

A photograph of two women in a dark forest at night. The woman on the left has dark hair and black makeup, including a crescent moon on her forehead and black dots around her eyes. The woman on the right has long red hair and red eye makeup. The text 'ALL HALLOW'S' Hex' is overlaid in the center. 'ALL HALLOW'S' is in a bold, orange, sans-serif font, and 'Hex' is in a white, cursive font.

ALL HALLOW'S'  
*Hex*

*KENNA BELRAE*

## *Praise for All Hallows' Haunt*

“I devoured this book! Honestly, I couldn’t wait for it to drop into my Kindle. I’d been following it from idea conception through all the bumps and bruises. To be able to read it all in one sitting was absolutely a fangirl moment.” — **Azzyandherbooks (Amazon)**

“This is the first book of Kenna’s that I have read, and it definitely won’t be my last. I was pulled in from the first chapter and couldn’t wait to see what was going to happen next. The chemistry between Sienna and Everett was off the charts!” — **shedevilreads (Amazon)**

“Well she did it again!!! If you want a spooky Halloween read , here is a great one! I’ve never wanted to play in a mirror maze more!!! All the spicy fun!” — **Richard S (Amazon)**

*All Hallows' Hex*

**KENNA BELLRAE**

This publication is a work of fiction. All names, descriptions, dates, places, and events are imaginary and any likeness or correlation to real-world circumstances is purely coincidental.

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# *Spotify Playlist*

## *All Hallows' Hex — Playlist*

*Chapter 1 — Spellbound by Siouxsie and the Banshees*

*Chapter 2 — Witchcraft by Book Of Love*

*Chapter 3 — Season Of The Witch by Lana Del Rey*

*Chapter 4 — chance by Hayley Kiyoko*

*Chapter 5 — girls girls girls by FLETCHER*

*Chapter 6 — Silk Chiffon by MUNA*

*Chapter 7 — The Space Song by The Pierces*

*(Special Track — Hocus Pocus - Original Mix by Marina)*

*Chapter 8 — Pussy Is God by King Princess*

*Epilogue — Boyfriend by Dove Cameron*

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*Oh, my deity, it's another insta-love ...*

*Run, run!*

*Nah, I'm for real. I'm very, very consistent in my cliterature.*

*They fuggin' and lovin' immediately.*



*To Kels:*

*The only Kelsey I've ever liked who wasn't a massive bitch, ever. Thank you for that post-rave, Taco Bell parking lot sapphic experience. It was completely platonic, always, and I'm so happy to see you thriving whenever I log into my personal accounts.*

*I don't think I've ever responded to a stranger asking to smooch so positively.*

*You helped me understand those feelings I battled with a little bit better.*

*I never told you that, but thanks.*

*All the best, xx.*

## *Content Warning*

This is a sapphic novella with explicit, mild, public sexual activities and may not be suited for some readers or those under the age of 18. This novella explores themes of bisexuality awareness and understanding what that means for our FMC as she finds herself. Mentions of modern day witchcraft practices including: tarot, astragalomancy, candle magic.

# CHAPTER 1

*Aimee*

**THE CAR BEEPED TWICE** as the headlights blinked. I looked over to see Vera pocketing her keys and double-checking for her wallet and phone—doing the notorious pat down from chest to ass. Her boots scuffed as she moved across the damp pavement to where Sienna and I stood.

“All right, bitches,” she exclaimed. “Fucking *girls’ night!*” She whooped with her hands thrown in the air, the pink messy bun bobbing with the jolting movement.

“Is it bad that I’m relieved it’s *just* us this time?” I laughed as we linked arms and started toward the entrance. “I mean, I love Shawn and Cody, don’t get me wrong. I just feel like we never get to go to these places by ourselves.” I watched as my confession brought goofy smiles to their faces. “Well, I tolerate Shawn. There’s a humorous element to him at times, I guess.”

Sienna proposed another costumed night for our girls only trip to Hallow’s Haunt. She came in half-skull face paint, while Vera opted for a simple scarecrow look. I took on a casual witch look, which really just meant wearing a cute dressy outfit and a pointed hat. I never cared to get super creative.

“I don’t love Shawn, for one, but I do adore Cody,” Sienna said in a follow-up. “I’m not thrilled at all about the prospect of running into Everett for ... two?”

“Three,” Vera countered. “We’re doing a strict no boys allowed rule. There will be no entertaining the Dick Squad in any capacity tonight.”

“The *Dick Squad*?” I clarified, nearly falling into a fit of laughter.

“Yeah, them and their grubby little dicks being all asshole-y, not having it tonight.” Vera put her nose in the air as Sienna and I snorted.

“I mean, I wouldn’t really say grubby *little* dick where Everett is concerned,” Sienna muttered as we left the gate’s turnstiles. Vera elbowed her.

“Sienna, no dick talk!”

“Fine, *fine!*”

“Do you miss him?” I asked, ignoring this newly imposed rule that wouldn’t affect me tonight.

“I don’t know what I feel. Feelings are a lot, and emotions are heavy. What if he was just extremely horny?” she pondered as we made our way down the main avenue.

“I doubt that he’d risk his job for a piece of ass,” Vera spouted off. Sienna’s eyebrows bounced up toward her hairline and she gave Vera an incredulous look. “I’m not saying you’re just a piece of ass, dammit. I’m saying if his job was on the line, clearly, he saw you as someone worth taking a chance on.” When Sienna nodded, she jokingly wiped her brow for the crisis averted.

“Have you considered calling him?” I asked, taking in the people around us and looking for our clown friend.

“Nope. Not doing that right now.” Sienna shut us down, and I felt the chill freeze us out of that conversation. Vera seemed to pick on the shift so she changed the topic.

“Cody asked me if I was free around Halloween weekend.” Both Sienna and I looked at her with confused shock.

“The hell is that supposed to mean? Like a date?” I asked, trying to wrap my head around it.

“He wouldn’t really give much information. When I asked if we were all coming, he simply mentioned putting something together and that he just needed to know what day I was free.” I snorted another laugh at her statement.

“Since when is Cody a planner?” I snarked.

“She has a point, Ver,” Sienna agreed. “Ooh, food. One second,” she interrupted herself and ran across the avenue to a Chinese fast-food vendor.

“I really hope Everett is off tonight,” Vera confessed quietly, as though she’d be able to hear us all the way over here. I looked at our emotionally hazy friend. She smiled at the server, but it didn’t reach her eyes.

“Do you think he’d try to talk to her?”

“No,” she said honestly. “He didn’t ask for her number. He knew she wasn’t jumping with him that night and let her have that control. By all accounts of hers, he was the perfect gentleman to her choices. I just hope he’s off work for his sake.”

“I’m sure it’ll work out with the least bumps and bangs.” I stopped my input there as Sienna paid the man and made her way back to us. She delighted at the food she was inhaling, a temporary happiness.

“Fuck yes, this is my favorite place to binge. I can’t tell you why, but it’s shittier outside the park.” Sienna shoveled another bite of chow mein into her mouth.

“Then why do you keep going there?” Vera asked with a laugh and shake of her head.

“I’m a glutton for punishment. I don’t know what to tell you.” Sienna smiled back at us, fully satisfied with her choices.

“So, Aimee was just telling me about how she’s looking forward to seeing Lanie tonight.” Vera had an eyebrow arched when I looked over. *Keep the conversation away from him.*

“Yes,” I said, finding a questioning look mapping her face and a bit of soy sauce smudged by her mouth. I reached out and quickly brushed it away for her. “I messaged her the other day and she said tonight they have her working at a tarot booth. Thought we could go and get our cards read?”

“Wouldn’t that just be gimmicky?” Sienna asked.

“I guess it would be if they just put a random person in there, but Lane is spiritual and actually practices witchcraft. It won’t be a show with her.” I watched as Sienna nodded and came around to it.

“Fuck it,” she exclaimed, shrugging her shoulders. “I could use all the guidance the stars are willing to offer me right now.”

“That’s my girl!” Vera shouted, throwing her arm over Sienna’s shoulders and causing her to drop some broccoli from

her fork. “Ooh, I’m sorry about that.”

“I think you guys are really going to like Lane. She’s super funny and is just the sweetest person I’ve ever met.” I took out my phone to check the time and see if I’d missed any messages from her. “She even said she could comp our tickets if we come back out soon.”

“Okay, I love her.” Vera bounced with excitement and Sienna walked off to throw her trash away.

“She’s pretty lovable.”

“So, are you ... ?” Sienna started when she came back. “You don’t have to say anything right now. I won’t take it as an answer either way. I just want to know what tonight means for you and if there’s any way I can support you in that.”

“Same,” Vera promised with a sheepish smile.

“I wish I had a more definitive answer,” I said with an awkward grin. “I’ve never really explored those options for myself, you know? I just know that Lane makes me giddy inside and I really love it when my phone goes off and it’s a text from her.” I looked down at my shoes as I tapped my feet in no pattern.

“That could be many things, so you just tell us what you need when you need it, okay?” Sienna asked, extending her hand. I took hold of it and Vera added hers into the mix. “Now, let’s find a roller coaster and get those nerves out before we see her.”

“Deal,” I whispered.

*These butterflies are permanent.*



## CHAPTER 2

*Lanie*

**I STRAIGHTENED** the purple tablecloth sitting on top of the round wooden table. There were celestial symbols screen printed in metallic silver. I looked over the items placed on the table and fidgeted with their placements. The large glass sphere that was supposed to imitate a “crystal ball” was my manager’s doing, despite my protests that it was unnecessary for my services. I moved it to the side where it was mostly out of sight and out of mind. There were three tarot decks lined on one side and an array of crystals I cleansed overnight. The incense I burned to keep the area neutral was going strong.

