

SASHA'S SURPRISE

BABES IN
TOYLAND

BRYNN HALE

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LAST CHAPTER PRESS LLC



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Cover Design: Last Chapter Press LLC

Editing: Last Chapter Press LLC

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SASHA'S SURPRISE INFO

Sasha

I don't need help in any room of my house...much less the bedroom.

All of my time is better spent taking care of my patients.

One day the door rings and my drop-dead gorgeous neighbor is standing there with a box in his hand.

His dog, Fortune, chewed up a delivery from a friend of mine and he had to replace the item.

When I open the box, I'm horrified that my friend sent me a personal bedroom happiness helper...*and it isn't small...*at all.

But the meeting does set off some magic with Liam and I start to question if my job is all I need in life.

Liam is confident, charismatic, and simply magical when it comes to helping me decompress from stress.

Could he be the thing that's missing most from my life... and my bedroom?

Sasha's Surprise is the first in the Babes in Toyland series of heartwarming, humorous, instalove stories. No cheating. No cliffhangers. Always a happily ever after.

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THREE WEEKS AGO...

DANICA, SASHA'S BEST FRIEND

I scroll through pages of potential gifts, my cheeks tingling at the sight of some of the options. The site I'm on definitely has no shortage of... *variety*.

I've been waiting for over two months for Christmas to be around the corner to warrant buying this gift. At first, the idea started out as an innocent enough joke, something to make my girlfriend, Sasha, and I have a good laugh. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized my quest isn't a joke.

It *isn't* a joke.

That woman needs some stimulation in her ho-hum life. She needs more hum and maybe even a little more ho. But the buzzing kind of hum might have to do.

It isn't that Sasha can't find a man, or even just a good playmate for the night. The woman is gorgeous, hilarious, and has her life all together. It's that my crazy friend won't separate herself from her job long enough to bother looking, or let anyone in. Her past has a grip on her and I just wish I could see her find love.

I admire how passionate she is about being a pediatrician. Her drive is one of the things that makes her so damn beautiful in the first place. She lives for her patients. But she's in her mid-thirties, the years are going by fast, and I'm starting to get seriously worried she's going to die regretting that she didn't take a chance.

But maybe this is my chance to make her consider stepping outside that self-imposed comfort-zone.

I look through all the toys, wondering what would make Sasha really scream—or cream—and maybe say “WTF” a dozen times, but scream nonetheless. The girl needs a good get-me-off device. If she isn’t going to find a man, the least she can do is learn to relax and take proper care of herself.

My eyes light up when I see the perfect one—aptly named *The Giant*.

“Oh...my,” I say with a giggle as I scroll through photos of the monstrosity. “Wow, now *that’s* impressive!” I click “Add to Cart” without hesitation.

Girlfriend, you’re either going to find someone or love The Giant you’re with.

On the checkout screen, I type in “Sasha Bridger” and her address, referencing the zip code on the notepad beside me. I read aloud as I type the gift’s note, “Since you seem to have given up on finding a real one, enjoy! Get on it, sister—literally. Love you to Cali and back, Danica.”

I hit Send and squeal in delight at my job well done.

Christmas is *coming* a little early this year for Sasha... and hopefully it won’t be the only thing!

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SASHA

I take a deep breath and force a smile as I walk the last patient and his mother out while “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” plays on the overhead music system. It’s still a week before Christmas, but I’m already a little tired of how red Rudolph’s nose is and how Grandma can’t stay out of the way of a fast-moving sleigh.

I let out a long breath. My pediatrics office has been non-stop since opening this morning, and this Thursday has been one for the record books. I’ve been hurled on—twice. Thought about testing a little boy who bit me for rabies, and I laughed to myself to keep from saying the comment out loud to his shocked mother and chance sounding a little rabid myself.

Lunch was hardly a reprieve. I took all of a minute to scarf down my food—leftover mac and cheese that I shoveled into my piehole in two bites. I’ve definitely had easier Thursdays... but I wouldn’t give up being a pediatrician for the world.

My job and the children I help mean everything to me. So much so that I don’t have any children of my own. I definitely want to have them someday, but that generally requires finding a man first—although I have explored the alternatives, and who has time for relationships when they work sixty-plus hours a week?

The lights click off and I’m surrounded by darkness. The sound system abruptly stops crooning and the silence is

slightly chilling. Thankfully, southern California isn't anywhere near cold in December and when I head outside, I'll be able to put the top down on my Mustang. She was a gift to myself last year and I haven't regretted the purchase since. Of course, since it took me six years to get up the gumption to actually buy one, the regret had already been felt prior to the purchase. I struggle with buyer's remorse and maybe that's why I treat all of my possessions with kid gloves. I don't want to have to find a replacement.

Huh, maybe that goes for men, too...

"Hello?" I call out, unsurprised when no one responds. The lights are on an automatic timer, one of the ways I keep myself from working *too* much, or at least what I consider too much. I'm used to being the first one in and the last one out of this place. My coworkers and many of my friends would say I spend too much time here and I need to find "balance". I mentally do air quotes around the word and then roll my eyes.

If I could sleep and shower here, I'd never leave.

Okay, I probably do need some "balance" and maybe my friends have a point, but I'll never tell them that.

A very small point. Miniscule. Almost undetectable.

My bestie, Danica, is the one who gets on my case the most. Which is funny coming from her, considering she's an Emergency Department doc putting in twelve to fourteen hour shifts. At least my patients are only here from eight to about six—that's only ten. But of course, she only works three days a week and I work five...and I'm here two hours before work and two hours after...

Sigh. Okay, I see her point...kinda.

Hard to ignore that my work has become all-consuming when a fellow doctor starts telling me that I need to take some time off and step away from the office.

Of course, Danica means well. She knows how much my work means to me. She takes her job seriously too. But she also has a far better work-life balance. She actually goes out

on dates and lets loose once in a while, and that's what she harps on me for.

I don't. Never. *Ever.*

I can't remember the last time I went out on a date. It had to be over a year ago, back when Danica convinced me to put a profile up on one of those fishy dating apps—and not the one that matches people who fish. It's out there, I promise. She met some guy on an app, she thought he was “the one”, so she was convinced I needed to try it too. Well, I did, and all I met were men who wanted an easy piece of you-know-what or who couldn't handle a woman making more money than them. They gave Neanderthals a bad name.

I punch in the alarm code and lock the office door, hopping into my Stang—aptly named Missy, Missy Stang—and cruise home. The familiar drive feels good. It's late in the evening and the last bit of sunlight is dappling my neighborhood as I drive in front of my house, a comforting sight after the day I've had.

As I pull into my driveway, I catch sight of a guy halfway down the block walking his dog. *Nice ass*, I think to myself with a chuckle. The way his buns are hugged by his straight-cut, deep blue jeans sparks a quiver between my thighs.

