

A pregnant woman with long, dark, wavy hair is shown in profile, looking out a window. She is wearing a long-sleeved, floor-length lace dress in a light beige or cream color. Her hands are resting on her belly. The background outside the window is a soft-focus view of trees. The overall mood is serene and intimate.

bred

for

him

JENNA ROSE

BRED FOR HIM

JENNA ROSE



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Lucy Anderson is a planner. She has her whole life planned out, and so far everything has always worked out for her. She's been an honor student now she's on her way to Yale to earn her law degree. But one day, something happens that Lucy could not have planned for.

Her plane is delayed, and with nowhere else to go, she is offered to stay the night at billionaire playboy, Jason Rooke's, house. Jason sweeps Lucy off her feet while also challenging her outlook on life. Within no time, Lucy is questioning whether her plans for her future were even hers to begin with.

But is there more to this handsome prince than meets the eye? When Lucy's fantasy romance comes suddenly crashing down upon her, she finds herself rethinking everything she knows about herself...and Jason Rooke as well...



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LUCY

IT'S best to plan your life. Don't believe me, just look around you. You can see that those people who plan are better off than those who aren't. And I'm not even talking about planning out your entire life – I mean I am – but even when it comes to simple things like planning out what you're going to eat for dinner and making sure you have either a, dinner reservations or b, all the ingredients you're going to need to cook with that night. Otherwise, what are you going to do when six o'clock rolls around and you're hungry and you and your family have no idea what you're doing?

Should have planned something, shouldn't you?

This methodology has worked great for me for my entire life. It's what made me a successful student all throughout elementary and high school. It's what allowed me to also take on many extracurricular activities and succeed at them – which really made my parents happy, of course, and it's why Yale accepted me early admission and why I'll be going there this year as a freshman. That also made my parents *very* proud.

It's why I found *just the right* guy and made him my boyfriend. We started dating at the end of freshman year and never stopped. He comes from a great family, he's going to be a dentist when he's finished with school, and I'm pretty sure that sometime soon, he's going to propose to me. I'll say yes, and then at the end of college we'll get married. Everything will be perfect.

I decided to take a bit of a summer vacation before heading off to school. A trip to the Philippines where I would not only

get a chance to relax, but I would also teach math to impoverished children in rural villages. *Yale will love that*, my mother had told me, but that isn't why I'm doing it. I guess a part of me just can't stop getting involved when I see an opportunity.

I woke up early this morning, said goodbye to the folks, grabbed my bags, and took a very pricey Uber to JFK airport from our house in Philadelphia. I made sure to arrive at the airport around forty-five minutes early, to give myself plenty of time to get to where I need to go, and also to give the airport some leniency (we all know how airports can be). I had my carry-on bag, as well as my little personal to-go bag, as I like to call it, with things like gum, water, a phone charger, my favorite snack bar, Band-Aids, toothpicks, and plenty of other things a person might need while going on a trip by themselves. But as it turned out, all my meticulous planning meant nothing when I arrived at the airport.

I'd been checking my flight's status the entire ride there on my phone, and everything was fine. I grabbed my bag from the trunk, found my way inside, went through security (talk about a mega hassle), and walked all the way down to my gate, only to find that my flight had been delayed.

"Excuse me," I ask a man standing by the gate, looking very official and also very frazzled. "Do we...know how long the flight is going to be delayed?"

"Hi." He smiles. "No, we don't at this moment. If you could just take a seat, we'll keep you informed."

I open my mouth to ask him how long he intends for us to just "keep our seats," but before I can speak, he's off marching away from me. So without anything to do, I take a seat in the corner of the room and break out my water bottle, which I'm very grateful I packed at this point. And that's when it starts.

An hour goes by before people start to get really restless. I go up to one of the attendants to ask if there's been any updates, but I just get more non-answers that sound like one of those Senate hearings you see on TV. More time goes by, and more passengers go up and come back to their seats looking

discouraged. I text my parents to let them know what's up. I even try to FaceTime with them, but I get no response. They're probably on their flight to Hawaii by now. Their flight that actually went according to plan. *God, I hate airports and airplanes.*

There's a really sweet-looking family seated a few seats over for me, and I ask them if they wouldn't mind watching my carry-on for a few minutes while I go to the bathroom and grab something to eat. They smile and tell me *of course they wouldn't*, so I do just that. The airport food is atrocious, so instead of torturing my body with a hotdog that looks like it's been dancing beneath a heat-lamp for longer than we've been waiting for our flight to get moving again, I buy myself a fruit smoothie and another two protein bars, one to eat and another to make up for the one I wolfed down earlier out of my to-go bag.

When I get back to my seat, I make a bit of conversation with the nice family who played bodyguard over my bag. As it turns out, they're taking a family trip all over Asia, and the Philippines will be their first stop. Their son is super excited to see Japan, as he's really into Anime, and their daughter really wants to see China. I'm not sure how they're affording a trip like that, and I don't ask, but I get doctor vibes from the father, and it's pretty clear the mom works too.

I'm just finishing up my protein bar and taking another sip of my smoothie when a voice from behind me startles me.

“Stranded at JFK?”

I try not to jump out of my skin as I turn around in my chair, but what I see nearly causes my jaw to drop to the floor.

In front of me stands what has to be the most gorgeous man I've ever seen. He's tall, with high cheekbones and piercing eyes, just a bit of scruff, and chestnut brown hair that's swept back in a way that looks like it had to have been done by a makeup artist, but I can instantly tell that this is a man who would never go near one. No, he made himself look like this, and he did it with ease.

He's wearing a suit that must cost thousands, but he's wearing it casually, like he could ruin it and throw it away and not even be bothered. And he's leaning over the back of my chair, totally invading my personal space like he knows me, but there's not a single creepy vibe coming off of him. Strangely, everything about him right now makes me feel like I've known him all my life. In fact, I wouldn't even mind getting closer to him...

"S-seems...seems that way, yeah."

Oh my God, Lucy, are you stuttering? What is wrong with you!? But I already know the answer to my own question. I'm stuttering because Mr. Magic here in front of me has me under his spell, and he's only said three words to me.

He shakes his head and glances at the rest of the passengers. *No. No, look at me,* I can feel myself screaming inside. My heart rate soars, and I feel the urge to reach out and grab that chiseled chin of his and snatch his gaze back to mine. But it's only a few seconds at the most before he turns back to me and his eyes find mine again and I feel my body's equilibrium begin to settle.

"What's your name?" he asks me. His voice is solid, like a tree with roots that go deep into the ground. I take a breath. I'm not going to stutter this time. I'm not.

"Lucy."

I did it.

"Hi, Lucy," he says, extending a hand. "I'm Jason. Jason Rooke."

I reach out and take his hand, but as we're shaking, there's a bell ringing in my mind – or a lightbulb going off, or a humming, or a bird up in a tree chirping. I don't know which one it is, but whatever it is, it's trying to tell me something.