“Anything else you need, Lane?” Matt asked, peeking his head in through the back entrance of my booth. Everett moved into frame beside him. He and Matt moved the big table into place for me since my ass of a manager declined to find proper assistance. Everett had an exhausted smile in place as he took in the finished settings.

“I think that’s all, Matty.” I flashed him an appreciative smile.

“Do good tonight. I know all of that,” he said, gesturing to the costume and exaggerated displays, “is to please Shelly for the Halloween theme, but your readings are fantastic.”

“Thanks, that means a lot. Do you guys want a reading before I open up completely?” I asked as the two boys exchanged looks of uncertainty before shrugging.

“Fuck it, I won’t deny the stars a chance to guide me.” Matt stepped inside, ducking to accommodate his frame. Everett followed the same movement and took the seat next to him on the other side of the table.

I sat in front of the two and laid out the deck options for them.

“Okay, so I don’t want you to make a quick decision. Look at the decks and really try to connect with one. Follow your intuition,” I instructed the boys.

“So like, which one is calling to me kind of thing?” Everett asked, and I looked at him with surprise, considering he didn’t seem ready to jump in.

“Yes,” I answered. He didn’t react to me or my answer as he stared at a single deck. His hand shot out and he placed a quick finger on the purple, more subtle deck in front of us. “Are you sure?”

“I’m positive,” he responded as Matt glanced between the remaining two.

“I keep going back to this one,” Matt said, pointing out a black deck with a silhouetted image of a sun and moon embracing for an eclipse.

“Perfect.” I cleared the table and picked up the deck Everett chose. “What question would you like to ask the deck, Everett?” I inquired as I began to shuffle, keeping Everett at the forefront of my mind.

“I don’t know what to do.” His response was apathetic almost. He looked up from my shuffling hands and clarified,

“I don’t know if I should pursue, hold back, or give up.”

“Is this a relationship matter?”

“Yes,” he answered.

“So, then I can assume your question is more aligned with needing to know what path you should take for a sense of happiness, whatever that looks like to you?” I asked, and he nodded in response. I repeated that sentiment to myself over and over as I shuffled.

*How should Everett move forward in this relationship that troubles him?*

I shuffled and pulled the first card for the cross spread, setting it to the left, the second to the right, and finally, I pulled the third, fourth, and fifth cards and placed them from bottom to top. I took a moment to observe.

“Generally speaking, this is a good spread, Everett.” I looked in the order I pulled the cards and gathered more insight on each one individually. “So, the first card,” I said, pointing to the spot. “Is going to represent you. Your role. Your place.”

He leaned forward, his eyebrows pinched together. “Is this a joke, Lane?” He cocked a smirk. “The Fool? A skull and a jester’s cap ‘n bells?”

“I understand the way that looks,” I said before snorting a quick chuckle. “But I promise that wasn’t on purpose.” I took a moment to regain composure. “The Fool, quite the assumed connotation, but it really represents possibility. With its placement and being upright, I can infer opportunity and potential. Your role in this situation was the spark for a new beginning.”

I turned to the second card, placing my finger on it.

“This is her.” I looked up at him. “I’m assuming *her*, yes?” He nodded and I continued. “Judgement reversed.”

“Is that a cherub?” Matt asked, leaning closer to get a better look. I nodded but didn’t answer aloud.

“So, in this position, I’m reading self-doubt for her. The way she sees herself in this relationship, or proposed relationship even, is heavily critiqued and she’s looking for every reason to avoid the intuitive feelings that brought her to you in the first place.” I tapped my fingers across my lips as I pondered more on the matter.

“Do—”

“Nope, I don’t want anything to sway my reading.” I cut him off with a finger in the air. “I’m getting a heavy sense of doubt, but not related to the person,” I concluded, coming back to the first point. “It’s not a doubt in ability or action, but in ... worthiness. Let’s come back for an overall look later.”

I started at the bottom, looking from one card to the next.

“These three cards in the middle are going to shape the guidance you’re looking for,” I started. Pointing to the third card at the base of the cross, I explained, “Position three is the foundation. Page of Wands is sitting upright. As it represents the foundation for you two, this can be many things. The strongest coming through is a sense of curiosity. In the fourth position,” I said, moving my hand to the card above. “This card represents the current state of the relationship. I’m guessing this is explaining the issues you’re seeing.” I took a deep breath before explaining. “Two of Swords upright.”

“Swords? Like conflict?” Everett asked. He was much closer now as he was fully invested in the reading.

“Not exactly,” I reassured. “Conflict is found where you wish it to be. There doesn’t have to be conflict if you know how to navigate. For instance,” I said, sitting back to look at him head-on. “Two of Swords upright, like all other cards, has a myriad of interpretations. Based on the previous cards in the spread, I’m drawn to the aspect of choices and decisions. Love and the like aren’t easy things to jump into on a perceived whim. The issue is that a choice hasn’t been made, and it’s left you in limbo.”

“Yeah, to say the least.” He sighed and looked at the last card.

“That’s the card that brings it together. Fifth position, we’re going to draw an outcome from here.” I analyzed this one carefully. I’d never been the tarot reader that gave fluff and happiness where there was an unknown answer. “More wands. This time, it’s Two of Wands upright. The likely outcome by basic interpretation is progress. I’ll go further and say more concretely, a decision will come and progress will be made. That progress, however, is widely open to interpretation. Progress to you might look differently from progress to your potential partner.”

“But progress is progress, and if that’s the outcome, then I’ll take it.” Everett resigned himself and sat against the back of his chair. He crossed his arms over his chest and focused his gaze on his shoe.

“If you don’t mind waiting, Matt?” When I looked over at him, he shook his head and gestured to continue. “Can I read dice for you, Everett?” His eyes moved from me to Matt as he thought it over.

“Dice?”

“Divination dice, astragalomancy. It won’t take any longer than the cards.” I picked up the velvety pouch from the area I placed crystals earlier. With my other hand, I grabbed the wooden tarot box. He nodded as I set it up. “For this, we read house, sign, and planet.”

I dropped the dice into the box, closed the lid, and gave it a few shakes as I thought over the same question from his tarot pull. I set the box on the table and opened it so the boys could see the symbols as well.

“Each die represents a separate facet that is read together. The house gives insight to the affected area of life, the sign gives insight to the emotions that are at play in the situation, and finally, the planet guides actions or offers influence,” I explained, pointing to each respective milky white die. The gold painted symbols glinted in the overhead light.

“Is it different from tarot?” Everett asked.

“Yes, it can offer you another perspective.” I looked for the first die that represented the house. “No surprise here, the seventh house is facing out, along with Pisces and Venus.”

“I don’t know what that means,” he deadpanned, looking up.

“Of course you don’t, silly. That’s why you pay me to read it.” He smirked at that, and I continued, “Simply, your personal relationships are being affected and romantic, intuitive emotions are driving you forward. Venus represents harmony, attraction and love. Give it time, Everett. Let her come back and make that choice.”

“See, Lane. You’re simply the best,” Matt offered as his friend settled back in his chair and thought over his readings. “I’ll do a simple three card spread—past, present, future.”

“Noted,” I said, clearing off Everett’s read and taking Matt’s deck into my hands. I shuffled and shuffled, waiting for the cards to pop out as they wished. Soon, three cards rested against the purple fabric in a simple three-placement line. “Coming from, currently at, and where you’re headed,” I explained, pointing to each card. “Eight of Cups reversed, Nine of Cups upright, and Ace of Pentacles upright.”

“Good spread?”

“Always at the interpretation of the querent,” I answered Matt. “Looks like you’re coming from a place of avoidance. Change wasn’t something you were willing to budge on, but currently you’re thriving in emotional stability. I’d say at some point, you went with the will of things and it’s doing well for you. As for what you can look forward to, I’m seeing new opportunities.”

“I’ll take it. Once again, Lane, that brilliant witchy brain of yours has pulled out the best reading.” Matt stood and slid his chair back, but Everett lingered with heavy, unspoken questions coloring his expression. His full lips were pulled in a thin line, his brows pinched, and his focus stayed zeroed in on the cards in my hands.

“You okay?”

“Yeah, sorry,” he whispered before shaking it off and putting his mask back into place.

“First-time readings can be heavy if you aren’t prepared. You’ve got this.” I fixed the table and lit another incense to cleanse the area. Matt waited for him at the back exit, but I stopped his advancement and pulled him in for a hug.

“Thanks, Lane.” As he pulled away, my phone went off with a text alert. Pulling it out of my bag, I waved to the boys



as they made their exit and started their own conversations.

Aimee: Hey, turns out we were able to make a girls trip. Are you free?

Lane: Yes, I'm just opening actually! I'm across from the clown house.

Lane: Shelly has me doing tarot reads, ironically enough ...

Aimee: Awesome! I'll see you soon then!

I stared at the screen, realizing too late a goofy grin slid its way across my face. There wasn't much to confirm that Aimee had *those* feelings for me. Hell, there wasn't even much to conclude that she was gay at all. I could've very well read into every interaction we had and projected my own wishes onto them.

*But ...*

I danced around the topic enough, and it was only going to hurt worse the longer I put it off.

*Simply ask.*

*Simple.*

## CHAPTER 3

*Aimee*

**“SHE'S EXPECTING US?”** Vera asked, leaning forward to look at me as we walked to the clown house we visited during our first trip. Sienna was visibly uncomfortable, but she wouldn't bring it up, even if we tried to pry it out of her.

“Yes,” I answered, closing my phone and putting it back into my bag. “She did confirm the ... haunted house is the right location.” I chose my words carefully.

“Clown isn't a cuss word, guys.” Sienna sighed and loosened her shoulders.

“We're always going to look out for you first,” Vera promised as she leaned in to hug her.