The good ones are always taken, pretty sure he would be with a body like that.

He notices me while his dog stops to sniff the street's mailbox and gives a little wave, so I wave back.

Damn, he's cute.

I watch him walk away for a moment before gathering up my purse and heading inside. “Not like I have time for a relationship anyway,” I mutter under my breath as I toss my keys and purse on the table and kick off my shoes.

Besides, a man like that probably wants a woman who dotes on him and gives him all her attention, not one who's already married to her job.

And I'm not changing for any man.

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LIAM

I bend forward, resting my hands on my thighs to catch my breath. I've been chasing Fortune, my golden retriever, for nearly half an hour now and I've lost him twice. The little bugger is like Houdini when it comes to escaping.

I originally named him Nugget because of his golden color, but after his second surgery at only five months old, he was better suited to Fortune. He's now had six surgeries total to remove foreign objects from his stomach.

He's lucky I love him so much because he sure is hellbent on eating stuff he isn't supposed to. And he's cost me more than a really nice vehicle in total...hence, the name...Fortune.

He's also been dead set on escaping our yard ever since we moved. We're new to the neighborhood and, of course, Fortune is determined to make friends with every single person and dog who lives here. He's harmless, but really, really frustrating sometimes.

My eyes spot him down the street on someone's front lawn. He's in the grass in front of their porch, head whipping back and forth as he mangles something in his powerful jaws.

Damn it, dog, what the heck do you have now?!

I muster up the energy to jog over, eager to take away the foreign object before he ends up costing me another vet trip. As I get closer, I see a long, flesh-colored item poking out from his mouth.

Oh my God, is that a cat?!

A sick feeling creeps into my stomach. I run faster. Fortune has the item pinned to the ground between his paws, lying there as he nonchalantly chews one end.

“Drop it!” I yell once I’m only a couple feet away.

He doesn’t listen. Doesn’t even bother to look at me. His ears lower as he keeps going to town on the item. He knows what he’s doing.

“Fortune, I said drop it!”

I’m happy when I get close enough to realize it’s definitely not an animal. Still, I can’t quite make out what it is. A stick? A bone?

He pulls me to the ground as I wrestle the item from his mouth. He runs off, circling back to position himself a couple feet away from me. His head is down, butt high, as his tail wags, and he’s panting and barking as he waits for me to throw the mystery item.

“No chance, buddy,” I say as I inspect the item. At first it looks like a bone, but as I turn it around, I quickly notice that the item is far more... *phallic*.

It’s not a bone—it’s a boner!

I shout-whisper at my dog, holding the item gingerly now, “Did you bite off some guy’s parts? That’s low, even for...wait a minute...”

Bits of the item are scattered around, but there’s no blood anywhere.

I burst out laughing, partially in relief and partially at the absurdity of the situation as I hold the mangled, and pretty impressive, personal pleasure device.

“Damn, boy. You’ve murdered some poor lady’s cavern-banana. And judging by the size and heft of it, this thing probably wasn’t cheap. Where did you find this, anyway?”

I quickly notice the bits of packaging scattered on the ground, a trail of paper and cardboard leading across the lawn

to the front door. I pick up the plastic container the item was housed in, then what's left of the box.

Crap. Am I going to have to replace this? And how do you tell your new neighbor, "My dog ate your ding-dong?"

I get Fortune clipped into his harness and hook him up to his leash and he about pulls my arm out of its socket.

"You have to stop running away like this, boy. You keep getting us both in a lot of trouble."

He barks happily, jumping up on my hip and trying to snatch the mangled wiener out from under my arm.

"Down, boy! Fortune, down!"

He backs off and sits on the ground, staring up at me with those dopey, honey-colored eyes.

I shake my head. "You are friggin' weird, dog."

My heart jolts as I hear the garage door on the front of the house beginning to open.

"Shit!" I gather up the rest of the bits of packaging and duck behind the row of hedges along the front of the lawn, narrowly making it onto the sidewalk before the car starts pulling into the driveway.

Looking back, I see a stunning woman with chocolate brown hair and bright eyes staring at me. I shove the rubber-rod and boxes further into my armpit, doing my best to conceal all with my coat. I take a couple steps down the sidewalk, acting casual, before glancing back again.

I wave and the gorgeous woman waves and smiles, making my heart jump in my chest. She's got one of those smiles that makes everything feel right in the world, even after your dog just chewed the crap out of her new bedroom best friend. The fact she's hot only makes the situation more embarrassing. Hopefully, I can replace the package before she notices.

I wave back at her, watching as she pulls into the garage and the door closes behind her. *Damn.*

I walk Fortune home, the cool night air chilling my hands. Once inside my house, I call the emergency vet and have a quick chat about what happened...for a \$100 charge over the phone. Since Fortune used it as a gnawing stick and didn't seem to ingest any of it, the vet recommends staying home and keeping an eye on him over the next seventy-two hours, which is a relief.

But the fact the vet tech can't stop laughing in the background is mortifying.

Sitting at my kitchen table, I'm better able to examine the packaging. I read the personal note written on the gift tag: *Since you seem to have given up on finding a real one, enjoy! Get on it, sister—literally. Love you to Cali and back, Danica.*

The fake man-part was a gift! At least Ms.—I examine the label—*Dr. Sasha Bridger*—won't be expecting this package on a particular day.

Wait... she's a doctor?

I leave the shredded package on the kitchen table and head to the living room. I grab my laptop and flop onto the couch, quickly punching her name into Google. I'm quickly met with a bunch of search results and photos. Apparently, she's a pediatrician at a clinic not far from here.

Damn, she's gorgeous and super smart!

There's a quick stirring in my pants as I click through the photos of her. Her sparkling caramel eyes and perky red lips are even better looking up close. And now I'm sitting here, with her giant pecker—or what's left of it—sitting on my kitchen table, wondering what a beautiful woman like her needs with this faux manmeat and imagining her using said manmeat.

What a complete nightmare.

I debate what to do. Do I try to replace it? Do I ignore the incident altogether?

A thought hits me that makes my stomach clench. Does she have one of those front door cameras? Everyone seems to have them these days, and I walked right up onto her porch.

Crap.

I decide replacing the gift is my only option. Dr. Sasha didn't just see my face, she waved at me and smiled. If she has footage of me scrambling off her porch with this thing under my arm, I'll never be able to show my face in this neighborhood again.

And the thought of not seeing her face again is just as looming as having to embarrass myself when I see her with the replacement.

I type "giant cock" into the search engine, hoping to find an exact replacement.

Oh god, my eyes!

I refrain from pinching my eyes closed as hundreds of real-life pictures spring onto the screen.

Not that...Not...that.

I add "adult toy" to the search and devices and gizmos fill my screen. I never realized women had so many options when it came to these things. Finding a replacement is starting to feel impossible, then an idea hits me.