"Rooke," I mutter, cocking my head to the side. "Jason Rooke...don't I know that name?"

Jason's lips curl into a knowing but innocent smile. "I don't know, do you?"

His hand is warm. So much bigger than mine – and rough too. Callused. You'd expect a man in such an expensive suit to have soft hands, office hands. But not Jason.

His name keeps bouncing around in my skull like a rubber ball, each time getting me closer and closer to remembering where I know it from. But even when I look at his face, it's like I've seen it somewhere before. But where? I know for sure we've never met. I would absolutely remember meeting this man.

“Ladies and gentleman!” I glance behind me as one of the gate officials waves their hand in the air to get our attention. “I'm very, *very* sorry to let you all know this, but there has been an issue, and right now, we're looking at about a ten- to eleven-hour delay.”

A simultaneous groan comes from the crowd. Many people raise their voices.

“I realize this is a major inconvenience. The airline will be issuing refunds to anyone who wishes to cancel their flight...”

“Don't you just love to fly?” Jason whispers in my ear. I turn back around to see him staring at me, the most commiserating look on his face. “I know I do.”

“This is ridiculous,” I groan. “Now I have to spend ten hours at the airport? Until they tell us it's going to be even longer.”

“You don't live nearby? Close enough that you could drive home until they announce your flight?”

“My house is over two hours away in Philly,” I sigh. “And I'd have to go through security again. It would be a nightmare.”

“Philly, huh?” he asks. “I've got a place there. But my main house is here in Greenwich, Connecticut. Not that far. Have you ever been?”

“No.” I shake my head.

“Well, I've got a solution then.” Jason grins. He *just* grins, and it's then that I realize he's still holding my hand. We

haven't let go since we started shaking several minutes ago.

A moment goes by, and I see by the look in his eye what he's suggesting. It doesn't take a genius to understand.

"No..." I say, not in the actual sense of the word, but more like the *Are you serious?* kind of way, because I'm not quite sure I actually believe him. "Are you saying what I think you're saying right now?"

"Yeah, why not?" Jason shrugs. He lets go of my hand to pull out his phone and begins typing with both hands. I feel an immediate sense of loss from no longer having contact of his skin against mine. What is this man doing to me? And so quickly? "Or would you rather stay here and try to make a bed out of these godawful chairs?"

Well, he's got a point there. Sleeping at the gate would be a terrifying proposition, especially when surrounded by all the other passengers, who would certainly be growing angrier by the hour.

"But I don't even know you. What if you turn out to be a serial killer or something?"

"Serial killer?"

"Like that gorgeous— that guy from *You?*" That was close. "Maybe that's your schtick. You show up at airports, find women who have their flights delayed, offer them a place to sleep, and then chop them up into pieces while they're—"

And then, something about the way he's looking at me — amused, completely unfazed, a man who's used to dealing with things and being on top of everything and handling it his way — just causes all the pieces to fall into place. And I get it.

"Wait a second!" I blurt out. "I know where I know you from now!"

"Oh, yeah?" Jason smiles.

"You're Jason Rooke, the billionaire CEO of Rooke Industries!"

Jason tilts his head down in what could be considered a respectable bow. "Guilty as charged."

I grab my carry-on and my to-go bag and stand.

“All right, Mr. Rooke,” I say. “Let’s get out of this place.”

JASON ROOKE

I KNEW the moment I saw her. The *moment* I saw her, I knew that this girl was special. I've made an incredibly successful career out of my ability to just know things. To be right on the money. People are always asking me how I knew this investment would be the right one, how that investment would be the right one, and very often I give them the same answer. *I just knew.*

And that's how I felt when I saw Lucy.

I was walking to my gate – one down past hers – for a flight to Los Angeles (my private jet is currently undergoing maintenance), and I knew that moment that I just had to drop everything to talk to her. Even if it meant missing that flight to a very important business meeting, but I'm the boss, and being the boss means I can just reschedule for a later date.

It wasn't just Lucy's flowing blond hair or entrancing green eyes, her pink lips or rosy cheeks that drew me in. It was something about the way she carried herself. It was as if there was an aura around her that only I could see that was calling out to me. I knew I had to answer, so I went right over to her without an ounce of hesitation. And boy was I right.

I was instantly smitten, and as I walk with her outside, my feelings for her only grow stronger. This isn't like me. This doesn't happen to me. I keep myself away from women – at least in the emotional sense. I keep myself protected. Thirty-one-years-old and I've never been married. Never had a long-term relationship. I built myself up from nothing, and I couldn't have done it if I let myself get distracted by a member

of the opposite sex. And *after* I established Rooke Industries into the titan that it is today, I knew I had to be much more careful about who I let into my life, so the idea of a wife became even less feasible.

But now, here I am, walking out of the JFK airplane terminal section, toting a girl's carry-on behind me, over toward the helipad, where I have a charter ready to take us to my house in Greenwich. If you'd asked me if this was possible even a half-hour ago, I would have said absolutely not.

When Lucy sees the chopper, her eyes go wide, and she turns to me. "Seriously? We're going in *that* thing?"

"We sure are." I smile. "Or would you like to sit in traffic out of New York City? Because I sure don't."

"How long will this cut the trip down to?" she asks.

"Twenty-five minutes or so."

Lucy's jaw drops. The flush on her cheeks grows even redder. Christ, she's adorable.

I take her hand – so soft and warm in mine – and help her to the copter where the co-pilot is waiting. He smiles and takes Lucy's bag from me and stores it. I thank him, and he welcomes us both aboard, secures the doors behind us, then climbs into the cockpit with the pilot.

"Wow," Lucy says like she really means that shit. "So this is how the other half lives."

"I'm well above the other *half*," I say with a grin. "Not to brag."

Lucy smiles back, almost in a scolding manner. "Not to brag."

Moments later, the helicopter takes off from the pad, and she reaches out for my hand. I can see it's purely out of reflex and smile as I take it and hold her tight. She's already looking to me for safety and protection.

"Look there," I say, pointing back at JFK as we rise higher into the air. "That could be you down there. Trying to catch a

nap on one of those uncomfortable chairs. Or curled up on your carry-on.”

“No thank you,” she giggles. Her laugh is delightful, even filtered and distorted coming through the headsets we have to wear to protect our ears from the sound of the rotor. “I’ll take the billionaire status. Even if it’s just for a little while!”

The flight out of Manhattan is pure delight. Normally when I do this, it’s with a business partner, and I’m reviewing documents or talking about company problems, so I don’t really pay much attention to anything out the window. But this time, my partner is a beautiful girl who’s never done anything like this, so I spend the flight pointing out landmarks and watching her reactions as she bounces up and down in her seat with excitement. By the time we’re touching down just outside Greenwich, I think Lucy has pretty much forgotten about her flight.

