



# SCORING

# Santa

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# BRITNEY BELL

# Scoring Santa

Britney Bell



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## Chapter 1 - Lennox

JUST ANOTHER DAY, WITH the same scenery, down the same old streets on my drive home. In fact, I pass by my childhood home almost every day. Don't get me wrong, I love my little town that I was born and raised in, and apparently, will grow old and die in, as well.

“Whoa, Nelly! Now *that* is a good change of scenery. Oh, yes, indeed. Look at those well-defined muscles pushing that lawnmower. I can only imagine that the rest of his body is just as fine. Shit!” Being distracted, I over-correct a little and my car veers to the right, nearly missing Mrs. Finkle's mailbox.

They say that fifty two percent of motor vehicle accidents happen within five miles of your home, and I just about added myself to that statistic. *Focus, Lennox.*

School starts in just a few short weeks, and that's all I need, to show up with a banged-up face for all of my students to laugh at. Highschool kids can be so mean, especially to geeky math teachers. I try to ignore their snickering behind my back, but sometimes it's hard to deal with, even at twenty-seven years



old. You would have thought I would have left the petty thoughts behind after high school, yet those memories of the so-called popular ones saying crap still taunts me as I walk down the identical halls. Only now, I'm a teacher here.

My garage door opens, and I pull in slowly, careful not to bump the wall in front of the car. As I turn the ignition off, I glance in the rearview mirror to see if I can finally tell who the new mystery man that moved in last week is. I haven't been able to see his face yet. Time seems to stand still while I simply admire this man's toned body flexing and working in the hot summer sun. I can't believe that his tan skin glistening with perspiration is making me so hot that I have to roll down the window.

He has a ball cap on, but I'm still hopeful that he'll show his face. He stops pushing the mower, takes the hem of his t-shirt and brings it up to his face to wipe the dirt and sweat away.

"Oh, have mercy on my soul. Those abs that form a perfect V shape down..." My tongue darts to the corners of my mouth to clear any drool that may have formed, just as he pulls his earbuds out of his ears and turns to face my garage, my car, and oh shit, *me*.

Our eyes connect in the mirror as I immediately sink into my car seat and try to hide from embarrassment. He looks familiar, but I just can't place who he is. How am I going to get out of this car without him seeing me? Not moving from my slumped form, I slowly reach my hand up to the sun visor to click the garage door opener to close the door.

I should have gotten the windows tinted when the car salesman tried to give me that add-on price to my hatchback Toyota Prius. But no, you can clearly see through the back of my car and into the mirror to see that I was totally in creeper mode.

I still wasn't able to tell who he was. However, I do know that my new neighbor will definitely be starring in my fantasies tonight.

Monday, I will start back to work, and I'm as anxious as I was starting a new school day during my high school years. It's exciting to set my classroom up and meet the new students. Yeah, there are those that are bratty teenagers, but the majority of the kids are well behaved and make my job fulfilling. Those are the ones who remind me why I chose this career path. Then, there are those other teachers that, unfortunately, I graduated with, and for God knows why, they went into teaching and chose this same school to come back to and torment.

Like, why? Why would the same mean girl from high school come back and teach here? She's the exact same one that was the leader of the group that always talked about leaving this tiny town and never returning. Also, they were the ones who laughed and snickered behind my back if I dropped my belongings in the hall, rather than stoop down and help me pick them up before they got trampled on. Those types of girls were the ones who wore the right things and fixed their hair and makeup perfectly just to gain all the boy's attention and

always made you feel like you could never be attractive or cool enough to get the guy who you were totally into.

Well, we are all grownups now, and I will give myself the same pep talk I did last year when they both were hired at Nelson County High. This is a new era, and there is no need to think like that any longer. I had the same education that they did to get where I am today, except I'm pretty sure that they did not graduate at the top of their college as an honors four point student.

I turn to the mirror hanging on the hallway wall, and I repeat the mantra out loud, "I am completely enough. I am attractive. I am cool enough, and I can be with anyone I so choose. Now, you go out there, Lennox, and you don't listen to a damn word they say. You will go to work next week, and you got this, girl."

## Chapter 2 - Nash

THERE IS A SHEEN of silver across the field from the morning watering the school grounds keepers never fails to do. At sunrise in late summer, there is a sense of calm standing in the middle of the field of an empty football stadium. I have done this same thing in some of the largest stadiums in the United States, yet nothing compares to the feeling I get standing in the very spot where I was mentored into the man I am today and where I was pushed to grow to accomplish all that I have been afforded in my short life thus far.

That is exactly why I am back here, standing in the place it all began. My hope is to help as many boys become men, and assist them in achieving their dreams, as possible. To show them that with hard work and determination, greatness *will* come.

Soon, this ground will be put to the test with fifty-five boys running up and down the turf, looking for that next big play to come their way. Will they be the one to catch the ball in the endzone for the game winning touchdown? Rather, will they

be the one to tackle the opposing team's ball carrier before he can make the first down? Each of those options could make the player feel like an impactful part of the team. Only time will tell. For now, they must physically train, learn safety, and know the plays like the back of their hand. They need to be prepared for anything that this game will throw at them and be able to make adjustments on the fly. That is the only way to be ahead of the competition and keep those trophies rolling in.

I take a slow walk through the field, past the weightroom, and into the coach's office. When I get there a few of the coaches have arrived and are sipping their coffee to try to wake up. A simple, "Morning," is passed around and everyone goes back to the silence of the early hour. We all know that this time is limited before the next ten hours of loud noise, pounding hot sun, and hours of strategic planning. High school coaches have long days during the season, and the rest of the year is busy with analyzing how to make it better the following year. The work never stops, and I love it. Playing at the professional level was long hours of work and traveling, but it was definitely not as gratifying as I know coaching at this level will be.

The next three hours fly by with putting the kids through their morning workouts, and all of us coaches watching the time because we are supposed to be in a mandatory staff meeting in the next hour. School has opened up for the teachers to return to their classrooms so they can prepare them to start school.

Whistles are blown to signal practice has ended for today, and I remind the kids to be back at 6pm to run through plays. The

coaches and I then rush to the office to freshen up, doing our best since we do not have the full setup of a pro-level locker room.

When we finally make it inside the school building, I stop by my staff mailbox to see if I have had any letters from colleges that are trying to recruit, hoping that I can match a few guys up with their schools. I am stopped dead in my tracks when I'm met with a pair of eyes, no, the same pair of eyes I just saw yesterday, staring back at me. The slim figured, brunette's back is to me, but her front is facing the copy machine and she's looking in the mirror hanging on the wall.

Lucky for me, the mail slots are just to the side of the copier, so at least I won't seem like a crazy person when I go talk to her. I gingerly approach, as if the scared little foe will hop away.

The distance is still too far, but it will have to do. I'm a foot away, so I lean over her shoulder and whisper in her ear, "Do you live across the street from me and drive a white Prius?" She turns around so fast that her hair slaps me across my face.

"What? Huh? You live across the street? Aren't you Nash Witten?"

"The one and only," I answer with a wink and refuse to back away out of her personal space.

"We went to high school together," she says. "I'm Lennox Moore."

“That’s correct, Lenny. We sure did.” I watch as her cheeks turn a shade pink on her pale skin.

“Oh, not too many people call me that anymore.”

“Why not? I think it suits you,” I question.

“Haha, that’s funny. You don’t even know me, not even from high school. We were in completely opposite worlds back then.” Well, she does have a point there. Though, that doesn’t negate the fact that I would certainly like to get to know her and those luscious looking lips and fine full breasts on that lean frame.

Before I am able to counter back, the loud intercom speaker cracks to life right above our heads, and I scowl up at it for interrupting me. “Attention. Attention. All staff please report to the auditorium. The teachers’ assembly will begin in five minutes.” The announcer is not even finished talking yet, and she has grabbed her things and is walking out the door. Oh, Lennox Moore, this is not over. I *will* get to know you.

## Chapter 3 - Lennox

HOURS GO BY OF the same boring spiel we get prior to the schedules and student rosters being handed out. Honestly, I am not sure how much of it I actually retained because my mind was whirling over the fact that the stranger that moved in across the street is no other than Nash Witten. Yes, I knew he was going to be a coach here now, the head coach to be exact.

Yet, I didn't have a clue that he would move in directly across the street. I mean, this man probably has more money than the Queen of England. Why in the world would he live in my neighborhood? It's not a bad one. It's just normal, middle to lower-middle class. It's affordable on a single teacher's salary in a small town, which is not much. I still have to watch my spending, or I would be in trouble.

On a one-way course to my classroom, there he is again, standing at the end of the hall with *her*. The one who made my life hell through high school, and the one that came back to be a teacher here, knowing full well I worked here too. Vanessa was, still is, one of popular girls that was, is, too good for us



nerds to even breathe the same air as them. *So they say*, I think to myself with an eye roll. When my eyes come back into focus from rolling so hard, the two of them are still talking and laughing together with Vanessa patting Nash's arm, shoulder, pretty much anywhere she can get away with without having a sexual harassment charge, be brought against her.

The two of them are perfect together. Just like old times. Looks like not much has changed. If I didn't love Kissing Springs and like living close to my parents, I would have been out of here as soon as I heard that Vanessa was hired.

But as for him, that young boy I remember from high school, he has filled that tall frame out quite well into a fit, muscular, defined man. A hot and sexy man. Mercy, what do they even have the temperature set at in these halls because it is warm in here? I fan my shirt, trying to cool myself off and turn into my classroom, where I feel a gust of cold air just as soon as I open the door. Thank goodness. I rush over to my desk chair and plop down to give my shaking limbs a break. The chair is grounding me, but the feeling of heat is still there, so I lean over and place my head directly on the cool surface of the wooden desk. "Ugh!" I groan aloud to no one. "Fuck it. I don't have to stay here."

I scramble to get my purse and key so I can leave. This time, when I enter the hallway, I don't even bother to look down toward the end to see if they are still standing there. I don't want to know.

Of course, the car's air conditioner doesn't even start to cool before I make it home, but I figured out one thing on my short drive. It is not the temperature outside or in the building that is the issue. It is the temperature in my core, an aching desire that needs a release. And I have just the thing to remedy this illness, my secret subscription box.

Every month, I have a small discrete box delivered to my door. Inside the package is a variety of goodies from Delicious Desires. My subscription includes the self-pleasure package, since I obviously have never had a serious relationship. I only have actually had sex once. Then later, after learning so much through reading steamy romance novels, I got curious and started doing some body experiments. One thing led to another, and I have been a devoted customer and subscriber for the last two years.