I take my laptop to the kitchen and inspect the packaging again. I discover the surprise gift is called *The Giant*—aptly named based on its length and impressive girth. For a moment, I'm a bit intimidated, but ultimately decide I measure up.

Besides, nothing can compare to the real thing when it's used right...right?

I puff out my chest and Fortune tips his head, seemingly unimpressed.

I add the words 'The Giant' to the search bar and voila! The same make and model.

Whoa.

The list of the toy's statistics boasts a nine-inch length and a two-inch diameter.

Well, well...

The image of Dr. Sasha Bridger using this thing floods my mind. My cock twitches and my cheeks burn.

I finally shake free from my imagination. Good for her. I like a woman who knows what she likes and can find her own happiness. Even so, I'd love to show her how happy I could make her given the chance.

I hold what's left of the chick-stick in my hand, my manhood pulsing in my pants at the weight of it. I'd be just as down to sit there and watch her use one of these as I would to give her the real thing. My pants tighten at the thought, my hands fumbling and dropping the monster.

It thuds on the floor, Fortune diving out from under the table like a furry ninja.

I snatch it up just in time to keep it out of his snapping jaws. "Nuh uh, not this time, dog!"

I get back on my computer after setting the toy on the table, ordering its replacement. Maybe this whole bizarre situation isn't so terrible after all. After all, this is the perfect excuse to formally introduce myself to Dr. Sasha Bridger.

The fact she's a doctor sends a tingle down my spine. I love smart women. My ex was a lawyer, like myself. I thought we'd be together forever. Everything seemed so perfect at first, but by the time I started thinking about asking her to marry me, she asked if I felt "the spark". I wanted to say yes, but that would've been a lie, and I couldn't do that to her. We weren't meant to be.

I've buried myself in work since then, ignoring women and relationships altogether.

But I'm finding it impossible to ignore thoughts of Sasha Bridger.

I finish putting in the order details and click to confirm. The silicone gift has more than just impressive size going for it—it also vibrates and has a one-day delivery. *Thanks for that.*

I look down at Fortune. He's sitting there, head cocked, whimpering at me as he glances at the mess of packaging and mangled toy on the table.

I scratch behind his ear.

“Dog, if you weren’t so fuckin’ cute you’d be long gone. Let’s hope that your boneheaded ridiculousness doesn’t get *me* in the doghouse.”

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SASHA

I finish my last sun salutation, hands in a prayer pose as I inhale and exhale deeply one last time. Nothing like a good yoga session to start my Saturday off right.

I'm toweling off my face and neck when the doorbell rings. *Weird, I'm not expecting anybody.* I check my phone and see the hot guy from the other night standing on my porch with his adorable dog, a brown box tucked under his arm.

His gray sweats, a tight t-shirt, and a ball cap create the trifecta of a hot guy in my books.

"Just a second!" I raise my ponytail a little higher and ditch the damp hand towel before heading to the door.

"Hi," I say, opening the door. "How can I help you?"

"I think it's how I can help you."

I start to get a little uncomfortable, but his quick smile tamps down any questions I have.

"I think you're the guy walking your dog past my house the other night, right?"

He rocks in his sneakers. "Yeah, that's me. I'm Liam Victor. I'm a... neighbor, sort of. I live a couple blocks away. My dog escaped from the yard the other day and I found him in front of your house."

"Oh. Good thing you found him. I'm Sasha, Sasha Bridger." I extend a hand, then awkwardly take it back when I

realize he's got his hands full with the leash and the parcel.

"Yeah, I, uh, know who you are, Dr. Bridger."

That original discomfort quickly returns. "How do you know I'm a doctor?"

"Honestly, I looked you up after I found your name on the package my dog destroyed. I wanted to come over and apologize in person, and give you the replacement."

He hands me the brown box. There's a note taped to the top of it.

"The note came with the original package," he explains.

"I see." I open the box without reading the note first, quickly understanding his discomfort. My face scorches with the heat of embarrassment as I see what's inside the box. "Are you sure this is what was in the box?"

He rubs the back of his neck and cringes. "I have the, um... damaged item... at home."

After reading the note, I force a flustered smile. "I am *so* sorry about this. My friend, Danica, thinks she's funny." A hot blush rises up my neck and my cheeks burn like the sun.

"No need to apologize." Sandy blond hair peeks out from under his cap, and his eyes smolder a smoky blue. They're captivating, but his reassuring glance offers minimal consolation. "It's me who should be sorry. My dog, Fortune, is a bit of a troublemaker."

As if on cue, Fortune jumps up and tries to snatch the box from my hands. I swing around to avoid him, flinging the package's contents back through the open doorway and into my foyer.

"Fortune, off." Liam pulls the unruly beast away as he tries to lunge into my house to retrieve the item. "Sorry, Sasha, Seriously, he's a really sweet dog when he isn't trying to eat anything and everything in sight."

I close the door behind me, hopefully leaving my embarrassment on the floor as I hold the empty box. Liam

steps back, but our arms brush as he does it and my body tingles dangerously.

I reach down and pet Fortune's head. "It's okay, I totally get it. I had a kid randomly bite me the other day at work. Children and animals are both cute... when they're not busy chomping on things and people."

Liam laughs. "Agreed." He takes a step backward and Fortune still sits in front of me looking for more attention. "Fortune, let's go."

He ignores Liam's request and lays down and rolls over.

"Dog. Now." He holds out a treat. "Treat."

Fortune's stomach gets the better of him. He bolts to Liam's feet.

I shake my head. "And they say the way to a man's heart is with food."

"I think we know his Achille's heel."

Fortune eats the treat in two bites.

Liam smirks and a dimple divots the side of his cheek. "Well, I'll leave you to enjoy your, ahem... day, I guess. It was nice meeting you, Sasha."

"Nice meeting you too, Liam." My stomach drops and I open my mouth to ask him something, anything, to keep him here. But the feeling is so weird that I'm frozen.

He makes it halfway down the path when he turns back. "Hey, since I'm new to the neighborhood, would you wanna have pizza and beer with me one night soon? I'd really love to make this whole thing up to you."

I bite my bottom lip. It's been a long time since anyone this handsome asked me on a date. I inhale a deep breath. What do I have to lose? "Okay, sure. That'd be nice."

"Great." He pulls Fortune toward him, the dog whimpering and fighting a bit before giving in and following him. "Sorry, again for Fortune's misfortune, and... enjoy your gift."

I roll my eyes. "Funny..."

He winks and a long shiver runs my spine. I chalk the response up to the cool morning and my minimal amount of clothing.

But it's not.

I head inside and shut the door before my brain explodes.

What the hell just happened?

I pick up the mass of fleshy pink silicone from the floor and read the note one more time. Only Danica could get me into a situation this awkward and embarrassing. Well, her and Fortune.

At least I got a date out of it. She'll be happy about that.