“Now *that* was awesome!” she exclaims as I take her hand and help her out onto the helipad.

“Good first flight?” I ask her as the co-pilot wheels over her carry-on.

“Oh, yeah!” She smiles, both at me and at him. The co-pilot nods politely.

“Well, thanks for flying with us, miss. Hope to see you again.”

“Thank you!”

Frank, my driver, already has Lucy’s bag and is packing it away in the trunk of the Rolls by the time she turns around and sees it parked behind us. She’s been too busy ogling the chopper, as if she can’t believe we both actually flew here in it.

“Wait,” she stammers, pointing at the car. “Now we’re taking *that* to your house?”

“Well, what did you expect? A 1993 Toyota Corolla?” I stroll over, and she follows me. Frank greets us both and opens the door for us. “Thanks, Frank. This is Lucy. Lucy, Frank.”

“Um, hi,” Lucy says, trying not to appear overwhelmed as we slide into the backseat. It’s only a few minutes’ ride to the house, and I can see her eyes go wide as we pull up at the front door and step out. Her jaw drops at the sight of it, but as Frank grabs her carry-on, she turns to me and shakes her head a few times and waves her hands to the sides.

“Nope. Nope, I’m not gonna say anything this time.”

“You’re not?” I smirk.

“Nope. You’re a billionaire, and I’ve already been impressed by the helicopter, the Rolls, and *of course* you’re going to have a stupidly-crazy-awesome house.”

“I am?”

“Yup. So I’m just going to act normal and go inside with you.” She turns to Frank and takes her bag from him. “I’ll take that. Thank you, Frank. Let’s go!”

Without waiting, she marches forward, dragging her carry-on up the front steps, right up to the front door. I click the button on my keychain, causing it to open in front of her. I can see the slight pause in her step – she wasn’t ready for something like that – but she doesn’t acknowledge it to me. She just keeps moving forward and goes right inside.

Yeah, I like this girl. I like her *a lot*.

I find her inside alternating glances between the kitchen and the second living room, having left her carry-on by the door. I just stand and watch her for a second, admiring her beauty. And then a thought crosses my mind – a thought that I never would have thought I’d have in a million years – a thought I’ve never had in my life: What would it be like to come home to her every day?

The thought alone fills me with warmth and desire. Nothing has even happened between the two of us, and I’m already thanking the stars that my plane needed maintenance and I was forced to buy a public ticket, which caused me to end up at JFK. If that hadn’t happened, I never would have run into Lucy and wouldn’t have had the day I’ve had today. Nothing has even happened between the two of us yet, and

today has already been one of the most enjoyable days I've had in...I don't even know how long.

"So can I get you a drink?" My voice causes Lucy to jump, but she recovers quickly and spins around to face me, hand on her heart.

"You scared me," she stammers. "I was just looking at your...your...sorry, I'm not old enough to drink."

"I'm not gonna card you, Lucy," I laugh, walking past her and over to my wet bar in the corner of the room. I start to wash my hands then look up. "Wait a minute, how old are you? You're not *underage*, are you?"

Lucy giggles again – that giggle that goes all the way up my body, causing a pulse in my center region. "No. Not *that* kind of underage. Just not old enough to drink yet. I'm nineteen."

"Eh, that's close enough," I reply, waving my hand dismissively as I reach for some of the cocktail ingredients. "I'll make us both something tasty. We can sip on it while you tell me all about yourself."

"All about myself, huh?"

"Well, you know all about me, I assume. From watching the news?"

Lucy shrugs and comes over to the bar, watching me as I mix our drinks. "I know a little. I know you're rich."

"And our Jeopardy winner is!"

She smiles. "I know you built up Rooke Industries from nothing. You're a high school dropout. Didn't you start selling T-shirts or something? Built up your own clothing line?"

"That's right," I nod, pouring our drinks into two glasses. "Sold T-shirts around school. They got popular, started selling to other schools. More and more. I couldn't keep up with demand *and* my studies, so I picked the one bringing in money. Eventually grew the T-shirts into an entire clothing line which I sold when I was twenty-seven for two hundred million."

“Chump change.” Lucy smiles as I hand her her drink.

“Is that right?”

“What’s in this?” she asks.

“It’s a cucumber melon margarita. You’ll like it.” I cheers her, and we both take a sip. Lucy tries to fight it, but her lips pucker up and she breathes out heavily as she swallows. I chuckle. “You really aren’t a girl who drinks much, are you?”

“I told you, I’m not old enough!”

“That doesn’t stop most teenagers,” I laugh.

“Maybe not, but I’m not most teenagers.” She says it with such pride that I just can’t resist probing for additional information.

“Oh, no? Tell me more.”

Lucy pauses, twists her lips to the side, then takes a breath. “Let’s just say I like to be in control – and not in a weird, domineering, I-like-to-control people kind of way either, okay? I just like to be in control of my life. I like to *plan* things. Come up with a plan and stick to that plan. Alcohol takes you *out* of control, and I’ve seen too many people do too many dumb things that affected their lives in a negative way because of alcohol.”

“Wow,” I reply, impressed. “Aren’t you impressive? So your flight being delayed must have really upset this... vacation of yours?”

Lucy rolls her eyes, groans, and takes another sip of her drink. “Tell me about it. I had *everything* planned out, down to the tiniest little detail.”

“Yeah, but if your flight hadn’t been delayed, you never would have met me, now would you?”

I smile, our eyes meet, and a magic moment hangs in the air between us.

“Yeah, that’s true.”

LUCY

THIS IS CRAZY. I've never felt this way before. It's like I've been completely thrown off balance. Like Jason has inserted a key into my chest and unlocked an entire side of me I never even knew existed, and that side of me is now fighting for control against the side that normally runs my life.

I mean, I'm sipping a margarita. What? It's not like I've never been offered alcohol before, but I've turned it down and never felt wrong or weird or strange for doing so. I've been confident enough in myself to say no, and I didn't accept this time just because Jason Rooke is who he is. I accepted because I felt like I actually wanted to have a drink with him for whatever reason. And you know what? I'm actually enjoying it.

"So tell me more," he says as he leads me over to a caramel leather couch that is somehow both decadent and sleekly modern at the same time. "I want to hear everything about you."

"Everything?"

"*Everything.*" My God, his eyes. They're like laser beams cutting right through me. I feel as if I don't even need to tell him anything; I feel as if he knows already. "I bet you were a great student."

"Well, yes," I reply, feeling myself blush. "You could say that. I was an honors student. Did lots of extracurriculars."

"That must have made your parents proud."

"You could say that." I nod.

“And you’re going to college? I bet a gal like you applied early admission.”

“I sure did.” I smile. Again, it’s like he can read my mind.

“And where did you get in?”