I've got to use last month's new toy, before this month's box arrives. Let's see what I've got to work with. I sure hope it's something that will give me a deep orgasm that I desperately need right now. Maybe something like a long vibrating dildo with a clit stimulator. The box before this one only had a little bullet vibrator, so I had to pair it with another toy to get my juices flowing. Ha, ha. They think I am the ultimate nerd, but even nerds have needs that need to be met. If I don't feel comfortable going out and finding random guys to give me the same pleasure, then my little boxes can certainly help. Plus, this is a hell of a lot safer. No diseases to be scared of, no contraceptives that make me feel icky, and for sure, no accidental pregnancies. It's a win-win.

I pull out a beautiful, purple, silicone penis, complete with attached balls. The description shows that it vibrates, is nine inches, and has a suction cup for mounting somewhere. Oh, yeah, this will do just fine for getting me off. “Thank you, Delicious Desires. I think this will do the trick.”

The two hard barstools at the open kitchen bar catch my eye because they are adjustable and will sink low to the ground to make them a regular sitting height. One of those will be the perfect position to firmly plant my feet on the floor, so I run over and check the position.

The lever on the side allows the chair to lower with my body weight, and I place my feet on the floor, rocking back and forth to test the movement. Oh, yeah, just right. Now, I am more excited to try this new toy out. I rush around the house to make sure the curtains are closed since I will be on full display in the living room. Then, I run to the bathroom and open the packaging, wash it with a toy cleaner, and insert the appropriate batteries. My shoes and clothes fly off on my way back to the stool to suction the dildo and secure it in place. I brought my warming lube and squirt a dab on the tip of the plastic pleasure and hop on for the ride.

With a slide up and down, I test the feeling of being filled, and the balls me down under with a turn of the dial on the long cord connected to the underside. The familiar rumble inside me, springs my libido into action. *Oh, that's nice.* I leave it moving inside me and reach over for my phone. Nash being an ex pro player, he is all over the internet and a quick search has him lighting up my screen.

Am I ashamed for getting off to thoughts of him and imagining that this purple plastic I am riding is actually him on top of me moving in and out? Sure, I could be, but no, I'm not. Nope. Not even one ounce of remorse. Look at those muscles. I know for a fact that they would be so hard if I were to touch them. His skin is dark tan from hours outside, soaking up the sun, sweating to the workouts that he puts his body through to be able to be that fit specimen of a man.

With my eyes closed, I imagine the way his hands would feel on my body, and I wonder what he would grunt into my ear when he is pounding into me. In my own mind, it would be something like, *Damn, Lenny, you feel so tight. I like the way your pussy walls strangle my cock.*

“Yeah, that’s it. Right there. Ride it. Harder. Fuck!” I scream out to my empty living room on a climax.

## Chapter 4 - Nash

TWO WEEKS FLIES BY, day in and day out with not only football training, but also building team unity amongst the kids and the coaching staff as well. Since I'm the head coach, I do not have to teach in a classroom like the other coaches, yet I stay pretty busy getting all the other details organized and straightened out. Our first game is tonight, and I'm so glad that it is a home game to start this season. We are definitely in the full swing of things. And in just a couple of hours I will step on the basketball court the same as I did many years ago as a young man. Today, I will walk out there as the head football coach who will be the one leading all of these young men.

The hallway's cinder block walls give me a sense of nostalgia and a happy feeling. The woman walking toward me makes me smile even bigger. But she makes a hard left and tries to turn into the gym quickly. So, I jog to catch up to her and grab her wrist just as she's about to walk through the door.

"Hey, where are you going so fast?" I rush to ask, knowing that time is limited.

“Umm.” She looks back and forth down the hall to see if there is anyone around? “To the pep rally.”

“Oh, I guess you are.” I give her my megawatt smile; the one I reserve and only use when I really want something. “So, are you going to the game tonight?”

“Huh, yeah. It’s mandatory for all staff to attend the game to help with crowd control.” She glances up and down the hall again like she is nervous, and I think it’s damn cute.

“I guess you’re right. Okay, well, maybe I will see you there.”

“Yeah right,” she huffs out under her breath.

I shrug my shoulders, and she opens the gym door and walks through, leaving me feeling a little defeated and rejected. Rejected? I don’t think I’ve ever felt that before. I’m not really sure how it feels, but it doesn’t seem like she’s interested. So, I’m not sure how to process what is going through my mind right now. However, I don’t have time, either. As I hear the band drums playing a cadence to signal their arrival. I’ve got to run to the field house and let the guys know they are ready to start and line the players up to walk over.

The pep rally plays out for about an hour. Then, the coaches and I will make sure the guys get to the team dinner. When all that is over, we will have about an hour and a half to rest and clean up for the game.

After all the tasks of the day are done and the players are happy with full bellies, I rush home to clean up myself, but on the car ride home the brunette with big, framed glasses plagues

my thoughts. I was so thrown off by her comment and dismissal that I miss the box sitting in front of my door and trip over it when I unlock the door and try to walk in.

I glance down, and it looks like a mangled mess, like it had been smashed and thrown around a few hundred times. First, I glance at the name, and it is none other than Lennox Moore. Without hesitation, I head over to her house as I'm trying to hold the package together since it is really falling apart.

She opens her door and looks down at the mangled mess I am holding. I watch the color drain from her face. What could be so terrifying to make her look like that? I push the remains forward and something falls out, landing on my shoe.

No fucking way! Plain as day, it's a butt plug attached to a cat's tail. Oh, this little angel has even more to her than I already know I like. If she's not interested in me, then she's going to have to tell me exactly why.

She covers her face and doesn't move an inch, leaving me to pick up the toy that has caused her so much embarrassment.

"This was delivered to my house by accident." She lowers her hands but has tears pooling in those beautiful blues.

"Awe, Angel, it's okay, please don't cry," I say to try and sooth her. Then I wrap my arms around her and pull her into my chest. She lets me hold her as she sniffles into my shoulder. When she settles down, she leans back slightly, and I match her movement, but I don't want the closeness to end. I like the feeling of her in my arms. I tilt her chin up to look at me, and

what I see draws my head down close to hers, connecting my lips to the softest lips I have ever felt before.



## Chapter 5 - Lennox

“BOBBY, THAT IS THE last time I’m going to tell you to stop throwing ice. Next time I see you, I’m getting Mr. Fry to come and escort you out of the game.” Damn teenagers.

I never even went to the football games in high school, yet now, it’s mandatory that I attend to help monitor crowd control and watch for unruly kids, the very ones I tried to avoid as a teen. That’s a huge reason I didn’t attend the games back then.

As I’m standing on the edge of the stands at the railing, Nash looks over at me and it seems like our eyes connect. But is he really looking at me? Did our eyes really connect, or is that just wishful thinking on my part? He’s standing out on the field about the fifty-yard line while I’m about at the goal line up in the stands, thus I could totally be mistaken.

I don’t really know that much about football, but the game seems to be going well. Plus, the score on the scoreboard says that we have more points than the other team. The fans in the stands cheer loudly as the band plays our fight song on repeat. It’s a nice night to have a football game. The weather is mild,

not too cold, not too windy and definitely not raining. I guess it's good to get out and walk around a little bit versus staying in and watching movies or reading a book on a Friday night.

Although, I'm getting hungry. I'll grab something to eat at the concession stand and sit at the base of the student section bottom row so I can still watch the kids do what they're going to do. As I'm deciding what to eat, someone bumps me from behind. I turn around to look. Lovely. Vanessa. Just the person I didn't want to see tonight.

I knew it was inevitable, in a small school this football field can't be big enough for us to not bump into each other when we both have to be here. Of course, she's in high heels and a tight-fitting skirt and shirt. I don't honestly know how she stands in those things all day, every day and then walks around in them at the games as well. Her feet must be made out of steel. Heck, she probably doesn't walk around. She probably goes and sits her happy ass down somewhere and does absolutely nothing. You know, while us not so pretty folk walk around and do the grunt work.

Luckily, she moves on and talks to one of her groupie friends. They don't even work for the school. Why would they come to the football game? Who knows what they do and why they do it. I don't understand minds like theirs.

I finally get my food and sit down to eat just as we apparently score another touchdown. And the numbers on the scoreboard tick up six more points. Then I watch a field goal kick to add one more point to the scoreboard.

It looks like there's a big enough spread between the numbers on the scoreboard that the other team should not be able to catch up. This should be really good for us.

In fact, that ends the game. The band plays the final fight song of the night while the people all around cheer loudly. I look around and people are gathering up their things. Like a follow the leader game, I do the same and make my way down the stands' to man my post that is supposed to be by the back gate where the football boys come off the field.

It's a chaotic area where parents and close friends of those players and coaches gather to congratulate their loved ones while they come off the field. They are all sweaty and dirty, but no one seems to care as they wrap their arms lovingly around their loved one.

The last people off the field are the coaches with bags of equipment in tow since they've stayed back to gather up things. I watch on as I see the lady with steel feet rapidly approaching Nash.

Yep, that's it for me. My shift here is done as a lot of the boys and the majority of the fans have left the stadium. Luckily, I can leave here and don't have to watch that thing crawl all over Nash and try to win his affection. By the way her hands are all over him, it looks like it's working just fine. I don't know why in the hell he kissed me earlier today. Maybe it was just him having pity on me since I was stupidly crying.

Once I get to my Prius, that's parked at the edge of the field in the staff parking section, I'm able to finally breathe for the

night and just slip down and rest my head on the headrest. One game over; several more to go. I will be glad when this season is over.

## Chapter 6 - Nash

“DAMN!” I SAY OUT loud, not realizing it.

“What is it, man?” my offensive coach asks. “Did we forget something on the field?”

“No. Sorry. I didn’t even know I said that out loud. It’s nothing really.”

“Hmm, well, I’m not buying it. But I’ll let it go for now. Let’s go celebrate the win, Coach.”

It doesn’t take long for all the boys to filter out and for me to be following behind them and turning off the lights. The single coaches who don’t have families to go home to all agreed to meet up at derby night for a celebratory beer. I would’ve much rather been able to celebrate by hanging out with Lennox and getting to know her more. But I guess that’s not going to happen with how she hightailed it out of here and I wasn’t able to talk to her.