From where we originally came in, the area wasn't that far away. On this avenue's path, the shoddy building came into view soon and so did its massive line. Without bringing attention to it or the actors who could be working tonight, we made a beeline for the tarot booth.

Booth was a weird way to describe it. A shed with electricity was more apt. It was a simple construction, with a door and a large sign that was probably a bit more insensitive than intended. Lane had mentioned in a past conversation that

her manager, Shelly, was immune to constructive criticism. It was enough that she talked her out of most of the “costume requirements” she insisted on.

Lane implied that change took a meeting with HR on why you couldn't be insensitive to other religious or spiritual practices.

The shed was a deep purple, and a soft glow came from the open door. The scent of jasmine and desert sage wafted around us as we approached and stepped inside. I heard Lane greet the others who walked in before me.

I swallowed the thickness filling my throat and looked up. My breath caught as I took her in. She was wearing a beautiful robed dress and her makeup was theatrical. A black crescent moon was painted onto her forehead, and her black eyeliner dripped down her round cheeks.

“Aimee!” she greeted, a smile lighting up her face, and she walked around the round table. Her arms were outstretched, and when she got close enough, they pulled me into her. I matched her embrace automatically, my heart fluttering as the scent of her perfume filled my nose. I fought the urge to inhale deeply.

“Lane, I'm so glad I got to swing by this time,” I said, trying to keep my voice even. When she let me go, I looked at Sienna and Vera, who stood there with knowing smiles and arched eyebrows.

Lane turned to walk back to her side of the table and Vera took the opportunity to mouth, “You got this,” with a subtle thumbs-up. Only, Vera wasn't capable of subtlety and I was certain Lane caught a glimpse of the gesture.

“Sit, sit,” she said with excitement, her hands waving to the empty chairs. “This is going to be so fun! So, I’ve been open for a bit technically, but I haven’t taken customers yet. I wanted to get you guys in here first.” She placed the tarot decks in a row before us. “I’m Lanie, but most people just call me Lane.”

“Sienna,” my skull-faced friend said, leaning forward to shake her hand. Vera followed suit.

“I’m Vera. It’s nice to meet you. Aimee had nothing but good things to say.” At that, Lane glanced my way and rolled her lips to hide her smile.

“Well, that’s fantastic. To get started, I want you guys to look over these decks and really let your energy guide you to one. It doesn’t have to be instant; you can take your time,” Lane instructed.

“This one,” Sienna said, tapping the purple deck.

“I’ll do this green one,” Vera called next.

“I like the black one.” I pointed to the other side of the table.

“Everyone has been quick and confident with their deck selection tonight.” Lane rearranged the decks so they were in front of us as we chose them.

“You said you weren’t reading customers?” I questioned.

“Oh, no, not yet. I had a couple guys help me move stuff in here and I read their cards to warm up.” Sienna stiffened at her words, but her face didn’t betray the questions that went through her mind. “The first reading was actually this purple deck.” Lane tapped it, her short, manicured nails creating a thump against the thick, glossy card. “Wanna start your round?”

“Sure,” Sienna conceded. Lane smiled at that, and I had to wonder myself if Everett was the one who sat here earlier and selected this deck.

“Any question you have in particular? An area of life you’d like guidance for?”

“Well.” She paused. Sienna bit at her lower lip before responding. “Will I make the right choice? I don’t know if I’m being crazy for walking away from something promising.”

“Is this love or a career choice?” Lane clarified. Vera and I made eye contact briefly before focusing back on the cards.

“Uh, love. It’s a romantic matter.”

“I see,” Lane said as she started shuffling. She’d been studying and practicing witchcraft for a long time now, and I admired her passion for it. “I’m going to do a five-card cross.”

Lane shuffled a few more times before pulling the cards and facing them upright. I’d heard of tarot before—really, who hadn’t? It was always a gimmick used in movies and shows, but Lane captivated me as she placed the cards and looked them over. I had no clue what these images and words were supposed to mean.

“That’s interesting. I got this card earlier.” Lane tapped a card close to me on the outside of the cross. “Your perspective is going to look different because you’re watching me read the spread. Card one, two, three, four, five.” She pointed to them in order, left to right and then bottom to top. “This one is you, and this one is your potential partner.”

“Judas Priest.” Vera sighed, covering a snicker as Lane pointed to the second card for Sienna’s partner. When I leaned in, it was more evident that the image I saw was a court jester.

“Sienna, the High Priestess was pulled for your placement. It’s reversed, and this indicates your inner guidance and self-doubt.” Lane tilted her head as she looked the card over. “Your partner is upright, so look at this as an opportunity to explore.” She moved our attention to the bottom of the cross. “Foundation, issue, and outcome. What we have is Eight of Swords, the Hermit, and Two of Cups.”

“Is any of this bad?” Vera whispered, as though the cards were going to hear her question them.

“Not necessarily,” Lane said, laughing her off. “Positioning and placement are just as important as the personal interpretation Sienna places on it. The Eight of Swords, I know that is screaming conflict and everything bad you can associate with a sword. In tarot, this is representing a new perspective because it’s reversed. The foundations of this potential relationship center around this shift. What that shift is, completely up to you to determine and place.”

“Yeah, I know what it could mean,” Sienna said with a sheepish grin. Honestly, we all knew what this meant.

“The fourth card in the center of the cross, the Hermit, can be a little off-putting initially. The placement speaks to the issue you’re currently facing. This card is reversed as well, and it’s showing me withdrawal more than anything. Tarot cards don’t just have one meaning. The interpretations depend heavily on the other cards present and what I feel coming through.” Lane sat back and pondered.

This was all new to me, and as far as I knew, the girls didn’t dabble in card readings either.

“Alright, with this last card, the outcome is pulling this together and in a better light. The Cups suit deals heavily with emotions and relationships, so I’m not surprised to see it here.

Two of Cups has several connotations between its positioning, and we've pulled an upright card here." Lane tapped the last card.

"And that means?" Sienna questioned with lightness to her voice. She didn't look away from Lane or her reading the entire time.

"At its most basic interpretation, unity. But that can come across in a funny way, right?" she asked, and we nodded. "From this card, placement, and looking at you, I would be more inclined to interpret this as its connection foretelling."

"Can that be a reconnection?" Sienna clarified.

"I don't see why not," Lane said, smiling. "It's up to you, Sienna, to put meaning to the facts of a reading. I know nothing, but you do. Where this could have meaning is up to you. If you feel it's a reconnection, then you follow that. Tarot isn't so concrete, and given this spread, it's a comfortable determination that these two"—she pointed to the side cards—"could very well have a reconnection."

"Oh my gosh, me next, *please!*" Vera exclaimed excitedly. "That was amazing, truly." I looked at Vera, begging her to not bring any more attention to Sienna's cards. Lane enjoyed her enthusiasm and simply cleared the table of the present cards and placed them by the incense stick.

"Absolutely," she said before looking at me. "Is that okay with you, Aimee?" I nodded and Lane picked up Vera's deck. "Question for the deck?"

"Can it be cliché?" Vera asked as her cheeks flushed.

"I live for cliché, so go for it, baby." Lane smiled while she shuffled the cards and for a moment, I forgot everything around me. She was in her element. Her dark hair was



beautifully curled and framed her face in large, luscious waves. Her eyes were alight and the curve of her lips as she grinned stirred a new feeling deep inside my chest.

“Okay,” Vera said, cutting through my thoughts. “What do the cards want to tell me? I guess, is there anything I should be aware of?”

“Not as cliché as you could’ve gone, by the way.” Lane shuffled more and explained the spread she chose for Vera. “I think a past, present, future pull is perfect for your information. More so in a sense of asking where you were previously, how are you faring now, and what we can infer for your future.”

Lane took a beat of silence as her brow furrowed and her concentration landed on the deck she shuffled. Three cards popped out in quick succession, and she straightened them before discarding the rest with Sienna’s deck.

“Where you were, where you’re at, and what to expect,” Lane repeated as she pointed to the cards. “The Sun reversed. Page of Swords upright. Ten of Cups upright.” She shook her head with a soft chuckle and kept explaining. “Reversed Sun in the past position, the strongest feeling here is naivety. Upright Page of Swords, I’m leaning to restless curiosity. Upright Ten of Cups for your future outlook, I’m reading fulfillment. Beyond that, for future prospects, there’s a balance, a harmony achieved. Know what area this is for you?”

“No idea, if I’m being honest,” Vera replied. She looked just as puzzled.

“Well, keep these in mind if you do analyze areas you might be holding close to you without knowing it.” Lane cleared the table and looked at me.

“Actually,” Sienna interrupted before Lane could speak. “I just remembered; I haven’t eaten tonight. We’ve already had our cards read so, Vera, do you want to go with me and get some food while we wait for her to finish up?” Vera’s face sat in surprise for a moment before it clicked what Sienna’s aim was.

“Absolutely, I know you must be famished.”

*Way to really sell it, Vera.*

The two stood and ushered themselves out of the shed with hurried and muffled goodbyes. I schooled my face before turning back to Lane.

“I am so sorry about that,” I said, feeling the heat creep into my cheeks.

“Don’t be, we haven’t gotten to hang out with each other yet. Do you still want your cards read?” she asked, reaching for the deck but hesitating.

“I’d love one, but it doesn’t have to be anything extensive. I know this can be exhaustive for you.”

“How considerate.” She beamed while shuffling the deck I chose for myself. “In that case, we can ask a simple question with a one-card pull, and if we feel it’s needed, we can ask for clarity.”

“That sounds perfect, but you’re the expert.” I blushed under her undivided attention. Unlike the others, she didn’t watch the deck—she watched me. Her green eyes were fixated on mine as she shuffled and shuffled until a card spit out. She flinched at its expulsion and laughed.