I take another tiny sip of my drink. It’s good, but I’m still getting used to the alcohol. “Yale. I’ll be going to Yale.”

He raises his glass to me, and we do a tiny little toast. I can see in his eyes that he’s impressed, but there’s also something else there that I can’t quite put my finger on. Like psychoanalysis or something. But deeper. It doesn’t quite make me uncomfortable, but it’s like I’m being read.

“Quite the school, Yale. What will you be studying? I bet you’ve got that...*planned* out already,” he says with a smile.

“Law.” I smile back. “I’m going to be a lawyer, just like my dad and my grandpa.”

Jason nods some more. “Sounds like you and your family are pretty close.”

“Yup, you could say that. And my boyfriend, Zack, I’m pretty sure he’s going to propose soon. Well, not *soon*, but sometime during our freshman year.”

Something comes over Jason’s face – a stutter or a shift in his expression, and I instantly realize the faux pas I’ve just committed. What have I done? Why did I just say that? Why did I just mention Zack in this context? Technically, nothing has happened between Jason and me, but no guy wants to hear about another girl’s boyfriend after he’s gone out of his way to be so nice to her.

Nice isn’t even the word. Nice would have been just saying some sweet things back at JFK, maybe offering to buy me an extra bottle of water or something. But this? This is going out of his way for me. This is going *completely* over the top in every possible way. Pulling out all the stops, even if he is a billionaire.

“Is that right?” he asks. The tone of his voice is much lower now, much softer. “Your boyfriend.”

I just completely messed up everything. I have to salvage things right now, and quickly.

“Yeah, my mom introduced me to him, actually,” I stammer, feeling dumber than I’ve ever felt before in my life. “He’s the son of one of her friends, and we just sort of started dating because...I don’t know why really. Because it was convenient and I didn’t have a boyfriend at the time, but all of my friends did.”

“It’s rough not having a boyfriend, huh?” Jason replies. I can see the disappointment in his eyes just before he looks away.

“You know what’s even worse? Having one you’re not that into.”

It takes him a second to get it, but when he does, he looks back up at me. I can see the confusion. “But...you just said he was going to propose.”

“Yes, but I didn’t say what my answer was going to be.” I smile. “You know Zack and I have never even *done the deed*?”

“Really? How long have you two been together?”

“Just over a year and a half,” I reply. “I told him I was waiting for marriage, so we wouldn’t have to...”

“Wow.” Jason grins. “Well, that’s certainly one devious *plan*.”

I feel my lips twisting up into a smile as I look back at him. I can feel myself starting to calm down slightly. Maybe I didn’t completely ruin things.

“Come on, Lucy. Tell me more. There must be more to you. What else did you do growing up?”

“Well,” I say, taking a deep breath. “A little bit of everything, I guess. My parents had me involved in everything. Soccer, swimming, tennis, violin – which I dropped because I totally sucked. But piano, I *loved* piano, and I was really good too.”

“Was? You don’t do it anymore?”

“No,” I say sadly. “I just don’t have time now, what with so much schoolwork. Getting into Yale is no easy feat, you know?”

Jason nods, leans his head back, and narrows his eyes at me like he’s examining me. He sets his drink down and looks at me *hard*, as though he’s just discovered something very secretive and important about me.

Instantly, I feel my heart rate rise. I glance behind me nervously, in case he’s not looking at me.

“What?” I ask. “Do I have something on my face?”

“You know, I could see you being a piano player, Lucy.”

His statement shocks me so deeply that I’m not even able to respond for a few seconds.

“Me? A piano player? Like...doing my own little indie thing or something? The only problem is I can’t sing—”

Jason laughs. “No, not like that. Like in an orchestra. A concerto. Something professional, on stage, live in front of hundreds or thousands of people. I can see it.”

“You can *see* it.”

“That’s right.” He nods. “I bet you have the talent for something like that.”

Something stirs inside me as he looks at me with those beautiful eyes. I never would have thought of calling a man’s eyes *beautiful*, but they are. They’re also strongly masculine at the same time. Like the eyes of a friend who you know could also always have your back and get you out of any trouble you could ever get yourself into.

“First of all, thank you,” I say with as much grace as possible. “But I...that’s just not something I could ever see myself doing.”

“Why is that?”

“I just...” His question legitimately stumps me. I find myself flustered, searching for words, for an answer. “That’s

just not anything you could ever plan for, Jason. A concert pianist? I mean...how-?"

"Life isn't always something you can plan for, Lucy." He interrupts me. "Take today, for instance. I normally fly private--"

"Of course you do," I say, just teasing.

"But if my plane hadn't been under the weather, I never would have met you." He places his hand on my knee, his eyes still firmly connected with mine. The feeling is so intense, so consuming, as though he's putting some kind of spell over me. I stare at him, wishing I knew what he wanted me to do – or that he would do something next and ease me of this anxiety that's begun to flow through me.

But he doesn't. He just looks at me, like he's waiting for me to make the next move.

"Yeah..." The word falls from my lips, and I instantly regret it. *Yeah? That's all you could say, you big moron? He probably thinks you're an idiot now!* But the look in Jason's eyes hasn't changed at all. He's still staring right at me, still waiting. And I still don't know what to do.

Where's the guidebook for *What to Do When a Billionaire CEO Invites You Back to His House and Puts His Hand on Your Knee?*

"And you never would have had your first helicopter ride," he adds. Also true. But I don't just want to mumble *yeah* yet again, and come off like I've lost the ability to speak. But his hand on my knee-thigh area is really doing...things to me.

I take a deep breath but try not to make it too visible, and at the same time, try not to think about the fact that I'm immensely attracted to this man, or that he is who he is. *You have a boyfriend, Lucy. You have a--*

"I know what you're thinking right now," Jason says, inching closer to me on the couch, which does nothing to help my cognitive situation.

"Y-you do?"

He nods. “First, you’re thinking about how pursuing piano would be impossible, and not just because it’s difficult and hard to plan, but because your parents would never go for it.”

“Wow,” I reply, taken aback. “You really are a mind-reader, aren’t you?”

And there comes his smile again, melting away at me, at my heart. Only this time, it’s accompanied by his hand on my thigh, which is only doubling its effect on me (at least).

“Well, I wouldn’t go that far.”

“And the second thing?”

Jason moves even closer – so close I can smell what must be his aftershave. It’s subtle enough that it’s not cologne but still has a pleasant, manly scent to it that I would love to be around.

“The second thing you’re thinking about right now isn’t a thing – it’s a person. And that person is *Zack*, your *boyfriend*.” He makes quotation marks in the air with his free hand, which shocks me, but also makes me laugh at the same time.

“Okay, *how* are you doing this? There’s something like... psychic about you or something!” But all I get in return is an even broader smile. An even more charming smile. “Seriously, Jason—”

“To be fair, the second one isn’t that hard to guess.” He indicates to his hand. He’s moved it even higher up on my thigh and I hadn’t even noticed. “It’s okay to plan things in your life, Lucy, but you can’t plan romance. You can’t plan where your heart leads you.”