Derby Nights is hopping. As soon as the coaches and I walk in there, we are greeted with slaps on the backs. The crowd yells

out things like, “We’re glad you’re back,” and “You’re going to take this team to state and win the championship!”

When we make it to the bar and settle onto our stools, we never have to pull our wallets out to pay for anything because townspeople race to buy rounds of beers for the winning coaches.

I sit next to my buddy, Chance, who has probably been sitting on this same barstool throughout the entire game tonight. He’s an old friend from high school that recently went through an ugly divorce. I try to call him a few times a week to make sure he stays out of here at least for those couple of days.

“So, Nash, do you want to tell me why you’re just staring into that beer rather than chatting it up and celebrating like all those other guys?” Chance leans towards me to ask discreetly. I turn my head to look at him and realize that he’s not going to let it go, in the same way that I pressure him to talk to me about his thoughts because I know it’s not good for him to hold all of that in.

“Since your ex used to work at the high school, do you know the math teacher?”

“The little petite one with Brunette hair, large frame glasses, that’s real quiet?”

“Yep, that’s the one.” I look at the bottle of beer in my hand and start picking at the label just fidgeting and trying to decide how much I really want to tell him about Lennox. I figure, what could it hurt? I trust him the same way he trusts me to talk about his stuff. “Well, I’m a little confused by her.”

“Oh, do tell, sir,” he says with a knowing smile.

“Turns out, she lives across the street from me. Earlier today, I tried to ask her to the football game, and she pretty much shot me down. Then, before the game, I had to take a misplaced package to her house, and we kissed. Well, after the game, she got out of there so fast that the rubber on her tires left smoke on the pavement. I thought, for sure, she would stay and at least say hello.”

“Dude, yeah, that does kind of suck. But, from where I’m sitting, that’s probably a good thing that she didn’t. You know, women are nothing but trouble. Stay far away from them.” He claps me on the back as he gets up and then heads toward the restrooms.

I might as well go home. I glance over at the coaches as they talk amongst friends, and they seem like the pressure from tonight’s game is gone and they are able to relax a little bit.

That’s good, because we will do it all again starting early tomorrow when we have to meet the players at the fieldhouse in the morning to give them a light warm-up. We need to make sure they’re not so stiff and sore, and then we’ll go over film for the new opponent to start prepping for next Friday’s game.

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As the weather turns from mild to frigid, with snow falling during some of our games, we finish up the season. Most of the games were easy to win, and others were more challenging.

Throughout the season, I tried to stay focused by spending many hours at the fieldhouse. I kept busy with lots of film analysis, talking with the trainers to make sure that the players were taken care of, studying the injured list of who was able to play and who was not and then weekly, hell almost daily, working with the coaches to make adjustments on position changes with the active roster that we have.

We ended up going to one playoff game. Unfortunately, we lost, but it was really great for a team who hadn't won a game in the last two years. So, the fans were happy, players were happy, and the school board was happy. Which meant I was going to be able to keep my job for another season or two.

Was I happy, though? Not really, because the competitive nature in my bones and in my DNA make me always strive and want to win every single time there's an opportunity.

Now that football is over, Dad's been bugging me to pick up a Christmas tree at the hardware store and bring it to them and set it up. I finally agreed, and that's where I'm headed now.

Except, my smile turns to an unsure grimace, when Lennox walks up to the door at the same time I do. I've been able to avoid her almost the entire football season by purposefully not looking in the direction that I knew she would be or walking down the halls of the school when I knew she would have conference time. With the busyness of football going on, it was easy to walk away and keep strictly to the fieldhouse or football field. It's going to be a little more challenging now.



“Hello, Nash,” she greets as I hold the door open for her to enter the hardware store.

“Hi, Lennox. How are you?” I ask and extend the olive branch. Not knowing if I should, though.

“I’m well, thanks. How are you?”

“Good, just trying to get back in the swing of everyday life after football.”

“Yeah, it sure sounded like you guys had a good season. Congratulations on that,” she says with a smile.

“Thank you. I’m here picking up a tree for my dad and grandpa. Have you got your tree yet?”

“I’m actually here to do the same thing. Well, not get one for your dad and grandpa, but just get one small one for my house.” She laughs a little at herself trying to correct what she said, and it makes me smile.

“Shall we head to the trees and pick a couple out?” I offer.

“Sure, let’s go.”

What would’ve taken me fifteen minutes to pick up a tree, pay for it, load it up in my truck, and drop it off at Dad’s has now taken me two hours. Yet, it’s two hours that I wouldn’t trade for the world.

Turns out that Lennox wanted to look at just about every tree they had on the patio lot. She has a thing for finding the perfect tree. Or the perfect image that’s in her head. She was having such a good time, and I was having a great time

watching her as I drug out each one and stood it up by holding on to the top so she could access it thoroughly.

I wasn't complaining because we were able to talk and chat about normal stuff. Questions were answered about what's happened with her since high school. How was college? Did she always know if she wanted to come back to Kissing Springs?

She asked me similar questions, a few questions about my career, but she admitted that she doesn't really know anything about football, so we didn't really discuss that very much. Honestly, it was a breath of fresh air.

Football has been my life ever since I can remember, and that's the forefront of every single conversation that I always have. To have someone to talk about things that wasn't all about football was really refreshing.

## Chapter 7 - Lennox

RUNNING INTO NASH AT the hardware store was nice. It was pleasant for several reasons, but mainly it was good to have him all to myself for a short time without worrying about Vanessa turning the corner and walking up to us.

I really try not to pay attention to her. But she makes it truly hard when all she does is try to leech on to Nash every moment she can. Like after every home football game, as soon as he comes off the field, it seems like she is in his back pocket. Good thing for me is that the coaches always walk off the field last, so my job is done, and I am able to leave and skip out of there as soon as it happens.

This morning feels like it's extra cold. I know it may be snowing outside, but it just seems to be bone chilling cold. I bundle up and open the garage door to see what the weather is like. Thank goodness, there's no snow, but it's still freezing out there. I better start my car and let it warm up.

Although, my car has a different idea. When I push the button to start it, something sounds like it's turning, but the engine

won't start. I try again and again for about ten minutes, and then I finally give up and get out of the car.

“Car trouble?”

“Ekkk!” I scream from being startled. “Nash, you scared the shit out of me!”

“Sorry, I didn't mean to. Are you having car trouble? Will it not start?”

“Yes, it won't start, and I don't know why. It's probably too cold out here.” I cross my arms around my midsection, trying to hold in some warmth from my jacket.

“I hate to say, I don't know anything about cars. I can give you a ride to school and we can call a tow truck?”

“Yeah, I guess that would be the best option. Would you mind taking me?”

“Not at all. It would be my pleasure. Are you ready to leave now?”

“Sure am, let me grab my stuff out of the car,” I answer and rush around to my passenger side and grab my bag with my computer, box of papers that I brought home to grade, and my lunch box.

“Here, let me help you with that load,” Nash offers, and he reaches for the biggest thing I am holding to carry it. Then, out of nowhere, he offers me his other hand to hold. “Shall we?”

I'm not sure it is the right thing to do, but it's obviously what I *want* to do, because without question, I accept his hand and

place mine in his palm. His fingers interlace with mine, and we start walking to his truck. It's almost like he's taking me on a date, except we are just going to work. Plus, there's the other big thing where he hasn't even asked me on a date.

Interesting, would I accept a date offer from Nash Witten? Of course, I would. What fool wouldn't? Yet, there is a lot of baggage that goes along with dating Nash, and am I up for that as well? Whatever, he's just holding my hand to walk me across the street. Yet, here I am having us eloping and riding off into the sunset to live happily ever after.

That's what living in a small town will get you. Every half decent man that crosses your path, you question if he's marriage material because there are not that many that you'll actually come across. That's also probably why Vanessa is a leach to the few that come around. Ugh, Vanessa. What if she sees us getting out of the same car?

Luckily, we don't have to encounter that, as Nash parks back by the fieldhouse, and we go in the back doors to set my stuff down in my room. I stay there to get the room prepared for my first class while he leaves to go start his day.

It was enjoyable, though. Riding to work with someone. Even though the drive was not long, it was good to laugh and cut up before the madness of the day of work starts.

He was telling me about how he saw a few kids play a Halloween prank on our principal during the Fall Festival. The man who is supposed to be all tough and rule the school got so scared he screamed like a little girl.

Just before it's time for the bell to ring, Nash pops his head into my room and says, "Okay, so meet me at my truck after school, and I will give you a ride?"

"Sounds good. How will you know when I am ready?" He hands me his phone.

"Put your phone number in and press call so you will have my number also. Text me when you're headed that way. I can leave whenever."

"Thank you, Nash. I appreciate it."

"No problem. Have a great day, Angel." He leaves the room and leaves me... speechless. What does that mean that he just called me that, or does he call everyone that, and I just have never heard him say it before? Then again, I really haven't been around him that much to know what he does and doesn't say frequently. Although, it sounds familiar. Was that what he said that day I was crying, and he gave me a pity kiss?

Later that morning, I get a text from Nash asking me if there is a way into my house without me being there, because he is sending a tow truck to pick up my car and take it to the shop.

I do have a spare key hidden under a rock in the backyard, and now that I have given them my hiding spot, I'm going to have to think of a new one. Nevertheless, I thought that it was really sweet of him to help me out and call the mechanic to get the ball moving on what's going on with my car.

## Chapter 8 - Nash

AS SOON AS LENNOX texts me that she will be ready in five minutes, I log off of my computer and am waiting on the tailgate of my truck when she comes walking out. She looks so cute in her casual Friday attire of jeans, a holiday shirt and Keds tennis shoes, with her brunette hair laid down in waves against her shoulders.

“Hey, you,” I greet and hop down to help her with her stuff and to get her into my truck.

“Hey. Did you have a good day?”

“Yeah, it wasn’t too bad. I finally got the doctor’s office in town to agree to come up to the school to do all the athletic physicals in one go.”

“That’s great! It will help out a lot of busy parents and those kids who don’t have good parental support at home. That will be one less thing for them to have to worry about getting it done.”

As we are driving to our houses, my knee bounces up and down, and my hands are clammy. I feel like a teenager asking a girl out on a date for the first time. All day today, I've been thinking about asking Lennox to come to my house and spend time with me to hang out. But we'll see what she says. She may not even say yes. I don't know if she will since she kind of shut me down months ago before the pep rally. I'm used to girls falling at my feet. But not Lennox. She doesn't know anything about football and not much about my fame. That's a really nice change from the norm.