“I see the spirit has chosen,” she said casually before flipping it over. “The Lovers upright.” She grabbed the deck,

shuffling before pulling another card. “For clarity, the Hanged Man. Upright.”

“I’ll be honest with my lack of knowledge and insight, but the Hanged Man doesn’t scream anything good.” I laughed it off, but I felt uneasy about the depiction before me.

“The Lovers is indicative of choices, and when asking for clarity, the Hanged Man is telling me that you need to let go.” She tapped her fingers along the edge of the deck, her blood-red nails creating a punctuated sound in the space between us.

“Let go?”

“Tell me, Aimee, what do you want from tonight?”

## CHAPTER 4

*Lanie*

**THE QUESTION** I asked hung in the air between us.

*What do you want from tonight?*

It was such a loaded question, and albeit a little stereotypical. I needed to know, though, and I couldn't stop myself from selfishly inquiring. Aimee's bright blue eyes were wide, and the dim lighting darkened the usual bright orange shade of her hair. She wore the cutest mass market produced witch's hat, and the unconscious reasoning for her choice made my heart flutter.

"If I'm being honest with you, I didn't really come with any expectations," she admitted, darting her eyes away from mine.

"Hey," I called her attention back to me. "Eyes here, always," I said, motioning between us. "If you didn't come with expectations, then let's just plan for a good night out. We can take it one activity at a time." I pushed away from the table, and the chair made a scraping noise against the floorboards as I stood. Leaning onto the table, I moved into her space. "Let's let go together."

“Okay,” she agreed, a smile growing the more she turned the thought over in her mind.

When Aimee smiled, a fire lit in my veins unlike any I had felt before. When I was younger, it didn’t take much for me to realize guys weren’t my thing. When I kissed a girl for the first time, the rush couldn’t even compare to what her simple smile did to me. It went beyond butterflies. This feeling dared to make me dizzy, and I’d lean into that fully later.

I took her hand, taking the lead where she was too shy to do so. Pulling the front door closed, we made our exit from the back entrance.

“Wait, don’t you have to do readings tonight?”

I stopped on the steps at her question.

*Shit, she was right.*

I let the prospect of a fun night with her override the need to please Shelly in some way with this damn booth. I turned to face her, not releasing her hand for a second.

“Yes, I do ... ,” I admitted, trying to mitigate the impending disaster.

I hadn’t read cards for myself tonight, but my daily tarot screamed for me to take chances this morning. This was a chance, and I needed to take it. Aimee’s eyes were soft and concerned over getting me in trouble.

“But I’m entitled to a few breaks.” The rationalization came easy after that. “I read for Matt and Everett, and they both work here and helped me move things in. Then, I read for you three. As far as I’m concerned, my spiritual reserves are a little drained and could use a milkshake?” I gave Aimee a coy smile as realization crept onto her face.

“A milkshake pleases the spirits?” she teased, stepping down after me.

“I’ve never known a deity to turn away a frozen treat.” I helped her step onto the pavement and closed the back entrance, engaging the lock and pocketing the key.

I wasn’t going to point out that as I lead her to my favorite ice cream shop here, she didn’t drop my hand. Aimee stood a few inches shorter than me since I was in my platform boots, but the height advantage allowed me to look down and observe the way she took everything in. As the lights moved and danced across us, her blue eyes reflected them like a kaleidoscope. Her smile was cemented as we walked in silence. My face hurt and I realized it was because I couldn’t wear any other expression than one that mirrored hers.

When I opened the door for her, she finally let go of my hand. The only time her smile wavered was when she noticed it too. Not wanting to bring awkwardness and discomfort into the mix, I gathered her hand again when I stepped inside and walked us to the counter.

“Favorite flavor?” I asked, eyeing the menu but watching her in my periphery. Christopher was working here tonight, and he came from the back as we looked over our options.

“I’ve always been a fan of chocolate.”

“That sounds perfect, actually.” I looked at Christopher then. “Can we get one large chocolate fudge milkshake?”

“Yup, would you like whipped cream on top?” he asked with a smile. I looked at Aimee and she nodded. “Discount tonight, Lane?”

“What good is working here if we don’t take advantage of that?” He laughed at that truth and rung us out.

While he made the milkshake, we chose a table by the large window storefront. It was two weeks out from Halloween which meant park attendance was growing by the night. Regular visitors felt like the park was busy in the beginning days, but it doubled almost every week. I really couldn't afford to spend all of my shift with her, but I wanted to.

"Can I ask you a question?" Aimee released my hand and started picking at a napkin. I didn't let the disappointment show on my face. Tonight was about getting her in a comfort zone and letting her explore without being pushed.

"Anything at all."

"Earlier, at the tarot booth, you said you did readings for some coworkers before us?" I nodded. "Did you say ...?" She paused and looked out the window before making eye contact with me again. "Did you say Everett was one of the guys?"

"Yeah, Everett and Matt. They work across from me most nights."

"Green hair?" I laughed; he was unmistakable with such a loud color choice.

"The one and only, why do you ask?" I eyed her cautiously, but before she could answer, Christopher came over with our glass and straws.

"It's about Sienna, actually," she continued when he was out of earshot. My eyebrow rose at the connection. "Last week, Everett and Sienna met. Your readings were about them." An embarrassed smile tugged at the corners of her mouth.

"That's really interesting. They picked the same deck and everything." I wasn't a meddler, but after meeting Sienna, I



wanted nothing more than to bring those two together.

“Vera and I have been letting her work through reason and logic on her own. I’m rather amused that tonight, their paths crossed in an indirect way.” She stuck her straw into the semi-frozen liquid and stirred.

“The stars have a funny way of sending you messages, even if you don’t ask for them.” I followed suit, leaning forward and taking a sip out of mine. The chocolate was delightfully rich. “These are literally the best fucking milkshakes. I’m not a seasonal employee, thankfully, and in the summer heat, this will save your life.”

Aimee laughed, and the sound was light and airy. She leaned in to take a sip but overshot and ended up with whipped cream on her nose. Heat crept into her cheeks when I reached across and wiped it off. Without thinking of the implications, I licked the cream off my finger. Aimee’s fair skin, already a bright pink, deepened to a warm crimson.

“Can I tell you something? It might be a little embarrassing.” Aimee’s eyes bounced between mine as her shoulders tightened. I took another sip of the milkshake, letting it cool my own heat and give her a second to breathe.

“You can ask me anything and you can tell me everything.” She nodded absentmindedly and looked out into the pavilion again. I didn’t push for what she had to confess because I prayed to every deity it was going to be the answer I needed.

“There’s something that’s been a bit of a gray area for me,” she said, but she was looking down into her lap as she spoke. “I’ve realized lately that not everything was as black and white as I thought.”

I slid a finger under her chin without much thought and lifted her gaze to mine. Her breath hitched and I waited for her to continue.

“My dating experience has been a little one-sided, but recently ...”

“Recently,” I encouraged her. The contact between my finger and her skin was searing in a delightful way.

“I’ve noticed a few changes ... in what I like.”

“What do you like?” Her mouth parted for an answer, but I could see panic flicker in her gaze.

“I think I like ... you.”

The word was the most pleasant dagger in my chest. I thought I quit breathing momentarily. This was the smallest door I needed to open.

“Would you like to find out if you like me?”

“I would, but I’ve never ...”

“You’ve never kissed a girl before?” She nodded, and I let my hand fall from her chin before trailing a finger across her wrist. “Do you want to?” Her mouth parted for an answer, but I slid the milkshake over to her and she took a sip instead. “Do you want to go to the Skytower with me before I have to open the booth again?”

“I’d love that,” she answered with relief.

Little did she know, my plans were to give her exactly what she just asked for.

## CHAPTER 5

*Aimee*

**THE MILKSHAKE SETTLED** in my stomach inside a bundle of nerves. It was one thing to hope for a moment, and it was something wildly different to know somewhere along the way, it was going to happen. Anticipation killed me as we stood in line at the Skytower. People hadn't bothered to fill this line, given the haunted attractions and shows, and I wasn't sure if that put me at ease or made the anxiety worse.

"Have you enjoyed the season so far?" It was the only thing I could think of to fill the silence between us. Lane was slightly taller in her boots, and when she turned that piercing stare down at me, it set the butterflies alight. Her dark lashes framed the lightest green eyes.

"I have!" She smiled, the plum-colored corners of her mouth tipped, exposing dimples in her cheeks. My heart beat erratically before she looked away and stepped toward the turnstile. "For certain, I enjoy haunt acting far more than what Shelly has me doing. Beyond the fact that I don't tarot reads for profit in my personal life, it's a constant headache to deal with people who like to throw around insults. The number of times I've had to hear fraud or be reduced down to a 'fortune teller' each time my booth opens has me ready to hit my head against the wall."

I followed her in the Skytower's shuttle as she looked for a place to stand.

"I'm sorry. It sounds exhausting to deal with assholes." She smiled over her shoulder.

"You've made it better." She stopped and leaned against the glass. "Tarot reading and divination goes far beyond fortune telling, but that's the socialized gimmick of it all. I'm not telling fortunes; I'm interpreting my decks for a message that they give meaning to. Sometimes, personal readings leave me in an uncertain state if it's something not immediately relatable. When the general public doesn't understand, they just fling out harsh insults like con artist, charlatan, and the like. Imagine the ire of a customer who doesn't get the clarity they demand." The smile didn't reach her eyes as she watched the ground grow smaller beneath us.

The Skytower moved slowly as it rose and rotated for the perfect view of the entire park. Screams faded, but the lights glowed like a Halloween kaleidoscope. It was beautiful and mesmerizing.

"I couldn't imagine honestly. It might not be everyone's practice or belief, but there's no harm with letting people enjoy their lives, you know? I love your entire vibe. You're intelligent, gorgeous, mysterious, and so accommodating—I can't fathom mistreating you." The words landed on my ears and my cheeks flamed at the realization of what I'd admitted aloud. Lane was watching me when I looked over to her. My throat was tight and scratchy. This was nothing like my previous crushes and dalliances.