I drop the package on the kitchen counter and call her. After explaining what happened, she bursts into a fit of laughter.

“You could also use the love-stick with someone, you know,” she says. “Someone like...*Liam?*”

“I’m hanging up now,” I say, abruptly ending the call, only to hear her laughing more before I hit the End button.

Seriously, that woman.

I love her like a sister, but this might be right on the edge of my tolerance.

I glance across the room at the present. Wandering over to it, I examine the gift and the plastic packaging. The veiny effigy is definitely nothing I would have picked out for myself. I roll my eyes. Oh, Danica.

But the longer I stare at it, the more my stomach clenches with need. It’s been a long time since I’ve been with a man, or a man-part replica. It makes me think about Liam and what sort of authentic gift he was hiding in those gray sweatpants.

I grab my phone, realizing the whole ordeal with Fortune had to have been caught by my front door cam. I can’t help but laugh as I scroll back through the footage, watching poor Liam wrestle the mutilated toy from Fortune’s mouth and then the reaction on his face when realizes what’s in his hand.

And then there's his scramble to grab it all. I'm actually glad he didn't approach me that night. Pretty sure I would have called the police.

That dog has some serious issues, but he is cute as hell.

But his owner is even cuter.

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**LIAM**

I shut the door and let Fortune off the leash. I can't tell if that exchange went better than expected or not. I expected to die of embarrassment. Since I'm still alive, I'm calling it a win.

And Sasha accepted my invite to pizza and beer, so it's a win-win.

Fortune runs into the living room and plops himself onto the couch. The place he's not supposed to be.

Maybe you're not so bad. You did get me a date.

I hang up my jacket and kick off my shoes, then head straight for the kitchen. I pull a glass from the cupboard and pour myself a splash of whiskey over ice. Surviving the humiliation that is Fortune deserves a drink.

As I sit on the couch and take a sip, my mind wanders to naughty thoughts of Sasha. Has she opened her gift? Is she at home playing with that monster right now? Maybe she's having a hot shower for two, getting acquainted with her new friend.

Then again, something that smooth is sure to get damn slippery, and the sheer weight of the thing would make it tricky to hold in action. Nah, she'd probably use it in the bedroom, legs spread while she lies there with it buried in her

Stop it.

I take another sip of my whiskey, trying to calm my nerves. I need to show Dr. Sasha Bridger exactly how interested in her I am.

Toy or no toy, I can't get her out of my head and I'm ready to make my play to be her new boytoy.

No batteries needed.



I RING THE DOORBELL, HOLDING A PIZZA IN ONE HAND AND A six-pack in the other. The three whiskeys I drank last night did little to dampen the naughty thoughts in my head. I ended up relieving myself in the shower while thinking about Sasha using that gargantuan hot-rod.

I swallow hard, pushing the thought from my mind best I can. I need to be on my best behavior tonight to show her I'm genuinely interested in more than just kinky fuckery.

"Liam. Hi," she says as she opens the door with a soft smile and wide eyes. "What's going on?" Her hair is up in a messy bun, and her perky, sizeable chest is covered by a sheer tank top that provides a fairly unobstructed view of her perky nipples. She crosses her arms over her chest, and I clear my throat as I avert my gaze.

"Thought I'd see if you were up to having that pizza tonight," I say, motioning with the box. "But if it's not a good time—"

"Um...no, no, come in. I was just deciding between boxed mac and cheese or last night's Chinese takeout leftover, so it's actually a great time." She ushers me inside and closes the door behind me. She takes the pizza from me, setting the box down on a countertop. I make myself at home, adding the beer to the selections in her fridge. Love a woman who is adventurous in trying new brews.

She clears her throat. "When you said you wanted to do dinner, I didn't realize you meant the next night."

“I’m sorry. I would have given you a heads up, but I realized I was an idiot yesterday and didn’t get your number.”

“That’s right. I’m happy you’re here,” she says, smiling sweetly. “You didn’t bring Fortune. Isn’t he going to be sad?”

I shake my head. “Nah, he’s at home in a time-out for eating a roll of toilet paper.”

“Toilet paper?” she laughs through the words, pulling out some plates and grabbing two bottles from the fridge. She’s effortless and I wonder what it would be like to live like this every day, easy and comfortable. “Is there anything that dog won’t eat?”

“Yeah, sushi.”

“Sushi?” She glances over her shoulder as she washes her hands before putting a couple slices of pizza on each plate, a quizzical look adorning her face.

“Apparently raw fish is his nemesis. He does this weird pull-back thing with his upper lip and crosses his eyes any time I have it.”

Sasha snorts. “Don’t take this the wrong way, Liam, but your dog is weird.” She hands me a plate and a beer, then grabs her own and motions for me to follow her.

“Oh, I know. Trust me, if he wasn’t so cute, I’d question my sanity. I originally named him Nugget, but after his second stomach surgery at five months old, I changed his name to Fortune, because that’s exactly what he was costing me. The doggie daycare has caught him eating another dog’s hair off of their body and once he swallowed someone’s pair of gloves... off of their hands. The vet thinks he might have pica—the urge to eat non-food items—but I think he’s just... Fortune. Weird. Completely unique.”

She shakes her head. “He’s lucky to have you. Someone who loves him so much, and someone who can afford all those surgeries. Speaking of...what do you do for work?” The way she takes a bite of her pizza as she stares at me with those whiskey eyes has the room feeling a thousand degrees hotter.

“Nice segue, Dr.” I smirk and she raises and lowers her toned shoulders quickly. “I’m a lawyer,” I say, to which both her eyebrows perk slightly.

“Interesting. Do you enjoy it?”

“Not sure it’s as interesting as it is boring, but yes, I do enjoy it. My family is full of lawyers. I think our DNA is made up of torts, briefs, and case law.” I take a swig of my beer, hoping the cold liquid can chill the heat wave crashing over me. Nothing can cool me when *she’s* on my mind.

“You’ve got a really nice place here.” I distract myself from thoughts that creep in from the sides of my mind. “Obviously, being a doctor isn’t anything to sneeze at, either.”

“Thanks,” she says, “I guess it’s not. We both went through a lot of schooling to land our dream careers, huh?”

“That we did, Dr. Bridger,” I say with a grin. “That we did.”

“And I suppose you put in long hours at the office.” The question is interesting. Most women concentrate on hobbies and *what* I do, not what it takes to *do* what I do.

“Not as long as I used to.” I lean back into the sofa and run my arm along the back. If I just moved two inches to my right, I could touch her shoulder. But not yet. I see caution in her eyes. This woman has caution tape across her body. Not yet. “I think I’ve learned there are better things to spend my time on in life.”

And you, Sasha, will be one of those things...

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SASHA

The late afternoon turns to evening and then to night as the conversation flows. Before I realize it, we're both on our third and last bottle from the six-pack. Beer tastes better with pizza. Or maybe pizza tastes better with beer. Either way, he's hit one of my Achille's heels. I'd eat pizza daily, if I could.