"I got a call from the mechanic today, and he said that your car only needed a starter. So, I gave him the okay to go ahead and fix it. It will be ready by tomorrow morning."

"That's awesome. Thank you so much for taking care of all of that."

"Would you by chance want to come over for snacks and a drink and hang out?" There it is. The question is out there. Now, the ball is in her court.

"Depends," she states, which means the answer probably isn't going to be what I want to hear.

"Okay, what does it depend on?"

"What kind of snacks do you have?" I laugh at her question, and also my insecurity. "Well, I may have better snacks at my house," she follows up with a shoulder pop.

"Umm, I have tons of different kinds of chips, different kinds of crackers, beef jerky, fruit, different cheeses, cookies, and ice



cream. There's probably more food in my pantry that I can't think of right now." I'm racking my brain hard trying to think about a variety. Truth is, being a former athlete at a professional level, I used to always have food on hand. Except, during my training days, a lot of it was a strict diet for optimal athleticism. Now, though, I have a cheat day at least once a week, and I'm able to snack a little bit more. I still keep up with my workouts every day. Although, working out in a multibillion-dollar facility versus a small-town high school has been a big change. But I've made do.

"Wow! That does sound good. What about drinks?"

"Drinks, I don't have as much variety. I've got beer, water, and coffee."

"All right, let's do this. I've got a bottle of wine at my house. So, let me put up my stuff, change into some comfy clothes, grab my bottle of wine, and I'll meet you at your house in say, thirty minutes. How does that sound?" she counters.

"That sounds great to me. I'll get a fire going, and I'll see you then. I'm looking forward to it." I turn my head to smile at her before looking back out the front window as we approach our driveways. Carefully, I pull into hers so she can get out and do the things that she needs to at her house. Then, I back out of her driveway and into my garage. I keep the place pretty tidy, but I still want to pick up a little bit before she gets there.

I jump out of the truck and jog through the house to first start the fire kindling in the fireplace. I will admit, I'm slightly too excited, for a grown man, to have a woman over. I run to the

kitchen, throw the few dishes that are in the sink in the dishwasher, and set out the snacks with bowls and utensils. I line them all along the kitchen bar so everything's available for her to choose from when she gets here.

It doesn't take long though before she's ringing the front doorbell and I'm racing to answer it, once again like a little schoolboy.

"Welcome," I say as I open the front door. "Can I take your jacket?"

"Why, thank you so much. How hospitable," she replies and laughs a little at my overzealous attitude.

"Come on in. I've laid out all the snacks for you to choose from. Just take what you want, and we can eat in the living room in front of the fireplace. Also, here's the wine glasses for the bottle you brought."

We pick everything out that we want to take to the living room, grab blankets, and get settled on the couch. I'm also laughing at her because it takes a few trips to bring all the different kinds of snacks that she wants.

"Are you a snack junkie?" I ask.

"What in the world gave you that idea?" she says, chuckling, and I look down the row of diverse boxes that she has opened and bowls with mixes of chips and snacks that she has put together.

"Oh, I don't know, maybe the four bowls of snacks," I answer.

"They're not just for me. They're for us to share."

“Are they now? With the way you look to be so protective of your snacks, I didn’t know you would share at all.”

As we settle into the cushions under the blankets with bowls at hand, we lose track of time. When the conversation is great, and the company makes the house become a home, there’s no need to look at the clock.

Having her here next to me, and in my house, is exactly what I pictured when the thought came up of asking her over today. I’m glad I did and didn’t chicken out.

## Chapter 9 - Lennox

SINCE IT'S FRIDAY NIGHT and we don't have anywhere to be, we can just relax and appreciate each other's company. I'm truly enjoying myself. Nash is easy to talk to, and I'm loving how I don't feel that nervous around him.

His arm is resting on the back of the couch while he plays with my hair, twirling it around his finger. Then, all of a sudden, he pulls a fist full gently, making my head jerk backwards as my eyes fly to his. I'm met with a smoldering, sexy as hell look on his face.

My body naturally leans in towards him. At the same time, he moves in closer to me, and his arm drops lower around my back.

Our eyes are locked onto each other's as our lips connect for the second time. It may just be me and the many fairy tale love stories I've read and watched, but honestly, it feels like sparks are blazing out of us, heating us up as we move even closer together. My hands begin to roam anywhere on him that I can

touch. His body is one that I have longed to feel over the past five months.

When I was in high school, the dream of even getting close to Nash was never fathomable, and over these months that we worked together at the school, I really didn't think it was possible either. I thought he would go for the Vanessa types versus the nerd girl types like me. So, I can feel him, but my mind has not comprehended it just yet. But, hey, I'm sure as shit going to go with it.

His hand slides up underneath my sweatshirt, and his touch is warm and caressing.

He pulls back from the kiss, and we stare into each other's eyes as he tucks a wayward hair away from my face and secures it behind my ear. Then he takes the back of his hand and gently runs it along my cheek, making me lean my head into his hand. I'm seeking his touch, loving his touch, wanting his touch, needing his touch.

"Can we go to your room, Nash?" I breathlessly ask with my heart trying to beat out of my chest.

He doesn't answer with words. Rather, he picks me up and kisses me again while he walks us down the hall to what I'm assuming is his bedroom. It's not long before he's laying me down and reaching behind his head to pull off his sweater. In which, I follow him and do the same. A deep rumble comes from his chest.

"Did you just growl at me?" I have to ask.

“Yes, I certainly did,” he answers as he’s climbing over me on the bed. I’m penned in with his arms like iron bars made out of muscle to keep me in place. I’ll happily stay right here without complaining one bit. His bed is so soft, and it contrasts to the hard ridges that make up his chest.

His lips are on me once more. Too briefly, they move down my neck to my collarbone and down to my bra. He uses one finger to pull the cup down and pop my breast out to suck on my nipple causing me to arch off the bed in shock of the sensation.

“More. Please. Nash.” It’s hard to breathe as I try to push enough air into my lungs to punctuate each word.

“Like this?” he asks and releases my other breast from its cup and begins to suck it as he gropes the one he just abandoned.

“Yes. Oh God, yes.” The feel of his ministrations is amazing and sends warmth straight to my core. “I still need more, though. I need you to be inside of me. Fill me up, Nash.”

“You don’t have to ask me twice. I’m so hard for you, Angel.” I lean up on my elbows and watch as he searches around in drawers for probably a condom. Which is good that he doesn’t know right where they are, meaning he hasn’t had sex in a while. “Okay, there we go. I got worried there for a second,” he says, making me laugh.

The feel of his mouth and hands on my body is so different and so much better than just toys. I can’t wait to feel his length inside me. I know it will be one thousand times better than toys also.

Finally, he lines his tip up with my center. He moves his hips back-and-forth to work it in slowly.

“Angel, you are so tight,” he growls, like he’s on the verge of losing his composure. Shit, I’m on the verge of losing mine also.

Right before he’s fully seated inside, he pulls out.

“Nash, please.”

He gives me exactly what I ask for and in one pump he’s filling me up. But he stills himself, letting me acclimate to his size.

“Lenny, you feel so good.” He begins moving his hips up and down, pumping his hard shaft in and out.

His rhythm mimics my heartbeat. At first, they’re slow and rhythmic. Then they start beating faster as his balls slap against me as he’s pounding us together, bringing me closer and closer to climax.

I’ve been a student of learning how my body works with all of the toys I’ve used over the years, and I know the eruption is going to happen soon. However, this is bigger than anything any toy has ever built me up to this far.

Nash turns his head and puts his lips on my neck and sucks. Before I know it, I can’t control it, and I’m screaming his name at the same time he’s grunting out mine when his body tenses and gooseflesh covers his skin at the last few pumps inside my core.

## Chapter 10 - Nash

HEARING HER BEG IS so stimulating and erotic. I love her words and the way she is wanting me.

As we lazily lay together under the covers and I'm running my fingers over her naked arm, I ask, "So, I was wondering if you wanted to go with me to my dad's house tomorrow and decorate that tree that you helped pick out the other day. Since it's just us guys to do the task, I'm sure a feminine touch would be welcome."

"Sure, that sounds like fun," she quickly answers, and the fact that she seems to really want to go makes me smile.

"Cool. Do you want to go pick up your car around eleven? After that, we could grab lunch and then go to my dad's house."

"I don't know, are you sure you want to hang out with me almost the whole day? Because that sure sounds like a full day."



“Of course, that sounds like a great day to me,” I answer her, rolling us over to kiss any doubt right out of her.

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Lennox said good night and went home last night. Although, I would've much rather her stayed in my bed all night and woken up with her. Yeah, I wanted a repeat of our session last night.

I have to respect her wishes and her space. If that's what she wants to do, then I'll let her go do just that.

Today is something that I've never done before, and I think my dad and Grandpa are going to be shocked. This will be the first time I've ever brought home a woman. I know they'll love her as much as I am enjoying myself around her.

She seems to be the brightness to my day. Something to look forward to. Something soft and feminine in this hard and male dominant world I live in.

Like right now, she's walking out of her house, all bundled up with a big smile on her face. Very few times have I ever seen her without a smile and showing those pearly white teeth. In turn, that always makes me smile back and be something that I want to gravitate toward.

I step out of my truck, go around to her door to meet her there, and then I wrap her in my arms, and passionately kiss her right there in the parking lot for the neighbors, or whoever else is watching, to see. Claiming her as mine.

“Good morning, Angel,” I greet her as I pull back and open the truck door for her to get in.

“Well, good morning to you, too. Now, that’s a way to greet a girl,” she says with a chuckle.

The next little bit is task oriented with getting her car and returning it to her house.

She was a little bit taken back when she found out that I took care of the bill. When I gave them the okay to make the repairs on her car, I also gave them my credit card number. Yet, she was very appreciative of that, and kept saying thank you. I also love the fact that she didn’t get mad at me for paying for it because I like taking care of her. There are women who would throw a fit about a man paying for their stuff. With Lenny, I’ve duly noted it in my brain, and I will keep moving forward with that knowledge.

As we eat lunch at the diner, she asks me some questions about my family so she can be prepared and know what she’s about to be getting into.

“We’re a pretty laid-back bunch of men. Except when it comes to football.”

“I think I can probably see why that is.”