She reached across and ran the back of her fingers across my cheek.

“I like watching you blush.” The coolness of her skin against mine was a needed relief, but her words only flushed me more. “Are you coming out next week? To the park, I mean.”

Her raised eyebrow gave away the subliminal message of that statement. I managed to nod, fighting the wave of anxiety coursing through my system. Dropping her hand, Lane faced the window and brushed her shoulder along mine.

“I-I want to. I have a season pass, you know? Wouldn’t be worth it if I wasn’t here whenever possible.” If she read into that, she’d know I didn’t give two fucks about the park or the pass. I wanted to be here every night she was. Her hand slid into mine with a gentle squeeze.

“Good, you should make time for Saturday night. Matt and Elijah have a performance that night I wouldn’t want you to miss.” I didn’t dare look at her as she held me.

“Performance?”

“Oh, it’s magical—pun intended. They’re trained acrobats, not just scare actors. If they’re not in the clown house, they’re traveling around the park, doing tricks and acts. My personal favorite is Elijah on the unicycle as they juggle together. When it comes to the arena though ...” She sighed, and from the corner of my eye, I saw her shake her head. “The way they move together is ... *sensual*.”

My head snapped in her direction at that insinuation. An airy, whimsical laugh escaped her and charmed me.

“Yes, I said sensual. They’ve been dating for a few years now. You can feel that tension and they’re a crowd favorite. Want to come with me?” Her eyes darkened as she watched my reaction.

If tonight went as I anticipated, that would be like a date. *A real date. With Lane.*

“I’d love to.” Her hand slipped from mine and my body matched her movements as she faced me.

“What do you see?”

She meant the view of the park, giving me a chance to sway the topic and talk about my favorite place, but it was right here.

“The most beautiful woman I’ve ever met.” It was just a whisper, but I might as well have yelled by the way her face lit up. A light touch of her hand under my chin stole my ability to speak or process thoughts.

“Do you still want that kiss, Aimee?” She moved closer and I took a half-step back into the glass. The park was passing around us outside, blissfully unaware of how my world was being turned upside-down. My eyes flicked to her mouth and I nodded.

That cool hand slid along my jaw and her fingers tangled in the hair resting on my neck. She pressed in, her perfume putting me in an intoxicated daze. I was certain she felt the hard thump of my pulse beneath her hand when her nose brushed mine.

A breath away, she whispered, “Gods above, bless me.”

Her lips molded to mine with tenderness and heat as her tongue ghosted over me. Lane’s resolve shattered as I opened to her fully, inviting her further as I tasted the milkshake’s sweetness. Both of her hands threaded in my hair as we breathlessly consumed each other.

She pushed me against the Skytower’s glass wall as soft moans passed between us. The cliché of seeing stars was all

that came to mind as I was swept up in her embrace. I felt like I was floating or falling. Everything about Lane was soft and sweet, but there was an undercurrent of a feral desire I wanted to tap into.

Her kisses trailed to my neck and when she nipped at the sensitive flesh, my eyes rolled back. Heat burned in my core, and I needed to feel her everywhere. Long nails scraped over my chest when her hand dipped below my collar.

In that moment, the sensation ceased as the Skytower stopped and locked in its landing position. We were back on the ground.

“Lane,” I whispered. She pulled back with ragged breaths and a warm face.

“I’m sorry—”

“I’m not.” She smoothed out her dress and looked toward the exit when the lights brightened. Gathering herself, she outstretched a hand to me.

“Let’s get back to the booth, yeah?”



## CHAPTER 6

*Lanie*

**KEEPING** a level head had been a priority for the night, but that went to shit the moment she kissed me back. There was nothing to question anymore.

I unlocked the back entrance of the shed and glanced at the clock on the wall. Admittedly, I should have opened the booth five minutes ago. Aimee was my priority tonight, and Shelly's issues with my time management could burn in hell. I stood back and let her pass through before locking us in after.

"When do you need to get things going again?" Aimee's voice was light and whimsical. It matched every beautiful part of her personality.

"I have some time. It's nothing to worry about." I walked past her and pretended to tidy various items on the table.

*Nervous. I'm fucking nervous.*

"Oh, that's good. I know Sienna might leave early, but if Vera's still around, I might enjoy the park until the end of your shift." My hands stilled on the tarot deck I was arranging. "If that's okay with you?" When I looked up, her blue eyes were big and full of hope.

"More than okay. I was hoping you'd come over after work." I stepped closer, reading for any discomfort or

hesitation as I leaned in.

She met me this time, sliding her hands around my waist and pulling me against her. Her plump lips pressed against mine and I lost myself in her. Soft hair wove around my fingers as I tipped her head back and swept my tongue over and under hers.

“Yes,” she breathed out in between. Her ass hit the table and I released her, motioning for her to sit on its edge.

“Are you okay with going a little further before I let you go?” Her chest heaved as she watched me move to my knees.

“Please do.” Aimee gripped the edge of the table with white knuckles as I skimmed up her thighs and pushed the skirt of her dress to her hips.

“The only thing I want you to do is relax and have fun. Tell me if you want to stop, but other than that, just enjoy how I make you feel.” I adjusted her legs over my shoulders and slid the lacy material to the side.

“Oh, fuck,” she whispered.

She had no idea how hard the realization hit me, too. Aimee dripped in anticipation, and my fingers glistened in the dim light as I slid them through her arousal. I withdrew my hand, bringing it to my lips as I licked her taste off me. It was divine.

“That’s hot,” she said under her breath.

My grin caused her cheeks to flush before I dropped my head between her legs and licked through her center. Her breath hitched as I circled her clit and slid two fingers inside. As I changed angles and depth, focusing on that shallow area of pleasure, her thighs quaked. Aimee’s moans grew louder, and I should’ve stopped and quieted her, but I couldn’t tear

myself away from her. She clenched around me harder as her wetness grew, and I wanted her to come all over me.

“Fuck, Lanie!” Her fingers knitted in my hair as nails scraped my scalp, but I didn’t release her. Sucking her into my mouth, I brushed that sensitive spot until she shook on the table, borderline screaming nonsense and flooding my hand. Leaning back, I watched her sweet release spill across my flesh.

“You come so well for me, Aimee.” Her chest rose with each rapid breath, and I wanted to keep her like this, keep us like this.

It would be no effort to keep those doors locked and bring her over the edge as many times as I pleased, but then I’d lose my job. It took a great deal of effort from Matt and Elijah to keep Shelly off of Everett’s trail, and I couldn’t ask the boys to do that again so soon.

Standing, I raised my fingers to Aimee’s lips, slipping them inside.

“Suck,” I instructed as she closed her mouth around me. Her berry-pink lips were luscious and pouty, and I craved to have them all over my body. *In time*, I told myself. “Good girl.”

Looking at the clock, I felt like shit for having to kick her out.

“It’s okay. I understand, you know?” Her voice was labored given her climax, but sweet and delicate all the same.

“Come with me tonight and I’ll make it up to you. I promise.” I walked behind my table and grabbed a small towel from my bag. After wiping her off my arm, I crouched in front of Aimee and began to clean up the mess. “It’s only a few

more hours and then I'm all yours ... or rather, you're all mine."

Her laugh was bubbly, and I wished tonight were one of my weekends off. A hundred strangers in a cramped, stuffy shed was hell in comparison to any time spent with her.

"I'll be here, pinky swear." I stood, taking her outstretched finger in mine and kissing the top of her knuckles. Helping her off the table, I walked her to the back entrance. "Lane?"

"Yeah?" Her hand stilled on the wood and she faced me, looking at me like I'd hung the moon and individually placed each star in her world.

"I had a fantastic time tonight; I can't wait to see you again."

That was it. That was the sentence that punctured my heart and bled me dry of every emotion I bottled up for her. My hands framed her face, and I pulled her into me as my lips found hers.

"I can't wait either, Ames."

She stepped out into the cool October air, running her hands over her dress and straightening the wrinkles. When she looked up at me, I winked, and she giggled as she rounded the corner, out of my sight. I closed the door, falling against the wall and placing a hand over my chest to calm my frantically beating heart.

I didn't have time to waste, though, so I pulled out the small tote of cleaner and began to spray and wipe down my table. Digging in my bag on the floor, I pulled out a pink and red candle. Arranging incense and rose quartz crystal, I placed the candle in a holder at the center and lit it with the purest intention.

*Happiness, fulfillment, and love.*

That was all I wanted with Aimee. It didn't matter the timeline or how difficult the road would be, I wanted to travel it with her—and *only* her.

## CHAPTER 7

*Aimee*

**I STEPPED** out of Lane's booth and into the crisp, windy air. It was a relief against my burning skin. She left me in a daze after turning my world upside-down and I dreaded that she had to work tonight. In truth, I didn't know what the hell I was doing. It felt like I was breathing for the first time, but also like I was drowning in uncertainty.

Boisterous laughter caught my attention across the access road, and I made out three figures in the grass. One was a familiar clown up to no good with his friends. Everett threw his water bottle at one of the guys, who caught it and fell back with laughter.

"Everett!" I called out, waving my hand in the air and smiling when he looked over, motioning me to the grass. The two other guys looked my way as I stepped onto the grass and then back at Ev.

"Hey, Aimee, right? Vera is the one with pink hair?" I nodded at his assessment, and he sat up straighter. "What are you up to tonight?" His question was singular and straightforward, but I didn't miss the hopefulness in his eyes that Sienna was lurking around somewhere.

"Nothing much really. I came by to see Lanie and hang out for a while." He took in my reserved smile and shook off the



sadness that washed over him. He extended his hand, looking at the guys for introductions.