“I-I’m not.” I’m stammering like a fool.

“You’re with him because your mom set you up with him. Because your parents think he’s a good match.”

“Well, I—”

“But you’re not *really* with him,” he says, sliding his hand farther up my thigh. “You’re just pretending because having a man that fits the narrative of your life is all part of your plan.”

His words have stopped me cold. I don't even know what to say anymore. But my heart is racing, my blood is pulsing rapidly through my veins, and my body is hot like Jason is not a man, but a volcano that I'm seated beside who is transferring all the heat from his body to mine.

No one's ever spoken to me this way before, not even my parents. They're the passive-aggressive type who like to dance around the issue but make sure I know exactly what they're talking about. On the rare occasion they do actually speak to me head-on about something, it's because we're discussing something that's time sensitive.

The way Jason is going right at me about this is terrifying, but it's also turning me on in a way I can't even begin to describe. I've only known him a couple of hours, but I feel as though I've known him for years. He sees right through me, and I want to expose the rest of myself to him as quickly as possible. I want to show him everything.

"You're right," I admit. "Everything you said just now is true."

Jason moves even closer. We're so close now our bodies might as well be touching. "So, Lucy, what are you gonna do about it? Gonna drop out of Yale and play piano all day?"

"You know...my grandpa believed in me pursuing piano. He's the only one."

"He sounds like a smart man," Jason replies.

I nod. "We were always close. Until..."

"Until what, Lucy?"

"Until...cancer. I don't get to see him as much now."

I see genuine empathy in Jason's eyes as he looks at me. He brushes my cheek with the back of his hand. "I can pay for the best teachers in the world for you."

I can't tell if he's kidding or not, but part of me thinks he isn't.

"I don't – I don't think I can go that far," I whisper.

“No.” Jason smiles. “No, of course not. But can you go this far?”

And that’s when he leans in and kisses me.

JASON

SHE PROBABLY THINKS I was kidding about paying for the piano teachers, but I wasn't. There isn't anything on Earth I wouldn't give this girl. But right now – at this moment – I know *exactly* what I want to give her, and it isn't piano lessons.

The feeling of her hand in mine was incredible, but that paled in comparison to the feeling of her thigh when I gently took it on the couch. But even that is nothing now compared to the feeling of her lips against mine.

It's as if a pure blanket made from the fabric of heaven was suddenly draped over me as we kissed. She hasn't moved in. She hasn't moved back either. She's letting me take the lead, and for a girl who's so accustomed to planning out every move of her entire life, I think that says a lot.

I lean in, kissing her deeper and with more passion. Her lips part slightly, and she accepts my tongue as I push her down on the couch beneath me. Her body is pure warmth, and I feel my cock growing rapidly beneath my pants as every inch of her teenage body presses back up against mine.

She may be slightly nervous, however, as I can feel just the tiniest amount of tremble as we embrace. I gently break our kiss and look down into her eyes – her green eyes that are more perfect than if they were painted by a master Renaissance painter.

“You're trembling,” I whisper. “What's the matter, sweetheart? You're nervous?”

“Of course I am,” she nearly blurts out. “You’re Jason Rooke. You’re this handsome, charming billionaire who’s had *who knows* how many women, and I’m just this nineteen-year-old who’s never even had sex before, and I don’t want to disappoint you and—”

“Shhh.” I place an index finger over Lucy’s perfect lips and gaze into her eyes. “You need to stop worrying, gorgeous. There’s *no possible way* you could disappoint me, understand? Me being your first, well that’s the greatest honor you could give me.”

Even with my finger over her lips, I see them slowly twist into a smile, and as they do, I take my other free hand and slide it up her shirt, over her flat and sexy stomach, until I find the cup of her right bra. I slip my hand underneath it and cup her right breast, causing her to gasp.

Perfection. So firm, so perky, smooth skin and a nipple that fits just right between my thumb and forefinger. I can almost picture it – a delicious little pink gumdrop that I’m eager to get my lips around.

Without warning, I snatch Lucy and spin her around so she’s on top of me. She squeals as I lift her shirt aggressively so I can get at her bra clasp. It comes off quickly and falls aside, revealing the most perfect pair of tits I’ve ever seen in my life. *I fucking knew it.*

I can’t let this girl go. I just can’t. I won’t. There’s no way I can let her go back to living her life of planning – the life she’s been living for her parents – for everyone but herself. I need her in *my* life. I need to show her what she’s missing by living for everyone but herself.

And I don’t care what it takes.

“Jason...” Her voice falters as she says my name, and I can see her arms start to move inward as I stare up at her flawless breasts. But I stop that right away. I grab her by the wrists and pull her down against me, growling as I take each of her nipples into my mouth. And it’s just as I thought; they are succulent little pink gumdrops. Lucy gasps with each little suck I give to them. “Oh my God!”

My cock grows harder and harder beneath my pants. It's nearly painful at this point. I have to get out of these and *soon*.

I slip out of my shirt and press my chest against hers, kissing her as I reach down and tug at my zipper. Lucy is no longer trembling as I pull my pants down and relieve the pressure on my raging erection. I can't remember the last time I've been this turned on, if ever.

I pop the button on her pants and tug down her zipper, then tug down her pants with both hands over her sweet, supple hips that can only make me think one thing: *I want to breed this woman. Badly.*

She's wearing the cutest little green thong underneath, which I actually almost want to leave on as I pull off her pants. But no, everything has to go. I need her fully naked, so I strip it away and reveal a shaved – no, waxed – little pink line of a pussy.

I nearly bust just seeing it.

“Holy hell...” I mutter. The tone of my voice must not come through right, or Lucy must still be nervous, because she pulls back and looks at me with fear in her eyes.

“What!? What is it?”

I quickly wrap her in my arms and pull her back to me, roll her beneath me, and gently kiss her. “Oh, it's nothing, baby. It's just...you have the sweetest looking pussy I've ever seen in my life, and I am *dying* to get inside you. That's all.”

That does it. Lucy's face melts, her eyes go soft and lock on to mine, and all fear is instantly wiped clean. She throws both arms around my neck in a lover's embrace, and I shift my hips until I feel the crown of my cock pressing against her hole. I apply just the right amount of pressure to open her up, and I watch as her eyes go wide.

“Jason...”

“It's okay, baby,” I whisper. “Don't worry.”

“I...shouldn't we have a condom or something?” She really is a planner. “Or are you going to pull out?”

“It’s all right,” I tell her. “I got the snip years ago. A man in my position has to be careful.”

While that’s true, I’m also lying my ass off. I didn’t get the snip. I’m completely fertile, and I’m going to breed this honey.