“Grandpa came to live with Dad and I when my mom died. I was just a toddler and don’t remember her. Dad says that he loved her so much that he never even went out and tried to find that kind of love again and remarry. Plus, he was super busy chasing me around with sports all the way through

college, and it really didn't leave him much time left over at the end of the day."

"Football has been a lifelong accomplishment, huh?" she asks.

"Yeah, both my grandfather and dad played college football at Kentucky State. So, naturally, that was my ticket into the door to be a Wildcat. I also didn't fight that chance either and try to go anywhere else because it afforded me to be able to stay close to home and keep an eye on them."

"Oh, so it wasn't the other way around? Them watching out for you?" We both laugh.

"You are probably correct. We all watched out for each other. There. Is that better?" I reach under the table and grab her knee and squeeze it a little to tickle her.

As soon as we step into my dad's house, the men are at the front door with wide smiles on their faces.

They know what a monumental occasion this is. They don't even have to say a word for me to know exactly what they're thinking.

"We came to decorate the tree. Are you ready, old man?" I introduce Lennox to them, and Dad ushers us into the living room where the tree and all the ornaments are there in boxes, ready to be unpacked and hung up for the season.

"Thanks for coming, Lennox. You'll be able to keep these boys in line when they get sloppy and start piling ornaments on only one branch. Just so they can get done early and go drink eggnog and eat cookies," my grandpa states.

“Yes, sir, I certainly will.” She turns toward me and dad and waggles her cute little finger. “You heard the man, no treats before the work is done.” We all can’t help but to laugh at her adorable sassiness.

“I do have to say, you’re going to fit in just fine around here,” my dad says.

## Chapter 11 - Lennox

THE TREE THAT WE finally agreed upon had been placed in the bay window and stands guard over the front yard. Nash and his family begin tearing into the boxes and laying the tree lights across the carpet. I know that untangling the mess is going to take a while, so I'm wandering around the living room admiring the deep leather couch and cherry wood end tables, when a towering bookcase catches my eye. It almost glistens. Curiosity pumps through my body, and I can't help but check it out. I have a difficult time catching my breath as my heart quickens to the sight that unfolds in front of me. Shelves upon shelves of trophies and medals fill every surface of the structure. Nash's athletic history is displayed from his first participation trophy in youth football to MVP for the Florida Sharks.

"Hey there," Nash calls out. "Are you okay?"

"I rub my face with both hands as heat rises up my neck to my cheeks. "Yes, I'm just admiring your athletic history."

"Well, get over here. We need all the help we can get."

I look up to see that the lights are not only still in a bundled mess, but that Nash has one foot tangled up in the string. The sight of this former Florida Sharks MVP helpless and getting more entwined by the second, sends me into a fit of laughter. My lungs burn as I try to control myself by holding my breath, but spittle shoots out my mouth as a seizure of laughter leaves me limp. Tears stream down my face as I try to free his foot, but my eyes blur, and I can't see what I am doing.

“Augh!” Nash screams as he crashes to the floor and flat on top of me. We are suddenly nose to nose, eye to eye, and lips so close that I suck in the fragrance of his minty chewing gum. My lips slightly part anticipating our mouths crashing into each other. Warmth fills my core as we lie on the thick carpet staring into each other's eyes. My body is heavy, and I can't move. I don't want to move. This feels like... home.

“Did I hurt you?” Nash whispers, and I feel the warmth of his breath brush across my lips. Fog fills my brain, and I can't form any words.

“Okay, you two,” Grandpa booms. “Fun time is over. This tree isn't going to decorate itself.”

An hour later, by some miracle, the lights are strung around the splendid conifer. White sparkling light fills the room with a glow. And the magic of Christmas is awakening in my soul.

“Lennox, your job is to place the ribbon on the tree,” Nash's father announces.

I unroll the burgundy ribbon with gold trim and study the tree for artistic inspiration. Will the guys be happy with any ole

way I throw it up there? Or will I be closely scrutinized over the way I drape it. Beads of sweat form on my brow, and I know that I am overthinking the whole process. I just don't want to screw up they're opinion of me at our first meeting.

*You got this, Lennox. Are you going vertical or horizontal? I silently cheer myself. Vertical, definitely vertical.*

"Nash, I need a step ladder, so I can reach the top of the tree," I call out. The next moment I feel myself being hosted up into his arms. "Well, that's not quite what I had in mind," I chuckle.

Grandpa hands me four strands of ribbon, one at a time, that I place near the top and weave down through the branches to nearly the base of the tree.

"Where is the tree topper?" I ask.

Nash's dad unwraps tissue and frees the most beautiful angel I have ever laid my eyes on. Her hair is blonde and glittering wings adorn her back. Her white flowing gown is covered in lace and appliques. I gently place her on top and hold my breath as I take in her beauty.

As Nash places me on the floor, I instantly ache for his touch again. Without any effort, he reaches up and connects the electrical plug attached to the angel and connects it to the string of lights. She immediately lights up with a soft yellow glow as she peers out over the room. No one makes a sound. We all just stand there taking in the enchantment of the moment.

“I know what we need to add to this festive mood,” Nash’s dad says. “Eggnog! Who cares if we’re not finished yet or not? It’s time to get in the holiday spirit.”

Nash, Grandpa, and I open box after box of ornaments that are an array of colors. Gold, silver, blue, burgundy, green, and clear balls. Angels, snowflakes, santas, and reindeer. My favorite ones are the balls that have NFL logos on them. It looks like they have one for every team. I’m not so sure if sports decorations will go with the other ornaments, but what can you expect from a house full of men. They seem to love them, and that’s all that matters.

The scent of eggnog filters in from the kitchen. As it meets my nose, I feel a deep grumble in my stomach and remember that I haven’t eaten since lunch. “What do you have to go with that eggnog?” I call out to his dad.

He soon appears with a tray of assorted cookies. My first instinct is to grab as many as my hand will hold, but my mother’s voice comes to my ears, “Ladies only eat a little bit at a time. You will get your fill, just take your time in doing so.” So, reluctantly, I take one double chunk chocolate chip cookie.

As we munch, we strategically place each ornament on the tree, careful not to bunch them up, spreading them out over the branches.

When the boxes are empty, we step back and gaze at the wonder of the tree. It stands like a sentinel ready to defend its objects.



## Chapter 12 - Nash

I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE cooking dinner tonight, and I quite possibly made the worst food choice this small town has to offer, but they do have the coldest beer and the best entertainment. Whether it's football games or horse races showing on their television monitors, or live music playing on the small stage, Derby Nights never disappoints.

Dillion Montgomery comes to my table and plants himself in the chair opposite me. He's the owner of Derby Nights and its adjacent male review, Hot Derby Nights.

"What's up, man?" I greet him.

"Well, I have a quick question for you."

"Okay, hit me with it." I lean back in my chair, intrigued as to what he would need.

"Don't you live on Maple Street?"

"Sure do."

“There are only a few houses on that street. I’m asking because we had a strange call come in that requested a dance party at Lennox Moore’s house that’s on the same street. Do you happen to know her?” I pause before answering, trying to take in all that he just told me in a brief minute.

A call came in that ordered a stripper to go to *my* Lenny’s house?

Why would that even happen?

Would she answer the door when it rang?

Would she let the stranger in to do the private show?

Like hell am I going to let anyone else strip in front of her and do a suggestive dance up against her body.

“Really? Yeah, I do know her.” Is all I can muster as I sit back in my chair trying to come up with all the answers to the questions racing through my head. “That is a strange call to have.”

“Well, I thought I would ask you because I don’t want one of my guys to go over there and make the lady upset. Normally, the caller lets us know what the occasion is for and that the other party knows to expect the dancer or the caller will be attending and will handle any fallout from the targeted lady. This one was just weird.”

“For sure. I’ll tell you what. I know her well. I’ll take care of this one for you.”

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Who would've ever thought that I would be right here, right now about to do what I'm about to do?

As Lennox opens the front door with a confused smile across her face, I give her that mega white smile, that's now only reserved for her, and she returns it in kind.

"Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas!" I reach one of my hands wide as the other one is holding the large, red velvet bag over my shoulder, letting my big cotton filled belly flop up and down as I say those magical words. She doubles over and laughs, and I can't help but laugh along with her.

"Come inside. What on earth are you doing?"

When we move inside, I close the door behind us and set the bag down so I can get the little boombox looking device out of it. Before she has a chance to let on to my game, I quickly connect my phone to the speakers and press play. Santa Baby by Gwen Stefani booms through the speaker.

As the music rings out, she jumps from being startled at the loudness and turns around to see me swaying my hips to the beat of the music.

She looks like she's frozen in place, taking in all that my body's movement has to offer. Which probably isn't saying much. I'm not the best dancer out there, but I do have some rhythm to go off of.

Quickly, she realizes that I am there to entertain her, and she finds a seat to make herself comfortable on the couch to enjoy the show. That's when I start peeling off the layers that this

suit consists of. With each article of clothing that drops to the floor, Lenny licks her lips, and her eyes darken, changing from caramel to chocolate brown. I playfully act like I'm going to remove the last of my costume but hold on to it a little while longer.

"You like what you see, Angel?" I ask, my own voice sounding husky.

"Very much so, Santa," she answers with a wicked smile, and it comforts me to know she truly is enjoying herself. "Take it all off!" She hoots and hollers to cheer me on, and I love that she is having fun.

It's coming to the end of the song and my grand finale where I lose my shirt and pants. First, I grant her the view of my emerald green silky suspenders that are under my white t-shirt by tearing the shirt in two down the chest. Thanks to Dillion for giving me one of those thin tearaway shirts that his guys use. Next, the pants have hidden snaps down the legs, and with one swift tug forward, they reveal the sexiest silk red boxes that Santa has ever worn. The gold clasps of the suspenders are sure to twinkle while I continue to pump my hips forward towards my girl and move closer and closer as she is laughing her head off.

I don't stop moving until my lips connect with hers, her arms are wrapped around my neck, and I am carrying her down the hall to her bedroom.

## Chapter 13 - Lennox

WELL, I SURELY WASN'T expecting anyone tonight, so I had a few of my new toys laying out on a towel to dry on my bed from recently cleaning, letting them air dry before putting them away. Nash is going to see them, and I really don't care. This is who I am. Take me or leave me.

“What do we have here?” he asks as he sits me on the bed.

“Umm, that pink silicone one that looks kind of like a hook is a new technology that is supposed to be made to absorb sonic waves through your body and transmit them to your clit for a deeper sensation. That hook part vibrates in sync with the sonic waves to stimulate my G-spot.”