“Happy you’re here. These clowns are Elijah Anderson and Matthew Barrios.” He pointed to each man respectively, a baby-faced brunet who was covered in white face paint with green jester details and a rugged, dark-haired guy who had a sinister and creepy skull design with matching green details.

It clicked then that the Matt Lanie had mentioned earlier was sitting in front of me, which meant his boyfriend Elijah was the jester. From what I could see, their physical builds and strength were amazing and promised an amazing acrobatic show. Elijah held out his hand first, and then Matt.

“Actually,” I whispered, “can I talk with you? In private?” Matt gestured to himself, probably wondering why a random girl had an interest in speaking with him. At my confirmation, he stood up and threw Everett’s water bottle back at him. Walking past me, he winked at Elijah, who cracked a grin.

“Absolutely.”

He stepped off the grass and onto the pavement, heading toward the metal tables under the trees. Following him, I had an afterthought. It felt shitty to leave Everett in a state of unknown.

“Everett,” I called over my shoulder. His head snapped up, amber eyes wide with anticipation. “She *does* want to call you, by the way.” I didn’t have to explain who I meant. The hitch in his breath told me he understood.

Leaving the boys, I made my way to Matt feeling like a fish out of water for the conversation I was about to open up. He’d clambered onto the top of the table and rested his elbows on his knees. I slid into the bench seat beside his feet.

“What’s up?” he asked casually, as if it were an everyday conversation and completely normal to be pulled aside by a stranger for advice and guidance.

“Lane told me you guys were friends. I hoped to ask you a few questions, if it’s not too personal?” Matt’s laugh was booming and deep, similar to his voice.

“Yeah, we’re friends with Lanie.” There was an inflection in his statement, an undertone that I couldn’t place, so I pushed it aside. “What’s got you overthinking?”

“Overthinking?” I didn’t know I’d given anyone that impression.

“Like I said, we’re friends with Lane. We’ve heard all about the infamous Aimee she’s smitten with.” His admission made me blush, but the thought that Lanie was as smitten with me as I was with her lit a fire through my veins. I cleared my throat.

“Oh, I didn’t realize she talked about me like that.”

“All good things, I promise.” Matt raised his hands to calm my anxiety.

“Well,” I started, fidgeting my fingers on the hem of my sleeves. I felt his gaze track up and down my frame as he waited. “I’ve never really been with ...”

“Ah, I’m getting a clearer picture now.”

“She said you’re dating Elijah, right?” He nodded and I pressed forward. “When did you realize you liked guys? Or rather, how did it feel?”

He smiled as he thought it over, glancing over my shoulder to the boys still sitting in the grass. Matt sighed, clasping his hands together and pinning his stare back on me.

“I think you’ll find that discovery was a bit more complicated than you’re hoping for. Let’s start with this—what are you feeling?”

“At the moment, a stupid amount of happiness.” I laughed nervously. That was merely a superficial feeling. Looking down, I continued to worry the fabric of my dress. “Before tonight, though, mostly confusion. I don’t know. I’m stuck in the middle.” The revelation lifted a heavy weight off my chest.

“More similar then. Aimee,” he said gently, pulling my attention to him. His features were soft and understanding. “Are you wondering if you’re bisexual?” I sighed in relief.

“Yes, exactly.”

“That I can help you with a bit. There are obvious differences because I can’t speak for the bisexual woman experience, but I appreciate you coming to me. I’m bisexual too, so I’ve been there with those thoughts and questions, the pressure to feel like you have to “pick a side,” right?”

“That’s exactly it. I know I have feelings for Lanie, but I didn’t expect to still be attracted to men.” The sense of breathing for the first time returned as I felt understood and not alone. Matt looked to the starry sky in thought.

“Understandable. Starting from the beginning, I guess you could say it started with your typical wild exploration in high school for me. Over time, that fun condensed into real attraction outside of those situations. I hooked up with a guy and then I found myself noting little things about him in casual meetups that just *sparked* something.”

He paused as he looked down to the boys in the grass, and my guess was to Elijah in particular.

“I wasn’t dating anyone seriously at the time and realized that same spark for girls was still there,” he continued. “What a tough and hormonal time that was.” He laughed, and it echoed down the road and put me at ease. “Are you happy?”

“Of course.”

“Then that’s the only defining factor that matters here. Whether it’s Lane or some guy, if that’s where you feel happiest and most connected to someone in this stage of your life, then go for it and leave that choosing shit far behind you. Do you feel safe at home?” It was the first time someone asked me that.

“Yeah, my parents are supportive. It’s mostly this internal battle of rejecting the societal norm. It’s silly. I’m sorry.” I shook my head and looked away. I shouldn’t be burdening him with my problems—he was a complete stranger to me.

“It’s not silly, and I’m happy you feel comfortable enough to talk to her friends on a matter like this.”

“How’d you know you liked Elijah?” I asked, shifting the conversation to a more lighthearted topic. It was then that he cut his eyes to the man in question. I heard the boys laughing and talking from here.

“Our first aerial.” He said it so matter-of-factly, as though there were no doubt or second-guessing that moment. “I held us up in the straps and his position was to hold onto my shoulders. Eye to eye like that, I couldn’t run away from it. He’s a beautiful acrobat and it was a fact I could acknowledge, but I was kidding myself that that was the sum of it all. Three amazing years later, I couldn’t imagine myself in love with anyone else. He’s everything for me.”

“That’s ... beautiful.” I sat in awe and amazement at how he spoke about Elijah.

“What you and Lane have is too, Ames.” He looked at me then, and despite his terrifying theatrical makeup, I felt at peace.

“Are you guys going back to work?”

“Yeah, Everett has to finish another hour in the clown house and Eli needs to grab his unicycle. We have a little performance in the pavilion. Wanna come?”

“A unicycle?” I didn’t know why it surprised me given their backgrounds, but the thought of a man that tall on a unicycle seemed a little out there.

“He’s the best jester after all. We’re on at the top of the hour. Come see us if you’re able to.” He hopped off the table and I followed his lead, standing and trailing behind him. Matt stopped for me to catch up, slinging his arm over my shoulders when I reached him. “Being who you are will never be wrong. If you ever need anything, just find me. Have Lane give you my number too, okay?”

“I will. Thanks, Matt.”

“No problem, enjoy your night.” His hand came up and patted my head before he left me in the middle of the avenue to join his friends.

I pulled out my phone, deleting the useless notifications and finding our group chat. The avenue filled with shrieks of terror as people ran out of the haunted clown house. Feet stamped across the pavement, the sounds of laughter following them.

Aimee: Invited to a performance, wanna join?

Vera: Sounds fun!! Dakota wants to hang out later, probably my last event here.

Sienna: Definitely next time. Mom called so I went home to help her. Still hanging out next week, yeah?

I shot off a confirmation and privately messages Vera where to meet me at the pavilion. It saddened me that Sienna was avoiding the truth, especially with us. She withstood the time she could, but the nerves of seeing Everett again and having to make that decision still rocked her.

The boys passed me on their way to the back of the warehouse and I set out to Vera, letting everything that happened wash over me with a new sense freedom and relief.

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**SITTING** on a bench that circled the pavilion, I tapped my foot and watched my phone as I waited for her. Lane had been able to send a couple of emojis between customers, but we hadn't been able to talk at length. A crowd formed behind with the chatter of anticipated excitement for the show.

A sing-song voice calling my name drew my attention away. I looked up to see Vera almost skipping to me with a bag of cotton candy and a cheeky grin covering her face.

“Did the cotton candy almost make you late?” She shrugged her shoulders and plopped down beside me.

“Have you had any? This shit is crack and totally worth being delayed a few minutes.” Vera shoved her hand back inside to pinch off a piece of the blue spun sugar.

“I don’t think so, but what’s that little smile for? Surely candy floss isn’t that life-changing.” I took the ball of candy she held out; it smelled like that manufactured blue raspberry flavor. Vera squinted at me before answering.

“You know why.”

“Did Cody make special plans or something?” I watched her face fall as she sighed, resigned to accepting the place they were stuck in.

“No, you know that would cross into territory he isn’t ready for. It’s just the usual. He’s going to pick me up and hang out at my place for the night.” Her eyes flicked to the candy still in my hand.

“Still doing sleepovers?” I grinned, raising my eyebrow and letting her know we all knew what those sleepovers really turned into for them. It was the ultimate cocktease they did, brought on by themselves. Her shoulder knocked into mine as she rolled her eyes.

“Yes, I’ll take what I can get, thank you very much. Eat the damn cotton candy already!” I snickered, popping it into my mouth finally. “Enough stalling about me, how’d your time with Lanie go?” She gave the same “I know what you did” eyebrow raise. The sugar dissolved on my tongue, replacing the taste of Lane.

“It was quite a night,” I said, laughing. “A very physical goodbye, if you will.”

“Shut up!” Excitement moved through her hands as she shook around her bag. “Details now, please.”

“Well, she kissed me, a lot, and then before she got back to her booth thing, she ... had a snack.” Vera’s laugh was a

cackle through the air, drawing attention to us. My face reddened and I hid the growing smile behind my hands.

“Shut up,” I moaned. I felt her arm drape over my shoulders as she leaned in close.

“So scandalous, Aimee Madison!” Her whisper yell caused a laugh to rock through me, and I shook my head, deliberately ignoring her bait.

I was timid and shy in the sex department, so public affairs were a scandalous thing for me. Though, the more I thought it over tonight, the more right it felt. Timid and shy didn't feel like a part of me, and I thought it came from never being with the right people. Lanie made me want to tackle and tame that adventurous side I thought would only be a far-fetched dream. Her confidence spoke to mine and coaxed it out. She saw *me* and in turn, I saw and felt me, too.