“The snip?” she asks. Wow, she really is innocent.

“A vasectomy.” I smile. “So I can’t get girls pregnant. So you don’t have to worry. Just take your mind off all that, stop *planning* for once, and enjoy yourself.”

Before she can say another word, I push forward with my hips. I feel the entrance to her tight, virgin pussy open around my swollen tip. She’s absolutely dripping with arousal, and it coats every inch of me as I push deeper and deeper inside.

“Oh my God, Jason,” she moans. “You’re so huge.”

“I know, baby.” I smile. “It doesn’t help that you’re so tight. It feels good, doesn’t it?”

She nods, her face a picture of bliss. She’s also still slightly hesitant, so I keep my eyes glued to hers to assure her I’m with her, watching every shift in her expression as I take her. It’s beautiful. *She’s* beautiful, and being the first man to take her is a privilege I’ll remember for the rest of my life.

I feel a hint of resistance and feel her tense up, her grasp around my neck go tighter.

“That’s okay, baby. That’s your cherry. It’s going to hurt for just a second, but it will be over quickly. Then everything will be incredible.”

“What do I do? Should I do anything?”

“Just take a breath,” I tell her. “You’ll be fine. I promise.”

“Promise?”

“Come on.” I smile. “Would I lie to you?”

I watch as she nods and does it, causing her perfect tits to rise and somehow become even perkier. And then I push. I feel the resistance of her cherry and see the pain register on Lucy’s face. She groans, and I feel her stomach tense up beneath me, so I drive my cock deeper, quickly, to get it over with.

The barrier gives way, and my cock slides in. Her sweet pussy accepts more of my inches, and she lets out a moan and relaxes.

“Oh my God, Jason.”

“There you go, baby,” I coo, petting her hair as I give her all I have left. I bury my shaft all the way inside her. That’s it. I’ve taken her. She’s accepted all of me. We’re linked now. The moment has occurred, and it’s phenomenal.

I start fucking her, slowly at first so she can get used to it, but holding back is hard – especially when such sexy moans are dripping from those plump lips of hers. Her gorgeous tits bouncing doesn’t make it any easier either. It’s like fucking a goddess.

My cock flexes as I rut inside her. I have to tense up every muscle in my body just to keep myself from coming. Christ, she’s incredible. Her pussy is like nothing I’ve ever felt before. So slick, so warm, and I fit inside her like it was formed just for me.

“Christ, Lucy,” I growl, placing my palms on her cheeks. “You feel so fucking good. You fit me just right too.”

“Yeah?” She whimpers as I rut hard, deep inside. I’m *going* to breed her. I can feel my cum, swollen and heavy and thick in my balls, just waiting to be shot up inside her.

“Oh, yeah.” I nod, leaning in to press my tongue against her lips. I want to eat her up. My heart is pulsing hard, slamming against my ribcage. I wonder if she can feel it or if it’s masked by the heavy thuds of my body slamming against hers.

I can feel her tightening up around my cock, which is only making it harder and harder for me to hold out, not just because of the physical sensations, but knowing that she’s getting close. It’s her first time. She was nervous going into it, but I’m still going to make her come.

“You’re close, aren’t you, sweetie?”

Lucy nods, lips parted, eyes wide. “Yes...”

“So am I.” I smile. “We’ll come together, okay?”

“And...and you’re sure I won’t get pregnant?” There’s a flicker of hesitation as she asks me again, but it’s instantly wiped away as I picture this beautiful woman going through the rest of her life, living out the plans of others, chained to a man she doesn’t love, working a career that was never her dream to begin with, all to please her parents.

I nod. “I’m sure, baby.”

She smiles back. “Okay.”

I move more sensually. She sways her hips back against mine, and I feel my own climax rising up inside me with great speed. I’ve been holding back for so long that even the thought of letting myself let loose is practically a release of its own.

Lucy’s grip around my neck tightens, and she throws both of her legs around my waist and squeezes. “J-J-Jason!” she stammers. “I’m so close. I’m g-g—I’m gonna come!”

“Thatta girl,” I grunt, tugging her face right up to mine so I can look her in the eyes when it happens. “So am I.”

We go off *almost* simultaneously, but Lucy comes just a second before me. I feel her pussy squeeze down on my shaft, somehow going even tighter than it was (which I never even thought possible), and throwing me right over the edge.

Every muscle in my body goes tense as I burst, as I empty my balls and spray my seed deep inside her, coating her walls with my hot, sticky baby batter that will breed this goddess and make her mine forever.

Make her mine. That’s the only mission here. Is it the best sex I’ve ever had in my life? Yes. Absolutely, yes. But that’s secondary to making sure my seed goes all the way up in her now – that she takes it all.

“I can feel it!” she cries out. “Oh, that’s hot!”

“You like that, baby?”

“Yes!” She nods. “Oh my God, it’s so warm.”

I don't even pull out when we're finished. My cock doesn't even begin to go down, so why would I? Sure, I'm sensitive, but if I pull out, the greater the chance there is of some of my seed slipping out of her. This way I'm ensuring that the most of my cum will remain as deep in her for as long as possible.

"So?" I ask her, stroking her hair between my fingers, brushing stray strands back into place. "Not bad for a first time?"

Lucy nearly scoffs at me. "Not bad? Jason, that was...that was amazing."

I feel my heart warm, along with the rest of my insides. We lie there together on the couch, Lucy in my arms, just fawning over each other and talking like a couple of lovers who have been with each other for years. It's blissful and would probably look so obnoxious to anybody watching from the outside, but I could not care less. I'm having the time of my life.

At some point, Lucy remembers she has to check in on the status of her flight and reaches for her phone.

"Ugh," she groans. "It's been delayed until tomorrow afternoon."

"Don't you just love airports?"

"Nope," she replies. "They are offering full refunds, though, so there's that."

She frowns and starts messing around with her phone, but I quickly take it from her and set it aside. "None of that right now, sweetie. We just had the most wonderful time together. Don't let a little inconvenience ruin it."

For a brief second, she looks like she's ready to argue, but then she realizes I'm right and drops it. "Yeah, you're right. I just...I had this all planned. It's going to be such a pain when I get there now—"

I lean in and kiss her. "Plans change. Come on. Let's go upstairs to the bedroom. You're staying with me."

I reach down and grab her panties and slowly slide them up her legs and put them on. Normally I'd just want her walking around the house naked, but not tonight. Tonight I have my load to keep inside her. Tonight I have a baby to make.

LUCY

I DREAMT last night like I've never dreamt before. Normally my dreams are not quite nightmares, but they're something close. I often wake up feeling anxious, with things on my mind like *What am I going to do today?* or *Did I forget anything from my planner yesterday?* or *Am I behind on any of my long-term projects?*

But last night I dreamt like a baby. It was like Jason sedated me when we got back to his bedroom.