I've never been one to shy away from tough conversations. Delivering bad news isn't fun, but it has to be done. But the worse part is learning the bad news and I'm cautious as to what truth hides behind those sparkling eyes.

"So," I stretch out the word, attempting to steer the conversation in a new direction but without a smooth segue, "how come you don't have a ring on your finger? Ever been married before?"

Liam leans forward, his T-shirt rising to show that ledge that makes women crazy. I understand the human body in its parts, but sometimes it still makes me amazed at how beautiful it can be.

He slides a coaster toward him and sets his last beer on the table. "I feel like I'm going to be interrogated."

"Well, you should be used to it."

He laughs. "You never get used to being the one on the stand."

I sigh. If he won't tell me, that's a big red flag in my mind. "I'm just curious. You seem like..." I search for words that

accurately reflect my thoughts.

“Yes?” he asks with a curious tip of his head.

“Like you have everything going for you.”

Liam shakes his head, the bright light in his turquoise eyes turning to a haze of gray sadness. “Up until recently, I was seeing someone for quite a while. She was a lawyer, like me. I thought we’d go the distance. We had everything in common, same likes, same dislikes. I was planning on proposing, but then she asked me if I felt *the spark*... and the truth was, I didn’t.”

I cock my head to the side, sipping my drink. “And a spark is important to you?”

“Isn’t it to you?”

I don’t think I’ve ever thought of anything outside of compatibility. I know what I want and what I don’t want. But spark is outside of my paygrade.

My parents married for spark and little good that did to keep the fire burning.

“I don’t know,” I say, biting my bottom lip. I don’t look into his eyes. The truth feels harsh. “I’ve never felt a spark before.”

He moves closer to me on the couch. His deep and rich cologne invades the space between us—something warm and almost cozy. Like Liam. His proximity gives me an even better look at the way his T-shirt hugs his muscular chest and stomach. His bicep flexes as he takes another swig of his drink, and my cheeks flush at the way he makes me tingle between my thighs.

Then my phone buzzes. *Shit*.

“I’m sorry, I have to get that. I’m on call,” I explain, rushing over to the counter where I’ve left my phone. My body clenches deliciously and the brushing of my yoga pants almost sends me into orbit.

The conversation ends up being nearly fifteen minutes long, but he sits there patiently until I return, and when I do,

he smiles warmly, surprisingly not looking the least bit annoyed. I've dated men who expected to be the center of the date, not understanding the importance of being there when a child is sick or a parent has questions that can't be answered by the on-duty nurse. I slide back onto the couch, maybe a little closer to him.

Not...*not*...on purpose.

I decide to face the elephant in the room head on. Either he understands or he decides it's not something he can deal with.

I lift my phone. "This is why I'm not with anyone," I confess with wiggle of the metal monster. "I don't think anyone could handle the fact that I'm married to my work."

His hand slides onto my thigh, and the heat radiating from his skin to mine sends a coursing electricity up my leg and straight to the parts of me that have been neglected for a little too long. *Holy shit.*

"Do you want someone special in your life, Sasha?" He leans in close. "Someone who can understand your dedication. But maybe someone who would make you want to be home more, too?"

"Maybe." My voice comes out breathier than I intended, chock full of need and desire and the desperate want to be fulfilled by a man in a way I'm sure he's well equipped to handle. "Is that someone you?"

He leans forward, wrapping a hand around my head, tangling in my hair, and with intent he draws my face to his. The way he kisses is possessive. It's a claim that I'm not sure I understand, or maybe I'm not prepared to. It's new and different, but ultimately, I want this. I need this. The touch of our lips lights up my every nerve from my mouth to my toes, every inch of my body pulses with a culmination of years of need.

A match ignites and the burn starts deep in my belly.

Is that the spark? How do I know?

I want him so fucking badly, but I'm not sure I'm ready for what he's proposing, and I don't do one-night stands. It's just

not in me to hit it and quit it, that's too hard to justify as being my way. And falling for Liam would be easy.

Too easy.

When he pulls away, I immediately miss the feeling of being attached to him by our lips. I back farther from him before he can kiss me again, fighting the resonant craving to invite him upstairs. I have to remain in control. I have so much to lose.

Like my heart.

My needs play second fiddle to my ever logic head. One night of connection doesn't make for a night of passion. I need time, even if I swear my lady parts are going to jump off my body and follow him home like a lost puppy.

I swallow. "I... I need to get to bed, Liam. It's getting late, and I work in the morning."

"So do I," he offers with that damn smirk that fans the internal flames to grow. "Lead the way?"

I tip my head. "Very funny. I need to go to bed *alone*."

"Figured." He tips his head back, downing the rest of his drink, long threads of muscle pulse from his neck. He checks his watch. "And I need to get home and let Fortune out before he eats his own foot."

"Is that a potential issue?"

His brows go up. "I never estimate or guess what that dog's issues are."

"He may need therapy."

"Just another vet bill..." He toasts his empty bottle to the words.

We get up from the couch and I walk him to the front door. After he's pulled his shoes and jacket on, he leans to me and pecks me on the cheek. The soft touch is as rousing as the hard kiss was. Gentlemanly, easy going, and yet, manly. My heart trips in my chest. He doesn't push and that means more to me than he'll ever know.

“I had a great evening, Sasha. Really. Would you like to go for dinner sometime...soon?”

I hope he can't hear my heart beating a mile a minute. I don't want to come off as desperate, despite how badly I want to say yes to anything and everything he might be hoping for.

“Sure. Well, maybe. I am pretty busy right now.” The old me starts to creep in and I hate how his smile drops even a fraction. “Let me check my calendar and get back to you.”

“Great,” he says, offering me a boosted smile. “Have a good night, Sasha.”

“You too,” I say, closing the door after he steps out and exhaling all the air I've been holding in my lungs.

I check my phone and see a text.

Danica: Drinks tomorrow after work?

Sasha: Sure, then I can give you that gift back.

Not even two minutes have passed when I hear the ping signaling Danica's reply.

Danica: Fine—but not like I can donate it to a thrift store. Are you seriously THAT afraid of your body, girl? Why not just try it? You might like it. Just sayin'.

I stare at my phone, not bothering to reply as I ponder the words on the screen. Am I afraid of my body? Why? It's not like I have any reason to be afraid. I have a nice body, at least I think so. I've got decent skin, thicker than average hair, and slick, tight curves in places that often catch a man's gaze. What's stopping me from exploring?

What is keeping me from making myself happy—literally? And in so many ways.

I shake off the thought and head back to the living room. I stretch out on the couch and decide to put on a movie, still too wired from the evening's events to crawl into bed. I pick “40 Days and 40 Nights.” I'm only half paying attention, but then the sex scene comes on and thoughts of Liam and all the things I want him to do to me flood my mind.