Music blared from the center of the pavilion, cutting off my thoughts and our conversation. It was an EDM Halloween music track that really set the vibe.

“I want the juicy details tonight, by the way. I'm not forgetting either,” Vera whispered. The crowd cheered, and we stood to move our way to the front, looking around. A backflipping figure moved over the bricked ground.

“That's Matt,” I explained, and she nodded, clapping and watching in awe as his body twisted through the air. He stuck the landing perfectly, sweeping his arm out to the crowd and dropping his head. That made them feral as they shouted and hollered.

“Good evening, mere mortals braving Hallow's Haunt! We are from The Devil's Rage, Hallow's very own acrobatics team. Please welcome my partner, Eli!” His voice echoed



through a mic and over the music. Cheering grew louder, but I caught Matt's gaze and recognition. He gave a little bow as people parted, and Elijah rolled in on an actual unicycle.

"Oh my god," I said in disbelief. "He wasn't kidding about the unicycle," I said, laughing at the sight.

"How fucking high up do you think he is?" Vera clapped to the beat and I joined in. I thought it over, realizing the unicycle itself was taller than Matt.

Leaning in, I said, "The unicycle has to be pushing over six feet tall, and Elijah's a tall guy, too. Hell, maybe ten feet, give or take?" There was a staggering height difference between them as Elijah circled Matt with his arms outstretched.

"I'd break my damn neck." I had to agree. My hand-eye coordination was shit in comparison.

While he worked the crowd, Matt snuck off to a bag by the line of people's feet and pulled out several large bowling pins. Elijah turned, moving the pedals back and forth to keep him steady. From where he was crouched, Matt tossed him three pins one after the other and Eli caught them with graceful ease.

With three pins each, they took their places as we waited with bated breath. On the beat drop, both threw their third pins in the air. One after the next, they exchanged pins as Elijah maintained balance. His posture was taut and perfect, and the muscles in his back rippled under his shirt. They took it up a notch as Matt moved in a circle and Eli turned to match him, never missing a catch or faulting on a toss.

Their gazes were intense and focused on each other. Their eyes never shifted to the crowd. Matt wore a smile, but

concentration framed Eli's face and suddenly, I felt like I was intruding on watching them watch each other.

Lane had been right. Even their simplest performance had an air of sensuality to it.

## CHAPTER 8

*Lanie*

**I FLUNG** my jacket over my arms, wasting no time in zipping it, and start heading for the door. I'd clocked out and changed in rapid time. No one could've stood in my way at that moment.

Lane: Finished, I'll meet you at the entrance

Locking my phone, I threw it in my pocket and zipped it. I felt the buzz of a text response as I pushed the heavy door open and stepped out into the cool October breeze. The boys were gathered on the benches outside. They were still in their costumes because they were scheduled to close this weekend.

"Bye, guys!" I waved them off with no chance to talk as I sprinted down the avenue and into the main area of the park. There weren't as many attendees at this hour, but I still found myself dodging people and weaving my way around small crowds. Lights and music still created a Halloween fanfare, but I was over it tonight.

Crossing the bridge, I came to a dead stop. Aimee sat by the fountain. Every year, Hallow's had it dyed red to fit the spooky, bloody vibe and it'd become one of my favorite pieces, though it was a small detail in the grand scheme of things. But tonight, she outshined the wonder of that fountain.

Her bright red hair drifted on the breeze as she looked between whatever she was scrolling on her phone and the parkgoers. The memory of how she tasted hours ago warmed me, and the desire to be wrapped up in her again surfaced.

I took a deep breath, calming my heart rate to acceptable before I walked over. She didn't notice my approach.

"Hello, my spooky dear." My arms wrapped around her shoulders, startling her, but she relaxed into me. "Ready to go?" I held out my hand and she took it happily as she stood beside me.

"I am. Sienna left a while ago and Vera just got the text from Dakota to meet him out front."

"Oh good. Have you been waiting long? I tried to get here as soon as I could." Aimee's smile was sweet and polite, lifting her full cheeks and brightening her eyes.

"No, don't worry. It's been fun watching the haunt actors." She looked out into the crowd, her eyebrows raising as she exclaimed, "Ooh! I even got to see Matt and Elijah perform at the pavilion."

Watching her get excited sent a buzz through my system. Her happiness was contagious. I framed my hands around her face, pulling her lips to mine. It was selfish and impatient, but I needed to feel her against me.

"I love that you enjoy this place so much. How'd they do tonight?" I asked, dropping my hands and taking hers again as I led her to the turnstiles.

"They were incredible!" Aimee beamed. "You were right about that sensuality thing by the way." Her head shook a bit as she looked off.

"Caught the way Eli stares at Matt?"

“How’d you know that’s what it was?” she asked, her head whipping back to face me. Realizing she shouldn’t be surprised, she smiled as I laughed.

“I was there when Matt and Elijah were introduced to each other as partners. They both do it. That practice gym felt hot and stuffy not a moment into it. I think everyone felt a little hot and bothered after watching them.”

“Even you?” She was shy with her question. “I thought you were a lesbian.”

“I am,” I admitted. “But fun is fun on occasion.” From the corner of my eye, I caught the furrow of her brow as she tried to read the underlying message there. Before I could explain, we’d reached the turnstiles and were stopped by a park attendant.

“Will you be reentering the park tonight?” He held out a stamp and ink pad.

“No, thank you. Have a great night!” We moved through without letting go of each other. A childish giggle at the thought wanted to break free.

“So,” I said, clearing my throat. “Do you still want to come over for the night? If not, I can take you home.”

“Honestly,” she sighed. “I don’t want to be anywhere else.” Aimee squeezed my hand and despite the cool temperatures, I could’ve melted right there.

“Well, I apologize for the walk to the employee parking lot. It’s a bit near the back,” I explained as we stepped onto the pavement.

Aimee didn’t seem to mind as we walked in comfortable silence. Our joined hands swung back and forth between us as the wind pushed the chill into our coats. I glanced over, unable

to focus on anything else because I just wanted to admire the pattern of her freckles or the curl of her hair. Instead, I caught the creeping blush.

“Are you blushing, Ms. Aimee?” That beautiful pink shade deepened.

“I suppose I am. I was thinking about ... earlier.” The crunch of the gravel was loud as we walked past her confession.

“We can do that again if you want.” Her hand tightened around mine. We passed multiple rows of cars before my black sedan came into view.

“I’d love that.”

I hit the automatic start button on my key fob as we passed Everett’s Infiniti and Matt’s Wrangler. It was dead quiet back here. Aimee moved to go to the passenger side, but I pulled her to a stop. Walking backward, she followed me in confusion until my hand slid over the back door handle and I opened it.

“Backseat first,” I said, nodding to the empty seats. Her eyes were wide, but she got in and slid to the other side without question. Before stepping in, I whispered a prayer to myself. “Gods bless me.”

I took my place beside her, shutting the door and encasing us in silence. The tint of my windows damped the obnoxious streetlight.

“Can you drive from back here?” She laughed nervously, fidgeting with her hands in her lap.

“I wasn’t planning to leave just yet.” I trailed my nail up her leg, leaving goose bumps in its wake. Her laughter turned to deep breaths as her chest heaved and she look over at me.

Her eyes dropped to my lips before she leaned in. I wove my fingers through her hair, bringing her mouth to mine. When I licked across her lips, she opened for me and danced her tongue across mine. She was sweet everywhere, but I could tell she'd eaten cotton candy.

"I want to make you come again," I admitted between kisses.

"Yes." Her reply was soft and breathy against my lips and wetness pooled between my thighs.

*Fuck me.* I looked down, moving the skirt of her dress and sliding her lacy underwear to the side. Her lips brushed my neck as she worked kisses up and down its length. I dropped my head back, moaning as I slid my fingers inside her. She was soaked and ready, but I couldn't do nearly half the shit I wanted to back here.

Her teeth grazed my skin as I brushed her sensitive spot and circled her clit with my thumb. She gave up on her musings, rocking and riding my hand as her head rested on my shoulder. I kissed her forehead, feeling her tighten around my fingers.

Her chest rose with each deep, shuttering breath and her fingers dug into the cushion of my seat as her thighs quivered.

"Lanie," she whined. It was beautiful to hear as she arched into my touch. Her hips rolled in time with the stroke of fingers. I looked down at her and the roundest, bluest eyes watched me. Aimee's pupils were blown as her lids got heavy. "Yes, yes, yes," she cried with each thrust of her hips.

"Look at me," I instructed as she started to close her eyes. The whimpers escalated as I drew her closer and closer. My



pussy ached when I watched her come apart. I desperately needed to come with her.

“Fuck, fuck, *fuck!*” she screamed, her slick cunt spasming and trembling around me as cum spread over my hand. I brought my fingers to my mouth, savoring her taste as it flooded my senses.

“My dear, you are exquisite.” I rested my forehead against hers, peppering her nose with chaste kisses.

“Your house?” She laughed on a shaky breath.

“My house,” I confirmed before we broke apart and left the park like a bat out of hell.

*Epilogue - January 4, 2023*

## AIMEE

**THE COLD NIPPED** at my fingers as I pushed the heavy metal door of the dorm building open. We were moving in for the spring semester, and it was a little less than chaotic. Familiar faces surrounded me, but I only cared about seeing one person this afternoon.

Aimee: Left the dorms, at the courtyard.

Lane: Just left Monroe's room. I see you.

I looked up after her response and sure enough, she was bounding around the corner with a giant smile on her face. Her long black hair trailed behind her in the breeze.

“All moved in?” she asked, bouncing on her toes as she watched me.

“I am, thank you for asking. It took some convincing to get my mom to leave the rest to me. A bit of a helicopter that one.” Her energy continued as she leaned in.