The only things I can remember about my dreams last night are images – images of big, strong, masculine arms wrapped around me. A hard, buff chest and a chiseled jaw, and of course caramel-brown eyes staring right into mine.

I wake up and stretch and immediately recognize that I'm in Jason's bed. Jason Rooke's bed.

How did any of this happen?

I had everything planned out. My trip to the Philippines, showing up early to the airport, my to-go bag, and then everything went off the rails. My flight was delayed, but what came of it? I met one of the richest men in the world and lost my virginity to him. What are the chances?

I roll to my side, expecting to see him sleeping beside me, but see nothing but an empty bed.

“Of course,” I say to myself. “Probably up for a 4 a.m. gym workout, or whatever.”

These billionaire types. Always up and at ‘em. Doing something to make more money. How much *is* he worth, anyway? It occurs to me I don’t even know how old he is either, so I grab my phone and Google him:

JASON ROOKE, **31 years old.**

Estimated Net Worth, 119 billion dollars.

I GASP. That’s a number I can’t even get my head around. I can’t even imagine what I would do with that much money. Paying off my college tuition would be like buying a Frappuccino to him. He wouldn’t even notice it. But at least he doesn’t look like one of those dickheads who wears like a watch with ten acres of diamonds on it so he can show off to everybody. I mean, his car was incredible, but still...

I slide out of bed and call out for him. There’s no answer, so I decide to head for the attached master bathroom and take a shower, but it’s then I see the note on the bedside table.

HAD some very important work business to attend to. The house is yours! Whatever you need! And Frank will take you to the airport whenever you need him to. Sorry I couldn’t be there with you. Call me when you get back.

AT THE BOTTOM there’s a heart beside his name, along with his number.

I smile, feeling warm and pixielike as I add his contact to my phone and send a smiley face text along with my name, not expecting a response any time soon. He is dealing with business stuff, after all.

I shower in a master bathroom the size of most people’s apartments, freshen up, then go downstairs, where I find a small acai bowl in the fridge, along with plenty of other fresh ingredients, along with another note from Jason.

THIS BOWL IS DELICIOUS. *Make anything else you'd like. I know you're a fantastic cook.*

LAUGHING TO MYSELF, I make a couple of scrambled eggs with scallions, a slice of toast, and finish it off with the acai bowl. It is delicious, just as he said it would be.

According to my phone, my flight is in four hours, so I'll need to get going soon if I want to get through the traffic, into the city, through security, and to my gate again. So I do my hair, get changed and head out front, and just like Jason said, Frank is out there waiting for me with the car.

Wow, this is how it feels to be part of the one percent.

“So think it's actually happening this time?” Frank asks me as we pull out from the house.

“Let's hope so,” I chuckle. “I've got plans over there that I've already spent money on!”

“Philippines, eh? How long will you be there?”

“Just shy of four months. I'll be back right before school starts.”

“Ship off to Asia, then ship off to college, huh?” Frank remarks. “You're not a gal who likes to sit still, I take it?”

His comment gives me a moment of pause. “I've never thought about it that way, but I guess yeah – you might be right.”

FOUR MONTHS LATER...

STILL NO WORD FROM JASON. That may not be his fault, though. He never texted me back before I actually got to the Philippines, which I understand – he could have been busy at work – and then as it turns out, when you actually get *to* the

Philippines, you can't just use your same US number like you're still in the US, because *duh*, you're not in the US.

There are all kinds of other tricky ways to do it, some of which I tried to do but failed miserably. I think I was just afraid of being scammed, honestly.

I managed to actually get a Wi-Fi-only text app that worked and was able to contact him on that, but that only worked for two days, because when I left Manila and went out into the village where I would be teaching, there *was* no Wi-Fi at all. We take things like Wi-Fi and TV and electricity that's always available for granted in the United States, but where I am now, those things are luxuries.

To be honest, though, not being in contact with Jason for the last four months isn't my greatest worry. My greatest worry is the fact that I haven't had my last three periods and that I have a very obvious bump growing on my tummy. That's all that's been on my mind for the last couple of months, and as each day passes, the worry grows and grows and grows.

At first, I thought I must be crazy. I'd only missed one period. That happens to girls all the time. He told me he had "the snip." That I had nothing to worry about. So how could I be pregnant? It just couldn't be possible. But then I missed another, and another, and I saw what was happening to my belly, and the chances that this could be anything else started to shrink rapidly.

I went online and looked up "the snip." A vasectomy is what it's really called, and I guess they can actually reverse themselves in rare cases, so I guess that's what could have happened here, and Jason could have accidentally gotten me pregnant.

God, he's going to be so pissed off.

What is a multi-billionaire going to want with a child and a girl like me? He is *so* not going to want to deal with that.

"Ladies and gentleman, welcome back to New York," I hear a voice say over the intercom, shaking me out of myself.

“If you’ll please remain seated for just a moment until the plane has come to a complete stop—”

It’s hard to believe I’m actually back in the United States. I glance down at my phone and see I have service again and immediately call my mom. She answers on the first ring.

“Honey! Are you back?”

“I sure am. We just touched down.”

“Have you left the airport yet?”

“No, not yet,” I reply. “I’m still on the plane. But it won’t be long now.”

I can hear the excitement in her voice. “Oh, wonderful. I’ll let your father know. So, what do you think? Two and a half hours? I just want to know so I can have dinner planned.”

The people around me start to get up from their seats to grab their bags, so I do as well. “Yeah, about that. Mom, I gotta go. I’ll call you when I’m close to home.”

“Okay, honey. Talk to you soon!”

I must reach for Jason’s contact a hundred times on my way out of the airport. My thumb hovers over it, ready to commit, but then every time, I find myself a reason why I shouldn’t make the call.

I mean, now that I’m back in the US, shouldn’t I have texts from him coming in? Wondering how I’m doing? Apologizing for not having gotten in touch with me before I left for the Philippines? But for some reason, that’s not happening.

Is Jason Rooke just a player? Was he just using me? For most men, a helicopter ride and a mansion like that would have been a big deal and big moves just to get laid. But not for him. For Jason, it wouldn’t even be a blip on his financials.

So what’s the deal?

A thousand thoughts are barreling through my mind as I slide my bag in the trunk of the Uber that’s going to take me back to Philadelphia. Yes, my parents are too busy with their important lives to come pick me up.

I'm not rude to the driver, but I make it clear to him that I'm not in the chatting mood, so he puts on some chill music for the ride. It feels a lot longer than the ride *to* the airport, what with all the things on my mind.

Should I call Jason or shouldn't I? Maybe if I do, it should be a little later, when I'm prepared and I know what I'm going to say. How in the world am I going to tell him I'm pregnant? He's not going to believe me, and I know we're going to get into an argument.