“Sounds complicated. Does it work?”

“I'm not sure. I've never used it. I just got it in and cleaned it to try out,” I say and lift it into my hands, flipping the on switch to feel the vibration on my fingers.

“Can I try it out on you? I would love to see how your body reacts to it and watch you come.” he questions with eagerness

dancing in his eyes.

“Really, you want to use it on me?”

“Of course, look how hard I am just by the thought alone.” I glance down to his silky red boxers and they have a huge tent in the front.

“Okay, let’s do it. Here is the owner’s manual, and there’s the lube. My body is yours to play with, Mr. Witten.”

“Fuck, alright then. Please remove your clothes, Ms. Moore, and lay your butt on this pillow to prop your hips up and spread your legs wide for me.” I do as he asks while he scans over the instructions.

After he’s prepped the vibrator with lube, he surprises me by leaning down and sucking a hard nipple into his mouth instead of inserting the piece in me and getting right to it. My back arches off the bed, seeking more, and he grants me my wish by moving over to the other breast.

I’m so transfixed on what he is doing to my chest that I don’t realize that he’s placed the toy into position until I feel a low vibration while he’s still alternating between sucking on each tit.

“Nash,” I beg for more.

“Yes, Angel, what are you feeling?” he asks, toying with me.

“Vibrations.”

“Where do you feel them?”

“My clit and inside me, just on the other side. Like it’s tickling from the inside and on the outside.”

“Can you handle more?”

“Yes.” He seems to crank up the dial on the toy to another level because the vibrations get more intense, and my heartrate kicks up with it, building the familiar pressure in my core.

Nash helps the stimulation by going back to pay more attention to my breasts and sucking on them. The sensation that is happening below and up top is too much as I start to writhe beneath his hand holding the vibrator and his mouth attached to my nipple.

“That’s it. Come for me, Angel,” he whispers in my ear, and I follow his instructions as I scream his name on my body’s high.

I barely hear the tearing of the condom wrapper over my heart beating so hard and the ringing in my ears. Then, with a touch of the tip to my center, he slides himself in deep.

“Oh God, that feels even better than the toy.”

“You’re still squeezing my cock from your orgasm, and I fucking love that,” he admits as he stills inside of me, feeling the pulsing of my walls around him.

Then, when he moves, he bends to kiss me at the same time. The sensation is all consuming as a tear slips down my cheek.

Nash sees it and kisses it away while still slowly pumping his shaft in and out of my channel, bringing my back up to another climax. We peak at the same time to jump off that cliff

together into a sea of bliss. This time, it's an authentic orgasm. One brought on by human interaction and desire for one another.

I've pushed my limits with these toys before, but the climaxes with Nash filling me up hit harder, better, and are longer lasting. In other words, perfection.



## Chapter 14 - Nash

IT'S A COLD AND wintry weekday where I'd much rather be curled up on the couch with a blanket in front of the fireplace. Add in a sexy body up next to mine while we sit there and enjoy the Christmas tree other than sitting in my cinder block of an office working on schedules for next football season.

Leaning back in my chair, I kick both of my feet up on the desk, cross one over the other, and extend my arms to interlock my fingers behind my head and stare up at the ceiling.

Lennox, Lenny, Angel, that girl, that woman, that lioness.

I know she's here to stay. She's happy here in the small town. I've been out there experiencing all that I care to experience. This small town, this is where I want to settle, to get married, to raise kids, to grow old with someone by my side. I made the choice of not settling down when I lived in big cities where there were tons more women to choose from because the majority of those women are ones where I would have to

search high and low in a needle in a haystack to find one that likes small-town living.

I'm not going to lie, though, moving back here, without a woman, was a little scary, since this is a small town and there's not that much to choose from. What if there was no match for me here? Even though I always gravitate back to the knowledge of the fact that my dad did it by himself, my grandfather has been by himself most of my life, and I too would be okay as a bachelor for however many years it was needed. They did it, and so could I.

I'm in such deep thought that when my cell phone buzzes from the top of my desk, it startles me, and I kick my feet off the desk so fast I almost fall backwards in my chair.

"Nash, buddy, I thought I'd give you a heads up on what I heard last tonight at the club. I was waiting tables because we're short staffed. There was a group of women at one of those round tables that I was helping, and they were talking about how funny they bet the look on the geeky high school math teacher who has the hots for the football coach was when their Hot Derby Nights dancers showed up for a lap dance at her house." My teeth grind together in anger.

"Did you know any of them?" I ask between clenched teeth.

"I only knew Vanessa. You know, that one that teaches with you?" My blood boils even hotter.

"Thanks, Dillon. I appreciate you letting me know." The call disconnects, and I'm livid. Mad and disappointed that grown adults still act like juveniles. Hell, worse than juveniles,

because now, as adults, they have more things at their disposal to torment and bully people with. People like that really do disgust me.

That's it! I'm going to go up to the school and to Vanessa's classroom right now and give her a piece of my mind. She can't play with people like this and think that it's acceptable. She has to know that she can't get away with it.

I walk out of my small office through the fieldhouse to outside, through the parking lot to the double glass doors that lead to the common area, and then down the hallway.

I'm just about to her room, only a few doors down, and I hear a sweet voice whisper shout my name behind me. That voice stops me in my tracks and makes me turn around to see that beautiful face smiling back at me.

"What's wrong? You look like you are running from a fire," she asks.

"More like, running into the fire," I respond with anger sifting through my veins while my eyes dart back and forth from one side of the hall to the other, looking for a place that I can pull Lennox into and tell her what that piece of shit woman did.

We are close enough to outside for me to retrace my steps and take her out there. I touch her elbow to silently tell her which direction we will be walking and move us forward at a fast pace down the hall.

"Nash, where are we going? We can't go outside. We don't have our coats, and it's snowing out there," she whispers,

pulling on my arm a little to stop me before we freeze to death. When I ran out of my office at the fieldhouse, I didn't grab my jacket then either. We won't be outside long. I just need to tell her what's going on.

As soon as we cross the doorway and the blue sky is shining over our heads, she grabs my hand to clearly try to comfort me. I can't help myself. I have to touch her and feel her in my arms. I back her up into the corner of the building so no students can see us and pull her in toward me for a hug. I just want to build a protective bubble around her and let no harm, both mentally and physically, come to her.

## Chapter 15 - Lennox

“HEY, SO WHAT’S GOING on? Where are you headed to like a bat out of hell?” I’m glad Nash and I are huddled up together in order to use our body heat as jackets while light snow falls on our heads.

“I just got a very interesting call, and that person informed me that Vanessa was the one who set you up for the Hot Derby Nights show, and she was bragging to her friends about how funny she thought it would be to see the reaction on your face with the shock and embarrassment that it must have been.” He rubs my back as he’s still holding me close.

“Yeah, Nash, that’s typical. It’s exactly something she would do. I’m just glad it was you that came. I did enjoy the show. Thank you for that,” I say between my teeth chattering from the cold.

“You’re welcome, Angel. I’m glad you did. That’s not the point, though,” he pauses and takes a big breath, and lets it out as a puff of white steam floats out of his mouth and above our heads. Then he follows it up with a kiss to my forehead. “The

point is, she shouldn't be able to get away with it and not be called out for her actions.”

“Oh, no. Nope, that would not be good to say anything to her. That would only make it worse. It's like she feeds off of the attention. So, if you were to say something, then she would move on to her next phase of meanness and proceed with whatever she had in her witch's hat to pull out and do.”

“She would not do that if I laid down the law and told her to back off,” he insists.

“Nash, I'm telling you, it would only make it worse. You have to listen to me. I know how she works. Please, don't say anything to her. Let's go back inside.”

“Do you have class next period?”

“No, it's my conference time,” I answer.

“Then, come with me to my office so we can warm up and talk.” Of course, I accept. Who wouldn't be honored that this man wanted to spend time with them?

He leads me through the fieldhouse, past the other coaches' communal office room, and into his office.

“Here's a space heater. We can put our feet in front of it. I'm sorry to keep you out in the cold so long, but it really helped me calm down.”

“People can be frustrating, but it's a way of life. Those of us who had to live with it growing up know how to deal with it. We just let it roll off our backs and go on about our day.” I shrug a shoulder and rub my arms to try and warm them from

the friction through my sweater. He hands me his coat to snuggle under.

It is warmer inside where the heater is, and the office smells like him. It's comforting and warms not only my body, but my heart as well.

"I still don't think it's right, or okay, for her to go around bullying people, especially at her age." I tilt my head in acceptance because I believe that also, but there isn't much that can be done. "I mean, come on. We have this big, month-long campaign about standing up to bullying and how to prevent it, yet there's a teacher who does that very thing."

"Yep, the pot calling the kettle black..." Nash cuts me off.

"See, yes, that's why I have to say something to her. How can you teach children not to do the very things that she does?" He pauses and leans back in his chair so hard that it rocks backward a little. "Or, God forbid, what if she is teaching those teenagers in her classroom to hate and how to be a better bully?" His words chill me to my bones, and my shoulders drop forward, making me slump in the chair as his jacket slips down my body.

"Nooo," I say, my voice lined with hesitation. "Now, I'm not going to put anything past Vanessa, but do you honestly think she would be capable of doing that? Corrupting young impressionable minds to spread her agenda of hate? Surely not. That would be the death of her career and would make all those years of college and all that money spent for nothing."

“I don’t know, Lenny. See, I’m going to have to tell her something,” he insists once again.

“Nash, please don’t. The way she acts will come out eventually when she bullies the wrong person. I just don’t want to be the person that her wrath comes down on when she finally gets found out for who she truly is.” I plead my case to him as he sits back, rocking in his chair with his elbows on each arm rest and his fingers steepled together.



## Chapter 16 - Nash

“UGH, DAD. I STILL cannot get what that woman did to Lennox out of my head. Why are people so mean? What if I hadn’t been at the bar that night when Dillion got the call and asked me about the address? What if some other guy showed up at Lennox’s house and forced his way through the front door and started stripping in her living room?” I sure as shit am not going to say what I was also afraid of. Which is, what if she liked it? What if she had a connection with this random guy who showed up to strip for her? I’m sure it happens in movies and books all the time where the strippers hook up with and later fall in love with the girl he was dancing for.

I came over to my dad and grandpa’s house because the floorboards were wearing out in my house from me pacing back and forth going over and over in my head on what I should do with this whole Vanessa and Lennox thing. Maybe here I can get a little clarity.