“Can I let you in on a secret?”

“A secret?” She bounded behind me, her delicate hands grasping my shoulders firmly and moving me to face the courtyard with bench seat in full view. It was just a standard concrete circular structure with a planter in the center.

“I don't understand—”

“You will, just wait.” Lanie leaned into me as iconic green hair caught my eye. A man walked across the courtyard, taking a seat on the curved stone.

“Is that ... Everett?” My voice was whisper, but it dripped with excitement. I knew it was him. He was sitting there plain as day, but I still couldn’t believe it. The metal doors groaned behind me, but I was too fixated to care.

“It is, and you wanna know who I just spotted on the other side?” My eyes widened with shock. It was too good to believe.

“Did our boy find her yet?” The deep voice caught me off guard. I turned, the familiarity sinking in with the presence at my back. Matt stood there, grinning down at me as Elijah moved behind Lanie. They bent down to our heights, crowding us and watching the hopeful reunion of the biggest lovesick idiots I knew. Matt’s large hand covered my head as he swiveled it back to forward-facing.

“Not yet,” Lanie answered. “Sienna’s on the other side, though, and I’ve begged the cosmos to put an end to his mopey ass mood.” I grinned at that sentiment. She cared about Everett, we all knew it, but she was determined to meddle in fate.

Said mopey ass was lying back against the concrete, earbuds in and the world turned off.

“This is agonizing,” Elijah said, caving after only a few minutes.

“I won’t lie. The cold is starting to ruin the magic,” I agreed.

“I feel it, keep waiting.” Lanie’s voice was stern and demanding.

“This isn’t bordering on stalking, is it?” Matt said, throwing his two cents in.

*We are the peanut gallery right now.*

“What would the cosmos say if I walked over there and grabbed them by their collars, forcing them to face each other?” Elijah’s smartass tactic didn’t soften Lanie at all. She turned, readying her fist for his arm.

“If you two don’t cut it—”

“Guys!” I interrupted their bickering. “Look!” Everett’s head had snapped down and fusion pinched his brows. He pulled the earbuds out and brought the phone to his ear. Breathing harder, his chest rose and fell in deep swells as his mouth moved. We were too far away to catch anything.

Everett was on his feet, scanning and moving around the bench. As Lanie had hoped, Sienna came running from the other side and fell right into his arms.

“Classic Everett,” Elijah muttered on a laugh.

“My god, our boy is handsy.” Matt wasn’t exaggerating either. Everett’s hands were all over Sienna, never resting in one place. He pulled her in for a kiss. A sweet moment was expected, but the man devoured her like he’d been starving.

“Oh, ew,” I said, my face scrunching as I watched my best friend completely lose it in him. I covered my eyes; my sweet Sienna was being defiled.

“Damn, doesn’t he have a dorm?” Elijah laughed a little too loudly and it echoed into the courtyard.

“Okay, privacy, *privacy!* Give them space,” I mockingly scolded them. Sienna needed this reunion. I grabbed onto arms and sleeves, attempting to pull all three of them back into the building.

The awkward for us scene resulted in taking cover in the dorm lounge. Elijah’s and Matt’s laughter still carried through

the halls. We occupied the four chairs turned in to face each other, and I drew my finger over them in the air.

“Did you all know?” I landed on Lanie first.

“I was sworn to secrecy, my dear. Forgive me?” The drama oozed off her.

“Forgiven, now you two?” I asked, pinning them in the hot seat.

“We may have known where Everett was going to school,” Matt said first.

“And we may have learned that Sienna would be here, too,” Elijah finished, a pair of troublemakers.

“Sneaky fucks.” I fought a smile, watching Elijah roll his eyes and shake his head. Lanie rested against the arm of the chair, catching my attention as she leaned in with a soft and seductive glint in her eyes. She started to speak, but something moved on my right, and I looked up at ...

“Shawn? Finished moving in already?” I wasn’t unaware of his admission, but I couldn’t honestly say I expected to see him at all, let alone move-in day.

“Yeah,” he said, brushing me off without even a glance as he moved closer to Lanie. He cleared his throat. “You are too gorgeous for this campus, sweet angel. What’s your name?”

*Seriously, who in the fuck taught this man anything regarding romancing a woman?*

His face was marred in what I was sure he thought was a cocky grin, but he just looked goofy as hell. I looked over to the boys, hoping to see a similar expression of shock and confusion. Instead, Matt was biting his fist as he nearly busted a blood vessel to keep from laughing. Elijah’s shoulders

rocked with silent laughter as his hands covered his face, but he peeked through his fingers.

Movement put my focus on Shawn, but he was just fucking shit up more. He leaned on the side table but miscalculated everything and knocked it over, sending a vase careening to the floor and crashing at their feet.

“I meant to do that,” he said casually. “It’s the Davenport charm.” Lanie’s wide eyes had narrowed into deathly daggers. “So, pretty raven, wanna get out of here? I’ve got a sweet bachelor pad on the third floor and all you’ll need for the rest of the night.”

Snorts escaped the idiot jesters, but that wasn’t enough to sway Shawn from Lanie. To be honest, I wasn’t ready to interfere yet. This was a disaster, and I wanted it to play out fully.

“If I go to your *sweet bachelor pad*, wanna know what I’m going to do?” He was completely unaware of the dangerous shift in her tone.

“Fuck yeah, I do.” Shawn bit his lip, or at least attempted to, and rubbed his hands together like a grubby little fly. He was eager, thinking she would whisper scandalous, dirty things to him.

“I’ll rip your balls off and stuff them down your throat so fast, you won’t have time to scream.”

Shawn continued to smile. His hands paused as he finally processed what she said. “Wait, what?”

Matt and Elijah lost it entirely. Their boisterous laughs had turned to the cackles of hyenas as their voices strained.

“She’s,” Matt tried to force out, but he couldn’t compose himself as tears shimmered down his cheeks.

“A lesbian,” Elijah finished with a deep inhale. He grabbed his chest, falling back in his chair.

“Oh.” Shawn looked at me after doing the math. “*Oh.*”

“Your audacity astounds me, Shawn Allen Davenport. Someday, the right girl is gonna breeze into your life with indifference and kick your ass into respect and decency.” I was truly taken aback.

“Right,” he said, looking between us nervously. “Well, I’m gonna just—”

He cut himself off, bolting for the door and running right into the metal doorframe before stumbling outside.

“Get yourselves together, dammit.” Lanie stood, glaring at the boys before taking my hand and dragging me from the chair. My steps were hurried as I followed her out of the lounge and into the hallway. “Which way is your dorm?”

“Oh, it’s down there. Why?” I planned to show it to her later, after I had a chance to decorate and put everything away. She tugged my hand, nearly breaking out into a run as we moved down the hall. Slightly ahead, she looked back at me with a wink.

“We have a bed to christen.”



She is delightfully chaotic; a beautiful mess.

Loving her is a splendid adventure.

**Steve Maraboli**

## *Acknowledgments*

This was long overdue. CHEESY I'M SORRY. But alas, it is here and it is queer. This story holds a very special and sacred place in my heart. From my first experience with my sexuality and all the way to Aimee's confrontation with her feelings, it is everything I've struggled with on a personal level. I didn't come out as bisexual until well into my twenties. I hope that anyone questioning finds themselves in these pages and characters, but also finds the courage and strength to come out on their own terms and pace. You deserve peace, acceptance, and sanctuary. To my LGBTQIA+ family, you are loved, cherished, and so very special.

N.B., thank you for everything. So many late nights are spent with me typing away at this computer beyond reasonability, but you stay with me and help me achieve my goals. Without that support, my reality would still be just a dream.

Stacy, babe we've gone through a lot and I'm honestly tired of going through the shit. Here's to a relaxing end of the year. Thank you for helping in all the ways that you do despite being busy beyond fairness in your personal life. You mean the world to me and I'm never letting you go.

Cheesy, ARE YOU HAPPY NOW? I love you. Thank you for supporting me, I couldn't imagine having a different PA to battle this career with. You are so wonderful and I cherish all of our time and moments together.

Susan, really though I think I'm going to be hunted down if I propose one more story idea after late night chaos with you. Never stop throwing out ideas, I cherish them all and love working with you as an Alpha.

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ARC readers, I don't know what to say. I came to you all and said, "This is the craziness coming to you in October," and you guys rolled with it with the most support. I do what I do for you guys, and I'm so happy that you've chosen to be by my side through this career. I have the best team hands down.

Patreon subs, you blow me away. Thank you for your vocal support and finding my work worthy of your financial support, too. I look forward to the future manuscripts I get to share with you. Stacy, Wavel, Michelle, Robin, Caradwyn, Holly, Erika, Julianne, Brittani, Heather, Kristin, Susan, Jay, and Misty—you are loved and cherished.

## *About the Author*



Kenna is pursuing far too many things all at once, but she wouldn't have the chaos any other way. She's a home favorite on Tiktok, the best ARC reader (okay, made that one up), and going mad figuring out her Master's degree. She became a hit on Tiktok after announcing to the world her love of *Why Choose*, and really it's only become more chaotic. Her mother's background in English planted the seed for writing and literature. (Sorry Mama B, she just reads smut now!) She's enjoyed books since she was in elementary school, and vividly remembers the carefree afternoons spent in her mother's school library. Shout out to Mrs. C for letting her take home books even though she wasn't a student yet! (And Kenna assures, the inspiration for the librarian in *He Who Haunts Me* was NOT you!) However, Ms. F, taking her *Maximum Ride* book in 6th grade (gifted by Gramma) was totally not f'n cool.

*Also by Kenna Bellrae*

[He Who Haunts Me \(Swallow's Archive Duet Book 1\)](#)

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[All Hallows' Haunt \(Hallows' Eve Hookups Book 1\)](#)

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