My clit throbs against the thin fabric of my pink lounge pants, a spot on them now damp with desire. I let a hand slip past my waistband and into my panties, sliding over my smooth mound and tracing my lips until they quiver against my fingertips.

My breathing grows raspy as I tease myself, running my middle finger up and down along my opening before popping it inside. I gasp at the sensation. I fight against my pants to stroke my body internally.

I'm not sure if it's the liquid courage from the three beers, or the way my body is still buzzing from Liam's company, but I jump up to retrieve the naughty present out of the hallway closet. I put it there with the intention of returning the gift to Danica, but I rip it out of the plastic packaging and head back to the TV.

I toss the huge, rubber man-meat onto the couch and fight my yoga pants and panties off with trembling fingers, then sit down beside the beastly *Giant*. I run my fingers over it gently, admiring the realistic sensation of the veiny texture.

I grip the massive cock with both hands, admiring the weight of it. Its head is smooth as I position it against my opening, spreading my legs a little wider as I begin to maneuver it inside. It's thick and I'm out of practice, but I'm slow and patient as the toy slowly pushes past my lips and into the puffiness that's already quivering to get a hard and fast release.

I've only got the head in when the first scream escapes my lips. The way *The Giant* fills and stretches me already has me wanting to reach the primal peak, but I take a few deep breaths, holding the monster still a moment before continuing to keep from ending this all too soon. When I'm relaxed, I turn the dial on the bottom of it and start up the vibrations.

I imagine it's Liam parting and filling me, his blue eyes clouded with a lusty need as he stares down at me, pressing his manhood into me as he claims me as his own. I think about the way he would kiss my neck and whisper how good I feel in my ear, letting the toy slip deeper inside me as I picture each

inch being Liam's sweet hot rod. The way it buzzes drives me wild with a cacophony of delight.

I fuck myself harder and deeper with the phallic lady-pleaser, letting its girth stroke me inside as my walls clamp down around its trembling length.

“Oh fuck, oh fuck... Yes, Liam! Liam! Fuck!” I scream at the top of my lungs as I reach the ever-elusive summit like a nuclear blast, not caring how loud I am as I writhe in ecstasy, only imagining that Liam joins my fall over the cliff.

I'm still trying to catch my breath when a pounding on my door pulls me from the hazy afterglow.

“Sasha! Sasha, are you okay?!”

Oh, shit. Did the whole neighborhood hear me? How loud was I?!

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LIAM

My heart thumps with each pound on her door.

“Fortune, knock it off,” I say as he nibbles on the leg of my jeans. He’s like a horse with his lips pulled back and just his teeth scraping the denim.

I don’t know what’s happened to Sasha, but I’m happy I was out here walking Fortune and heard her piercing cries.

As she opens the door, the flushed color of her cheeks hits me. The collection of hair atop her head is now cocked to the side and pieces are hanging out. Her clothing is as off-kilter as her appearance, with her t-shirt hanging haphazardly off her toned shoulder and her pants...*on backwards and inside out?* There’s a lax softness to her eyes that tells me she might not be in the state of emergency I originally pictured.

“Hi,” I say, fighting to gather my thoughts. “I, uh... Are you okay? I thought I heard screaming.”

Sasha’s face bursts crimson at the mention, and it immediately hits me what was *actually* going on. A barrage of suggestive images snapshot through my brain.

“Yeah. I was just, um... I’m fine.” Her voice is husky and rich. She’s panting softly, trying to catch her breath. Her bottom lip quivers as she stares up at me, but she quickly pulls it in between her teeth, my cock growing rock hard at the sight.

I don't stop to think about what I'm doing as I make my way inside and kick the door closed behind me. I don't even bother taking Fortune's leash off. I just let the leather strapping fall as I wrap my arms around Sasha's waist and pull her against me, lowering my face to hers and claiming her mouth with a ferociousness that I didn't even know I had in me. This woman makes me wild like an animal and a jolt of electricity rockets through my chest, burning the moment deep inside of me.

She parts her sweet lips, the taste of salty sweat lingering as my tongue pushes its way into her mouth. Her lips tremble against mine as I cup my hands around her buttocks, forcing her to moan as I squeeze and caress her voluptuous booty.

Still kissing, I back her into the kitchen, scooping her up in my arms and planting her on one of the cold, granite counters. I waste no time slipping her pants off, quickly aware of the fact she isn't wearing any panties.

At every turn this woman surprises me.

I glance up to look for the desire in her eyes, the mischievous gleam in them forcing beads of precum to trickle from me as I imagine what she was doing right before I arrived.

I part her thighs, letting my tongue slide up the length of the inner soft skin before planting my mouth on her tiny button and suckling the nectar that is as sweet as she is. Her head tips back and she moans.

“Oh shit...Liam, yes, please.”

She adjusts, her elbows planted on the counter to steady herself, watching everything I do with an eagle-eye. I might feel intimidated with any other woman, but with her, I'm only spurred on. I've argued million-dollar cases—and won all—but this...*this* feels like the most important plea of my life. I need this woman to feel and know how much I need and want her.

I flick my tongue over that tiny button of pleasure. Over and over, until she whimpers and moans fast and furious. *The*

Giant might have made her scream, but I'm going to show her how the real thing has real benefits and can stand up to any piece of plastic.

And damn, I'm standing at attention.

Her body writhes. "Liam, I need you..."

That's what I want to hear. She needs me. Now I want her to only want what I've got in my pants. No toy is going to show me up.

I stand and face her, kissing her hard as I let the taste of her own juices seep into her mouth. She wraps her arms around my neck as I unbutton my jeans, shoving them and my boxer briefs down until they fall to my ankles.

I'm ready to make her scream my name until her throat is raw. I scoot her to the edge of the counter and position myself at her softness, her body slick and warm. I ready myself to enter, anticipating the sweet embrace, but I don't know if I could ever be ready for this moment.

I'm coming home and the spark is like lightning to my gut.

Her walls squeeze me as I press on. Tight and wet and so welcoming. I can't force myself to take the slow and sweet pace I originally intended for her. My hands grip her lower back, forcing her forward until she's on the edge of the counter and available for me to thrust my full length inside.

My name bursts from her mouth as I bury my cock inside her, my gut clenching as I fight the base urge to detonate.

I gaze into her eyes and her lashes flash slow and heavy.

"Make love to me, Liam."

There's love here and I'm ready to make this woman mine.



SASHA

His fingers dig into my lower back, pinning my pelvis to his as he drives deep. My body is a big bubble ready to burst at

any moment. *The Giant* managed to get the initial job done, but it's nothing compared to the real thing. Liam's cock is just as thick and nearly as long, and the way he fits perfectly inside me is taking me to a whole new level of pleasure.

