Ezra’s strong arms encircled him. The smile that flashed across Ezra’s face was wide and wicked.

“See something you like?” Logan batted his eyelashes.

“Get to bed and I’ll show you what I like.”

Logan wasted no time untangling himself from Ezra's arms and hurrying to their bedroom. Logan's things had found their forever homes in their house. It didn't bother Logan that the place belonged to Ezra first; it didn't make it less theirs.

Logan climbed on the bed on all fours and before he could roll over onto his back, Ezra spoke.

"Stay like that."

Logan stilled and because Ezra couldn't see the look on his face, he let his smile grow as bright as it wanted. He took a breath and waited for what felt like an eternity, but then the bed dipped and he felt Ezra's presence behind him.

"Oh, my god." Logan's squeak of surprise turned into a moan and he lowered his chest to the mattress, leaving his ass sticking in the air. Ezra dragged his tongue up the back of Logan's balls and over his hole to the top of his ass crack in one long, luxurious lick, and Logan thought he might literally die. Ezra spread Logan's cheeks apart and lapped at his hole, teasing his tender skin.

Their sex life had always been amazing and full of variety, but Logan couldn't help but think of rimming as special occasion sex. Like even if it were the second Tuesday in April in the middle of the afternoon, if Ezra's tongue touched Logan's ass in any way, shape, or form, it was call to bust out the champagne and the fancy dinner plates.

Fireworks exploded behind Logan's eyes when Ezra's finger pressed into his slippery, wet hole.

"Ezra, you're killing me."

Ezra chuckled, and a warm breath washed over Logan's damp skin. "I assure you, that's not my objective." He kissed the cheek of Logan's ass, then returned to slowly pressing that thick digit inside Logan. He stroked Logan's prostate, making his whole body jolt. Logan was harder than he could ever remember being.

Logan melted into a puddle of desire. At least it felt as though he melted. Ezra moved away for a moment, making Logan whimper at the loss. He opened his eyes in time to see Ezra grab a pillow, which he shoved under Logan.

"Lay down, Lo."

Logan couldn't obey fast enough. He stretched out luxuriously, his hips raised to the perfect angle because of Ezra's thoughtful pillow placement. A lube cap clicked shut and slippery fingers carefully pressed inside Logan. He groaned and spread his legs wider in invitation.

Ezra took his time working him open, loosening him up. Kneeling next to Logan, he gently twisted his fingers inside Logan, stretching him. With every passing moment, Logan's desire grew until his body raged with need. Every gentle touch was too teasing.

"Please. Now, Ezra. I can't... can't wait." Logan panted, tucking his face under his outstretched arm.

Ezra kissed his way up Logan's spine. Warm hands caressed his body, soothing him. Loving him. Ezra lined his cock up with Logan's hole and pressed inside so fucking slowly, pressing deeper and deeper until there was nothing left. Ezra laid over him like a living blanket. Strong arms wrapped

around him. Warm lips pressed wet kisses to bare skin and Ezra fucked him slow and deep.

It was like being on the ocean when the tide went out and you were powerless against such a force of nature. Ezra whispered words of adoration as he fucked Logan. With his cock trapped underneath him, and his arms pinned above him, there was no way for Logan to reach down and get himself off. The friction of the pillow rubbing against his dick wasn't enough. Logan needed more.

“Ez, please,” Logan whined.

He didn't know that Ezra had heard him until he snapped his hips and buried himself even deeper. Logan cried out and gripped handfuls of the sheets. Ezra's whole body moved, undulated, as he fucked Logan with an increasing ferocity. Logan splayed his hands against the headboard and pressed his body back into Ezra, forcing back as Ezra thrust into him.

Ezra cried out and his steady rhythm faltered as he came, grinding into Logan over and over, pressing hungry kisses to Logan's neck. Then Ezra pulled out and turned Logan over. Before Logan could reconcile what was happening, his dick was down Ezra's throat.

Reaching down, Logan tangled his fingers in Ezra's hair. His hips stuttered and thrust. He practically jackknifed off the bed when Ezra tucked a finger into Logan's ass and stroked it over his prostate.

Logan came so hard he shattered. Ezra sucked him dry, teasing his ass until Logan whimpered for him to stop. Ezra carefully extracted his finger, then released Logan's cock from

his mouth. Logan, with his fingers still tangled in Ezra's hair, tugged him up into a kiss.

They made out, sharing the taste of Logan's cum, until they were breathless and exhausted. Only then did Ezra flop down next to Logan and pull him into his arms.

"Merry Christmas, future husband," Logan said, keenly aware of the foreign object that encircled his finger.

"Merry Christmas, Lo." Ezra pulled him closer.

Logan snuggled closer, and Ezra tugged the blankets over them. Tomorrow they'd wake early and open presents. They'd eat breakfast and drink coffee for the first time as an engaged couple. Then they'd climb into Ezra's truck and make their way to the diner. It was their last first Christmas together and it couldn't get any more perfect than it was already.



Merry Christmas

And

Happy Holidays!

If you haven't read Ezra and Logan's story yet,  
you can find it here.

[Last First Kiss](#)