“Son, people are mean. Are you sure you’re not overreacting to this?”

“Dad, I’ve been thinking about this for a week now. So, no. I don’t think that I’m overreacting. This lady teaches teenagers, and yet, she acts about as mature as one. Actually, there are tons of kids that act way more mature than her.”

“Maybe you can just watch out for it in the future and try to protect Lennox from any other things that Vanessa might try to do.”

“You always taught me to stand up for what’s right and stand up for the little guy. That no matter how big my fame got, to remember where my roots were and to be humble and treat people with respect. Well, that is what I really feel like I should do here. If someone is picking on the woman I love, then I have to stand up for her,” I confess.

“I see,” is all he says as he leans back in the chair and crosses one leg over the other. “So, you love Lennox? That’s good, son. Real good.” I pause. Damn, I guess I do. I actually haven’t thought about it much. However, when I’m speaking things that are straight from my heart and those three tiny words come out, then it must be true.

“Yeah, Dad, I do,” I confirm not only to him but to myself.

After another restless night, I wake up, get dressed and head to work and do my normal routine I’ve done since school started in August. This is our last week before we get out for the two-week Christmas break. Boy am I ready for that to get here. The break is much needed.

Just as I round the corner to go into the teachers’ lounge to check my mailbox, the she devil walks in with her shiny red

patent way too high heels for a teacher, way too short shirt for the winter, and a way too tight sweater to be appropriate to be wearing in front of horny teenage boys. No one else is in the lounge when we both walk through the door. Now is my chance to say something to her.

“Vanessa, I need a word, please,” I say with my stern coach’s voice, trying to convey the seriousness of this conversation.

“Sure, honey, anything you need. Better yet, anytime, anyplace, anyway, you just name it,” she says as she stalks up close to me while I take a step backwards away from her.

“I’m telling you, Vanessa, leave Lennox alone.”

“Why, what on earth are you going on about? I would never do anything to that poor little pathetic soul.” My anger level kicks up a notch as my hands curl into tight fists.

“I know that it was you who called and tried to schedule a show to go to her house, purely out of spite and to embarrass her.”

“Oh, honey,” she says and steps into my personal space to stroke my shoulder, while my jaw clinches tighter and I freeze. “I don’t have a clue as to what you are talking about,” she breathes into my ear as her voice is an octave too high for her to be telling the truth.

I jerk my ear away from the vile hatred that she is and take a few quick steps away from her. “I mean it, Vanessa. Stop bothering her, or else.”

“Or else? Or else, what, Nash? What are you going to do?” she spits out. “I will do what I want, when I want, and how I want, to get what I want. There is nothing you can say or do about it to change that. And you. *You* are what I want, and *you* are what I will have. So, buckle up, buddy, because we are about to go on a ride until you finally realize that we were made for each other.” She turns on her too high heels and walks down the hall.

How does a person like that even get hired as a teacher? Even so, why in the world would they go to school for all those years and be out all that money just to torment people like high school mean girls? She’s the one that’s pathetic, to be stuck in the past and not able to move forward with life so much so that she would go through all the trouble to keep trying to live in the past.

## Chapter 17 - Lennox

GRADING FINALS WILL BE what my week will be consumed with. It's actually my least favorite thing to do as a teacher. For me, this seems like the telling truth of what the kids have actually learned from my teaching. Were they paying attention during class or going through all semester cheating their way out of learning?

Math can be challenging to some, but it is one of those life lessons that kids don't think they will ever use in their lifetime. When in fact, they use it every day; to calculate how much money they need to pay for lunch, some who drive already use it to figure out how much gas money they need to ask their parents for, or how many miles they have to empty and come up with the answer to if they will make it to their destination.

The bell is about to ring, and I rush into my room to get settled before the kids barge in here. I'm running late because I took a little extra time to clean up the coffee station in the teachers' lounge. Someone left it a mess.

Coffee in hand, I take a seat in my chair behind my desk, but when my butt hits the cushion, the chair falls apart. It's like time morphs into slow motion as the fall to the floor is imminent. There is nowhere to grab to steady myself, and hot coffee is already high in the air and coming down to cover me.

Yeah, today's going to be a great day. Not! There's no time to go home and change before the kids get here as a bell just rang. Half of them are already piled in the room and start laughing at me because I'm still on the floor with coffee spilled all over everywhere. Papers are scattered since I made a futile attempt to stop myself from falling and grabbed a stack of papers on my desk instead of the hardwood. That's going to be fun trying to sort through. As gracefully as I can, I find my feet and make my way to standing.

Before I look up to meet the chuckling faces of my students walking in, I try to right myself and silently run through my chant, *I am completely enough. I am attractive. I am cool enough. Now, you go out there, Lennox, and you don't listen to a damn word they say. You got this, girl.*

Needless to say, I'm on edge the rest of the morning, especially after I realize that there are absolutely no screws in the chair that I fell out of. Which means someone had to tamper with it.

"Whoa! What happened to you?" Nash asks as he sees me walking down the hall heading home for lunch.

"I don't know, Nash. There were no screws in my chair this morning, and I attempted to sit down in it. I don't have time to

talk. I'm headed home for lunch to change."

"Hold up, I'll come with you."

"Fine." I'm not in the mood to chit-chat or argue.

As soon as we get to my house, I head straight from my bedroom and start stripping my clothes to take a quick shower and change. When I come back out, Nash has made us a couple of sandwiches and is sitting at the table.

"Don't worry, I know it wasn't Vanessa because I told Vanessa that she better back off and leave you alone and not pull these kinds of embarrassing stunts."

"She has been like this for most of my life. I know how she works and precisely how to avoid it. When I told you not to confront her, this is why. Look at me. I was the laughingstock of my students today. Do you know how hard it will be to gain their respect back now?"

"Well, if the football players give you any grief, they will be running until they are puking up their lungs."

"Stop. Stop trying to fix this, Nash. You just don't get it. This is only the beginning. She will not stop until I am gone, and she has you." I sit down, place my elbows on the table, and sink my face into my palms, wanting this day to be over with.

"Stop right there, Lennox." He kneels down next to my chair and turns me in my seat to face him. "You are the one who doesn't get it. I have never, nor will I ever be, interested in a woman like Vanessa. Frankly, I am repulsed by her, the way she looks, and the way she acts."

“I mean, why do I even talk or say anything to you when you’re not even going to listen to anything I have to say. You didn’t trust me enough to heed my warning and respect me enough to think I know what I’m talking about here. Instead, you just went on your merry way and thought you knew better. Mr. Popular, the one who never ever had to deal with this shit at any point in his life.”

“Lenny, I don’t know what else to say.” He sits back on his haunches and rocks, back-and-forth a little to stand up again and sit back down in the chair.

“That’s the problem, Nash, you’ve already said too much and done too much. I’ll take you back to school, but I think it’s time we part ways. Because we both know that she’s not going to stop until she has you. I’m no fight in that competition.” I stand up, walk to the entryway and put on my boots and coat to leave, and he follows suit.



## Chapter 18 - Nash

TODAY'S THE LAST DAY of work before the Christmas break. I spent the rest of this entire week pretty much in my office the whole time with the door shut. I don't want to talk to anybody, but tonight I promised my dad and my grandpa that I would come over for dinner. So, I'm certain the inevitable conversation will have to happen. However, it should be a short one.

It'll go something like, *So what happened to the girl that you love? Well, I didn't listen to anybody's advice and went and opened my big mouth, and it got me in trouble. Not only in trouble, I've lost the best thing that happened to me. I don't think I can ever get it back. End of subject.*

I'll move on, focus on the high school team. That's where my priority should lie anyway. That's why they hired me here, so I can help these young men be upstanding men of society and go on to live their dreams, whatever they may be.

"Hey, boy," My grandpa greets me the same way he has since birth. I give him a hug before I get through the door. "I'm so

glad you could grace us with your presence today. Come on in and have a seat. Your dad's got food on the table."

"Thanks, Grandpa, it's good to see you too." I kick off my boots in the entryway, shake out of my jacket, and head for the kitchen.

In true fashion, my dad has all the food laid out on the table for me and Grandpa to just have to sit down and start filling our plates to eat. Growing up with the two of them alone was all I knew. Did I miss a motherly figure in my life to coddle me when I was hurt? Very rarely. My dad and Grandpa were always there, and I never had to question that.

"Should I even ask where that pretty little girlfriend of yours is at?" In true fashion, Grandpa brings up the obvious elephant in the room.

"No, Grandpa, you should not ask," I respond.

"I only need to take one guess as to what happened there. Am I right?" Dad responds. I can't even look at him because I know he knows he's right. So, I just turn and look out the kitchen window, and watch the snowfall reflect off the streetlights.

"Let's not talk about it. What else do you guys have to discuss?" I put a big spoonful of pasta in my mouth. That was one thing my father always did great. He can cook like nobody's business.

"You know, boys, the guys down at the diner this morning were talking about how next year's rival football team is going

to have much larger young men than our upcoming class of players at Nelson County High. What do you all think?" Grandpa asks.

"I think that group of men down at the diner sipping their coffee all gossip too much," I comment.

"Nash, you're right about that. They *do* gossip a lot. However, with this one, they do have a point. Their roster lineup with all their juniors this year are going to be coming up as seniors next year. They are definitely going to give your team a run for its money."

"Well, they are bigger. But we are faster on defense and faster off the line on offense. We have better catching hands and have a lineup of two really good quarterbacks that can throw and run. So, I'm really not worried about them. It's when we make it deeper in the playoffs, that has me concerned."

We eat, shoot the shit, play a couple rounds of cards, and then call it a night. Grandpa said he had to get his beauty rest, and I really don't want to be left alone with Dad to tell me I told you so.

On the drive home, I take it slow, debating whether I want to stop by Derby Nights. Then I decide against it as I pass by the Christmas Festival in the town square that's in full swing with people walking around and couples holding hands. Sweet old couples cuddle together on benches to keep each other warm. Just when I thought I was getting over and accepting the fact that Lennox and I were not going to have a future, sights like these make me long to grow old with someone. Would I

survive on my own? Absolutely. But do I want to? Not necessarily.

## Chapter 19 - Lennox

ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO miss a guy so badly when you're the one that pushed him away? Is that really fair to him or to you? I think what makes me even more sad is that throughout these last several weeks with Nash by my side, I dared to dream of what a holiday would look like spending it with a guy that I care about.