I'm sure if he has his way, it won't be long before the big bang happens and I'm helpless to stop it...but a little part of me is trying to hold off. I want so many things, but topping the list is to come with him. Hitting that point of pleasure where we both lose all reality, but it'll be so real.

This is real.

I push the thought away. It could be a moment in time. It could be right place at the right time. It could be I'm dreaming.

"Jesus, woman, you're so tight." He grunts every word through his clenched teeth.

"Yes, Liam! Fuck me harder." I surprise myself and by his wide eyes and that smirky smile, I surprise him, too. All the things he's doing to me have me nonsensical. My stomach buzzes...low and deep. A hum of something special to come.

Soon the tension reverberates between my thighs, tingling all my sweet spots and making me wish this would never end.

"You feel... so fucking good, baby," he grunts in my ear, right before he bites the drop of my earlobe. Just as I imagined he would when *The Giant* had me in the throes of pleasure.

"So do... so do you," I manage to say between pants and gasps.

He slams his hips back and forth faster, his balls slapping gently against my body with a pattering rhythm. I let go of his neck and lean back, placing my hands on the counter as I push myself forward and grind my button against his pelvis.

"Come with me, Sash," he commands, his voice deep as he surrenders every part of himself to me.

My body is more than happy to oblige.

"Oh, fuck!" I scream as the overwhelming sensation of an orgasmic tsunami hits me. He plants deep, ringing every drop

of my peak from me until I've fallen into the abyss of calm and serenity.

"Sasha..." he whispers my name as he thrusts forward, a guttural moan from deep inside his throat as he bottoms out inside me and fills me like no man ever has. And maybe never will again.

I love the way every moment feels, every pulse into me, every moan from his puffy lips, every scintillating remainder of my release that has me tingling through every nerve.

He folds forward and presses his forehead to my chest, our skin damp with a hot sweat as we both pant and try to regain focus.

"What's that?" I ask, the sound of chewing pulling my attention away from him.

"Shit!" He looks down and glares. "Fortune, stop it!"

I sit up enough to look over the counter's edge and see that, while we were having a good time and paying no attention, Fortune's been making a snack out of my purse.

"I'm so sorry. I'll totally replace it."

I pull Liam back to me and plant a soft kiss on his lips and smile. "Seriously, don't worry about it. Totally worth it."

He smiles, wiping away some rogue strands of hair that have clung to my forehead. He pecks my lips. "I should probably get him home." He pulls out and my stomach plummets, some weird after the high tumble that I'm not quite sure I understand.

"Oh. Right..." I mumble, sitting myself more upright as Liam pulls his pants back up. I scramble to get dressed, not embarrassment, but something more like fear coating me. Fear that he's going away. And will never come back.

Like happened with my parents.

"Tonight was amazing, Sasha," he says, kissing my forehead.

“It was.” I start to open my mouth when he pulls Fortune’s leash and is out on the front step.

“Ouch...” Fortune has him taking the steps two at a time.

Even his dog wants to get away from me. Nice.

“See you later?” I mean it to be a statement, but it comes out a question. I’m questioning a lot of everything right now.

“Sure. Sure. Have a good—” Fortune yanks on the leash and Liam’s words are as lost as I am at the moment.

I close the door behind him and sigh, still drinking in the sensation of everything that just transpired. But at the same time, a weird feeling creeps up in my chest, a twinge of... *sadness? Anger? Disappointment?*

Maybe all, but I’m definitely a bit hurt at the fact he left so quickly. As a self-proclaimed fine-without-a-man woman, it’s an odd feeling to admit, but there’s no denying that there was definitely what I’d call—and I’m no expert—a spark between us.

Then a crazy thought enters my mind... I *miss* him. I want to curl up next to him in bed. I want to snuggle. I want to have him here when I come home from work.

And that’s the biggest shock of the night.

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**SASHA**

Danica clinks her wine glass against mine, grinning from ear to ear. “Oh my god, Sasha! Good for you! See? I knew that *The Giant* was going to be good for you. I just didn’t know *how* good.”

“Shhhh...someone might actually know what that is.”

She rolls her eyes. “Doubtful.”

For some reason she winks at the guy behind us. They’ve been playing fuck-me eyes all night long.

“I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas” plays in the dive bar that Danica chose. Her kind of place. A little seedy. A little dark and dingy. And a lot of guys who are looking for one thing.

You go girl.

But I can’t help but smile at her gesture-banter as I sip my oaky chardonnay. “I don’t know, maybe it was just one good night.” The chardonnay makes a quick return to my throat and I force it back down.

“Maybe... or maybe you found someone who inspired something new in you, Sasha and you’re thinking that what happened to your parents will happen to you. You do know that some people stay together right.”

“But he practically ran away after, and he hasn’t texted me. Maybe he didn’t feel the...spark.”

Danica gives me a confused look. “Spark? What are you talking about?” She tips her head. “I’ve never felt a spark with anyone, ever. Did *you* feel a spark?”

I don’t answer, avoiding her gaze as I pretend to take a long sip of my drink.

“Wait, does he have your number?” Danica asks as she leans forward.

My heart drops into my stomach. My mouth drops open. “Shit, no. He doesn’t.”

Danica snorts over the rim of her glass. “Rookie move.”

“Thanks for that,” I huff.

“Then maybe *you* need to make the next move with *him*.”

I contemplate her words for a couple minutes before breathing out a long breath. “I don’t even know where he lives,” I mutter.

“She offers another cheeky grin. “At least you’ve still got *The Giant*. Definitely not going to give that away now, are you?”

I laugh and shake my head. “No. No I’m not.”

Danica raises her glass. “To *The Giant*,” she toasts.

“To *The Giant*,” I say, tapping my glass on hers.

We finish our wine and I order myself a Lyft. That wine was good, but I definitely had a couple glasses too many to be driving anywhere. I can always get a Lyft back to my car in the morning, and it’s better to be safe than sorry. And I always go for safety, even if with Liam, I let my guard down more than ever. Including not using protection. Not a smart move on behalf of the medical community and not something I let slide to my doctor girlfriend. She’d be ordering tests immediately.

But that’s the thing. I trusted him. I let him not only into my body, but into my heart.

The driver welcomes me as I climb into the back seat. A bushy, white synthetic beard hangs from his face, and he touts

a Santa hat and head-to-toe red Santa suit. *Tis the season*, I think to myself.

I lean my head on the window and watch the streets roll by as the gentle haze of the wine lulls me toward slumber.

The last thought on my mind before I drift off is Liam, and whether I'm going to see him again.

That *was* a spark.

Hell, it was a bonfire.

The question is, did he feel the burn, too?

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**LIAM**

I let out a disappointed sigh. It's getting a bit late and I'm surprised Sasha isn't home. My mind wanders with ridiculous notions. What if she's out on a date? What if she's staying at another guy's house? She wouldn't, not after the night we spent together... *Would she?*

Fortune jumps up, scratching at Sasha's door. "Come on, buddy. She's not here."