Is it so bad, after all, to have a man who wants to protect you at all cost? He knew that I would be mad about him talking to Vanessa, and he knew what the consequence would be. Yet, something in his heart told him damn the consequence, he was still going to fight for my honor. Wouldn't any girl be lucky to have that in their life? However, I'm the stupid one who pushed him away.

As I'm cozy in my PJs, I turn on the gas fireplace and snuggle up on the couch with the soft blanket and my phone, wondering what I should do about the Nash situation. I really don't have a clue.

Mindlessly, I'm searching my social media feeds and come across something I've never seen before. They're pretty risqué pictures of normal women who don't look overly skinny or overly sexy. You know the ones who have that sexy *it* factor? Well, these pictures are not those women. Below in the comments it says a new boudoir photography studio called Poppy's Shots, that's in the back of the Tiger's Den, just opened in Kissing Springs, Kentucky.

I flip the phone tab up and open the search engine to find out what that business type even means. I soon learn that boudoir photography sessions are where you wear lingerie, skimpy dresses, or sexy outfits to get your picture taken. Some even go scantily clad to do it.

Now, with the answer in hand, my plan formulates how to say sorry to Nash. I may have destroyed our relationship all together and he will never want to be with me again, but at least, I'll be able to say sorry in a way that I know that he will truly appreciate.

I quickly dial the number on the post and schedule an appointment. Thank goodness that it is a lady who is taking the pictures because I didn't even think about that before I called. That would be kind of awkward if a male was taking my picture. I'm also glad that it's a name that I do not know. Growing up in a small town, you know just about everyone, and you more than likely know all that they've done in their life as well.

It's going to be a challenge to figure out what I'm going to wear. I'm going to have to order something and have it overnight shipped since we're going to do the pictures this week. That way, they'll be ready and here on Christmas day. For the next several hours, I scan through what feels like hundreds of different websites with different lingerie and nineties baby doll style teddies.

Plus, I spend another couple hours on boudoir photography tips. I'm now a little more prepared with my list of do's and don'ts. Sit this way. Don't sit that way. Stand this way. Don't stand that way. Smile. Don't smile.

Of course, I have to practice in the mirror. I position my arm a certain way, push my chest forward, lean back slightly, spread my legs, make sure to lift my feet up on my tippy toes. Then I look to my side at myself in the dresser mirror. Dang! I do look pretty hot.

Next, I test what they look like in picture form and set my phone up on the dresser and set the timer on the camera to shoot the picture. It takes a couple times to get this right as I keep shooting pictures and practicing my poses.

I'm certain the photographer is a professional, but I'm sure that it will help and speed things along if I know, somewhat, of what I'm doing.

My heart races at the thought of doing this. Yes, it's exciting for me to try something new, but it's more exhilarating because I know Nash will love them. I hope, anyway. Oh man, I *really* hope he does. If he doesn't, I guess he can just toss

them in the trash, well, tear them up first, and then go on about his life.

He has made me smile more in these last few months than I think I've smiled in forever. I loved my time with Nash, and I didn't realize that I was taking that for granted until he wasn't there to say good morning to in the teachers' lounge, or there to make me smile as we crossed each other in the hallway, or there waiting at my car to follow me home after school when football season was over.

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The day of the pictures flows smoothly, and I'm so glad I did practice when I could. I was a lot more comfortable as the camera snapped each shot. Poppy was as professional as anyone could ever be. She made me feel glamorous and like I was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen. The shoot lasted about an hour, and I changed into three different outfits. Also, she was really fast to turn my pictures into prints.

Now, I have them strewn out on the living room floor and am sitting here, deciding whether to give them all to Nash or just pick out a few of them. Hell, that's the whole reason I did these pictures. They were for him, so I might as well give him all of them. I'll pack them up in a little box with a few new toys that came in my most recent box. He'll understand what the invitation means.

I finish off the box packaging with red ribbon all the way around it and top it with a bow.



I left the little box I put together for him on his front porch by his door about an hour ago. I rang the doorbell and ran back across the street in true ding-dong-ditch style, but he must have not been at home since the little wrapped box still sits there on the mat, taunting me.

I'm waiting patiently. Okay, maybe not so patiently, for Nash to get home.

It's all my fault that he's mad at me, and I hope that this little care package shows him just how much he means to me.

## Chapter 20 - Nash

TONIGHT, DILLON AND THE guys asked me to go hang out at Derby Nights with them and drink a few beers. I get there and have one beer, but I'm just not feeling it. So, I go ahead and say my goodbyes to head home.

The only thing is though, the closer I get to home, the more I realize I don't want to be there because I have to pass by Lennox's house. I wonder if she's home or not. Then I'll start thinking about the times we had together, and I just don't want to go through that again. Rather, I'll make a detour and drive up to the football field. I'm parked outside the fence, sitting in my truck with music playing and watching the snow fall onto the turf, stands, and track. The white frozen water droplets fall like it's expelling all of its bad energy and creating a white cloud of positivity.

My gas tank is almost empty. So, I finally call it a night and face the story of my life and head home. When I come down my street. I keep my eyes locked on my house, but as I pass by the front door to pull into the driveway, there's a little green

box with a red bow on it sitting on my doorstep. I get out and go pick it up before I get back in my truck and pull it into the garage and shut the door off to the outside elements.

I'm not sure what it could possibly be, nor am I really in a rush to find out. I toss the box onto the counter and take off my shoes and coat, get a drink of water, and after I start the fire, sit on the couch and grab the box before I sit down.

With my feet up on the coffee table, I inspect the box, I don't really know what I'm looking for. Maybe it's a bomb or something. If it is, well, at least it'll put me out of my misery.

I take my fingers and unwind the bow on top that's connected to the ribbon holding the box together. Then I lift the top lid and ruffle the tissue paper around to see what's inside.

My heart stops. What feels like minutes later, it starts beating in my chest hard. With every flip through the pictures in the box my pulse beats faster.

There are probably twenty pictures of Lennox that are super sexy and after the pictures there's a toy. It's the one that brought us so much pleasure the last time we were together.

Without even putting my shoes or my jacket on, I run out of my front door and across the street to bang on her door.

"What is the meaning of this?" I demand as soon as she opens the door.

"Oh, my God, Nash, come in and warm up." She tugs me inside, wraps a blanket around me, and escorts me to the couch to sit in front of the fire. "Sit down, and I'll explain."

I obey like a little lost puppy dog which frustrates me again. I need answers. Why would she send me this type of stuff when we're done?

“Nash, growing up a math geek versus the football star, was night and day different. I'm not going to say that you always had perfect days, but I can guarantee you that you didn't come to school and be embarrassed by a group of girls almost every school day of your life. It became a way of life for me and the few friends that I had. We learned how to deal with it by finding ways to keep low and to the ground, be invisible, and how to get lost fast when those girls showed up. You experienced the high life of school that included parties and social life. Whereas, my highs came from winning scholastic competitions, and seeing how high I could rank in my grades.”

“I get that, Lenny. But why did you do all this for me?” I question, still needing some answers and clarity.

“What I'm trying to say is, I'm sorry for overreacting and getting so mad at you and shutting you out,” Lennox confesses. “Because, Nash, I love you. This has been the hardest week being without you. I need you in my life, but even more importantly than that, I need you to forgive me.”

“Oh, Angel. I love you too.” I pull her into my arms for a tight hug, never wanting to let her go again. “I also love the pictures. Thank you for those.” She chuckles against my chest. “Why the toy, Lenny? I know that was our last time together, but is there something else I'm missing?”

“That was the night that I completely fell in love with you. You saw all of me, accepted all of me, and seemed to still want and desire what was there.”

“I get it, but I fell in love with all of you way before that night, Angel. For me, it was the shopping for Christmas Trees that did it. That day, I noticed you had the biggest heart of anyone I’ve ever met, and your smile was infectious, and I just couldn’t get enough of you. I wanted to have you around me all the time.”

“Awe, Nash Witten, big strong coach is actually a gushy softy,” she playfully pokes me in the ribs to tickle me.

“Stop it,” I say laughingly, and I pick her up and throw her over my shoulder as she squeals. With large steps, I race us down the hall to use her new favorite stimulator along with my cock to show her just how *much* I love her.

## Epilogue - Lennox

THE FOLLOWING SCHOOL YEAR, after Nash made our relationship official, I was happy to say that Vanessa's teaching contract was not extended and who knew where she was or what she was doing these days. Since then, the last few years have been a lot better at work. Even the usual unruly students seem to be acting more well behaved. Who knows, maybe she was teaching them bad habits, or her attitude just might have been rubbing off on those around her. Anyways, good riddance.

This Christmas, we are spending it with the ones we love and have invited both my parents and his dad and Grandpa over for lunch and to open presents at our place. It didn't take long for us to merge our houses because one or the other was always at the other's house and we realized that it was just a waste to have two houses, especially directly across the street from each other.

We went and picked out the tree right after Thanksgiving and still chose one for his dad's house and took it to them as well.

When we delivered it, Nash's dad told us the story about the tree topper angel that has adorned their tree all these years. Then he handed us the box and said he wanted us to have it to carry on the tradition of letting her shine bright each holiday season.

Nash's mom had seen the angel in a little storefront window while his dad and her were Christmas shopping for Nash's first Christmas and she immediately fell in love with it. His dad told her that they couldn't get it, and they went on their way. Truthfully, though, he wanted to surprise her with it. He snuck back to purchase it, and on Christmas Eve night, he placed it on top of the tree and plugged in her lights.

The next morning, Nash's mother woke up to find it and loved it so much she cried. Every year since, the angel has been a reminder of the love their family shared and a remembrance of the good times they had together.

I finally scored with Santa, and I'm so honored to be a part of this family who has so much love in their hearts.

THE END

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### **ABOUT BRITNEY BELL**

I'm a Texas girl... Yes, I can ride horses, but I prefer fast cars. Yet, I prefer country music to hard rock.

Raising two boys, life can get really manly with all that testosterone floating around. The spare time I do get between ball games and outdoor activities, I absolutely love the mental escape that reading romance brings, even if it's in small increments. During the other ounce of my spare time, I write about what's in my head as I'm sitting through all those sports events.

My passion is to bring you that escape. The one where you get lost so deeply in the story that you lose all sense of time and actually do get to have a mental break.

XOXO

Britney Bell

...writing your escape