I turn around, pulling him off the porch. I don't make it down all the steps before a car pulls up in front of the house. The driver in a Santa outfit has me oscillating between curious and worried.

She wouldn't date Santa, right?

Sasha steps out. "Thank you, and Merry Christmas to you, too," she says to the man before shutting the door.

She stops when she turns and sees me standing there, the two of us taking each other in. She rolls her lips inward as she adjusts her semi-munched on purse. I thought that she'd trade it out for a fully intact one until I find a replacement, but it's adorable that she chose to keep it as is. It's like a child's first painting. It's priceless work of art to a parent but might look like garbage to someone else.

As she walks over, I rehearse exactly what I want to say to her.

How much she means to me, how I can't stop thinking about her, how the spark is burning hot and bright... How much I...how much love her.

“Hi,” she says, those big green eyes staring up at me with a lax and peaceful expression.

But all of my thoughts change when she gets close.

“Hi. Have you been drinking?” I ask, the smell of sweet and tangy wine on her breath.

“Danica—the friend who gave me...well, you know—and I went out and had a couple glasses of wine. That’s why I got a ride home.”

“From your friend, Santa?”

“Yeah, that was a little weird, and his sleigh smelled like something herbal, so I’m thinking he’s ho-ho-holidaying it up in there, so if that’s what you smell, it’s not me.”

I chuckle. “So he’s not competition?”

“Nope, just a ride home.”

So she wasn't with a man after all, just having a few drinks with her girlfriend.

“Good to hear.”

Everything we say seems in slow-motion. Like we both want this to continue...forever.

“Would you like to come inside? Fortune is welcome too, of course.”

“He’s going to jump all over you,” I say, following her to the front door as she unlocks it.

“No, he won’t.” She walks in and heads to the kitchen pantry. I follow her inside and wait, watching as she pulls something from the pantry, then crouches down facing us. “Fortune, come here, boy,” she says with a directness that I find so sexy.

He unexpectedly listens.

“Sit,” she commands, and he listens again. “Good boy.” She holds her hand out, letting him lap up the contents.

“Did you buy him treats?”

“Maybe,” she says with a grin. “See? He’s not a bad dog. He just needs a bit more training.”

“I’ve been trying to train him, but I guess I’m not the best at it. It’s hard since I work so much,” I say sheepishly.

“I get it,” she says, wandering over to me.

Fortune goes and lays down in a corner of the living room to munch his treat, leaving the two of us standing there alone together.

I wrap my arms around her, pulling her in and embracing the way she feels and smells. Even in our short time apart, I’ve missed her.

After all these years, I finally feel what I’ve been missing.

The spark...it's here.

“Is everything okay?” I ask.

“Why did you leave so suddenly?”

I nod. “I knew that was a mistake. I’m sorry. After talking about what I want from the next relationship, and after doing... what we did, I was feeling...” I swallow.

“Vulnerable.”

“And confused and a little like I wanted to rush into...us.” I pull her as close as I can. “We should be together, Sasha.”

She stares up at me, her eyes dewy with the onset of happy tears. “You feel it too?”

“You’re more than just a spark to me. You’re the fire in my heart, and I don’t ever want to go back to living a life without you. I want to protect you, to take care of you. I know we both work a lot, and that’s fine, but I’d definitely work a little less if it means coming home to you at the end of the day. Will you be my girlfriend?”

She flexes up onto her tiptoes and presses her lips to mine. “You know, that gift Danica got me was pretty impressive... but it definitely doesn’t compare to the real thing.”

I smile, warmth filling my heart. “Damn straight it doesn’t,” I say, claiming her lips and wondering if I’ll ever stop.

Never.

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EPILOGUE



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ONE YEAR LATER

SASHA

“I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride.”

Everyone cheers as Liam pulls me in close and kisses me, his lips lingering far longer than they should in front of family. I don't mind. All I care about is the fact that he's mine and I'm his, now and forever.

Our friends and family cheer as we head down the aisle together. The church is beautifully decorated with poinsettias, and green and gold ribbons hang from the walls and along the benches. Liam and I have been together a little more than a year, and we both didn't want to wait any longer. He's my one. The big and lasting spark—the bonfire I need. And when I told him I wanted to have a Christmas wedding, he was more than happy to oblige.

After the ceremony, we all head to the reception area to toast and enjoy a variety of finger foods and drink. Danica comes and sits next to me. She looks ravishing in her gold dress and with her hair and makeup done like she's a queen. She was, after all, my maid of honor.

“Here, thought you might need this,” she says with a grin, handing me a box wrapped in brown paper.

“What is it?”

“Open it.” The devilish twinkle to her eyes makes my stomach lurch.

“Is this okay to open in front of everyone?” I ask in a hushed whisper.

She rolls her eyes and laughs. “Yeah! Don’t worry. It’s not the same as the *last* gift I gave you in a brown box.”

Liam joins us at the table, returning from the restroom. “What’s that?”

“I don’t know,” I say, pulling the layer of paper off. We’re both eyeing the package curiously as I open the flaps and look inside.

“Thought you might need those,” Danica says.

“Holy smokes, Danica. How many pregnancy tests do you think we need?” Liam asks with a laugh.

“Everyone is really *buzzing* to hear you’re starting a family!” She bursts into a fit of giggles. “Alright, I need to use the ladies’ room. Excuse me, guys.”

Liam and I look at each other and shrug. He leans across the table and takes my hand in his, his lips hovering beside my ear.

“I guess she’ll be extra surprised when we tell her in a couple months that you’re already pregnant, hey?”

“I guess she will be. I love you, Liam Victor.”

“I love you too, Sasha Bridger-Victor,” he says, and the way he kisses me as the last word leaves his lips takes my breath away. He’s surprising me at every turn.

And to think all this started with a not-so-little do-it-yourselfie-stick, and now I have absolutely everything I’ve ever wanted.

Thanks, Danica. Can’t wait for you to open your gift that’s going to be delivered tomorrow. The Beast is on the way...

Thank you for reading. We’d love to hear what you thought in a review! [Sasha’s Surprise](#).

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Zena

Good job. Nice home. Growing bank account. I've got it all.

All except a man as my friend Zeek points out on the regular.

So Zeek decides to get me an early Christmas gift...a singing elf telegram with a present that makes me turn every shade of red when I open it.

But I've got bigger problems than a lively, rainbow meat stick...I've got plumbing problems.

When Harry, the comical elf, comes to my rescue, I reconsider my "I've got it all" stance.

Harry is honest, hard-working, and I can't get that silly elf and his ridiculously catchy song out of my head.

Maybe I need something more...I might just need a good plumbing.

Zena's Zing is the second in the Babes in Toyland series of heartwarming, humorous, instalove stories. No cheating. No

cliffhangers. Always a happily ever after.

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