So I hold off and just call my mom when I'm about ten-minutes away from the house. She sounds really excited – more than I've ever heard her before – but this is the longest I've ever been away from my parents before, so I guess that makes sense.

The Uber driver drops me off in front of the house, and I realize I'm feeling a lot less happy than I should be feeling to be home. I should be thrilled to be back. I mean, my trip was amazing, and I should be all ready to tell my parents every detail over dinner. But I just can't get Jason off my mind. Or the fact that I need to hide this rapidly developing baby bump from both of them.

The front door opens, and my heart skips a beat. I see my mom and dad standing there like I expected, but between them is something I did not expect to see.

Zack, wearing his favorite button-up, smiling like we haven't seen each other in years.

“Hey, Lucy-Boo.” He waves. It's the silly little nickname he gave me a few weeks after we first started hanging out together. He used to joke that he was going to call me his boo, and when I told him there was no way, he started calling me just Lucy-Boo. That I was able to tolerate.

I wave back and drag my bags up the steps to the door. Once I reach the door, Zack takes my suitcase from me and pulls it inside. “Oh, here. Let me get that for you.”

I smile at him as he gives me a kiss on the cheek, but I can't help thinking that if it were Jason, he would have come

down from the house and grabbed both of them for me.

“Welcome home, darling,” my dad says, pulling me in for a hug. My mom does the same, and I step inside. It’s still an adjustment to the luxury of even my own house after living in the Philippines for the last four months.

Mom’s made a roast for dinner, along with vegetables and a cheesecake for dessert. It’s all delicious, of course. Whenever my mom decides to go all out, boy does she go all out. I tell everyone about my trip, teaching, the sights, the flight there and back, but I leave out *everything* about Jason. As far as Zack and my parents are concerned, I slept uncomfortably at the airport until my flight was ready, and I am *definitely* not pregnant.

Once we’re all finished, normally it would be time to get up and do the dishes. But for some reason, that’s not happening. For some reason, everyone’s still seated. Seated and looking at me. Especially Zack.

He glances over at my father, who gives him a subtle nod. Then he rises from his seat and comes over in front of me. Instantly, I understand what’s going on.

Oh, please no.

He drops to one knee in front of me. “Lucy Anderson.” *Please, no...please.* “It’s so good to see you again. I know you and I are both still young – some people might say too young – but I don’t agree with that. I know that you and I are in love, and love doesn’t care what age we are. And I know that I want to spend the rest of my life with you, Lucy. So...”

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a jewelry box and opens it, revealing what is no doubt a very expensive engagement ring that is *so* not my taste. “Will you make me the happiest man on earth and marry me?”

My mom reacts more than I do. I can hear her squeal like a sow from her chair to my right as she clasps her hands over her mouth. My father makes some kind of grunting sound of approval, and I realize how strange this all is.

A proposal with an audience. And not a *big* audience either – like at a concert or something. No, Zack figured he would propose to me in front of just my mom and dad.

Talk about awkward!

My throat seizes up as I open my mouth, searching for words. I don't even know what to say. Several months ago, I was pretty sure that marrying Zack was the right idea. He made sense on paper. But when I explained it all to Jason, Jason made me realize that marrying Zack because it was a good plan was actually a terrible idea.

So now, sitting here in front of him and faced with this terrible decision I have to make is absolutely terrifying.

“Lucy?” my mom whispers. “Zack’s asked you a question, dear.”

“Yes, I–” I stammer. I can see the confidence in Zack’s face slowly fading. Couldn’t he have at least waited until I’d had some time to settle in? A day or two? I lean in close, so only he can hear me. “Can I talk to you outside, please?”

Zack’s smile vanishes, and he nods. “Um, sure.”

The jewelry box snaps shut, and we both stand and walk from the dining room to the front door. I can hear my mom calling after us but ignore her as I step outside and Zack follows, closing the door behind him. My heart is going pitter-patter like a snare as I turn to face him.

“What the hell are you doing, Lucy?” he immediately snaps.

“What are *you* doing, Zack?” I reply. “I *just* got home, I’ve barely settled in, and you’re proposing?”

“That’s the whole point!” he says. “I thought it would be cool. A surprise, ya know?”

“Yeah, well it’s not, okay? It’s not.”

Zack frowns, puts his hands on his hips, and begins to pace. “Okay, so I’ll give you some time. How much do you need?—”

You have to tell him, Lucy. You have to.

My palms are sweating. This is not how I wanted to arrive back home in the United States. But I have no choice now.

“Listen, Zack, I’m sorry, but I don’t think I need time. I think...I just don’t think you and I are going to work out.”

Zack’s frown turns into a glare. “Excuse me?”

“Let’s face it, Zack. We’re only dating because my mom thought we’d be a good match and your mom is her friend.”

“This is bullshit, Lucy!”

“We don’t even like each other, Zack!” His face is getting red. He’s not a guy used to being rejected or losing or not getting his way. “We just look good on paper. I’m sure there’s another girl you could date that you’d actually like, and not just go out with because your mom approves of her.”

“Lucy. There has to be more to this,” Zack says. “Did your trip to the Philippines change you?”

There’s no getting around it. I’m going to have to tell him.

“Well, yes.” I nod. “But there’s something else, Zack.” I take a deep breath. “Zack, I’m pre—”

My phone vibrates in my pocket. Who would be texting me right now?

I reach in, take it out, and am shocked by what I see.

Jason: Hey, babe. Whatcha up to?

LUCY

I'M HALFWAY to Jason's house in Greenwich and have only sent one text back confirming he was there, and have been ignoring the rest – as well as all his phone calls. The way I look at it, is he was pretty shoddy about getting in touch with me before I left for my trip, and then I didn't have any texts waiting for me when I touched down in the country, so that says a lot about him.

And on top of that, he got me pregnant. So right now, as far as I'm concerned, he's in full-blown asshole mode, and I'm not going to waste time getting into a text discussion (or argument) with him. I'm just going to drive to his house and confront him.

I took my car and left Zack back at the house with my parents. When I looked in the rearview mirror, he was talking to my mom and showing her the ring he'd bought me (that his parents helped buy, I'm sure). She seemed way more into it than I was.

The whole thing just made me feel sick. What a bizarre setup. Like an old-school arranged marriage between two families or something.

A thousand emotions are whirling through me when I pull up at Jason's gate. There's a fancy touchpad that I press. Instantly, his voice comes out of a little speaker. "Come on in."

The gate slides open, and I pull up the drive as memories of *that night* come flooding back to me. No matter how hard I

try to fight it, the memories trigger positive emotions that I just can't fight off, making it difficult to maintain the aggressive, tiger-woman vibe I came here with.

Keep it together, I remind myself as I pull up right to the front door and park beside some kind of fancy red sports car. I don't see the Rolls or Frank, which means we must be alone. Thank God.

Jason opens the door as I'm coming up the steps.

"There she is!" He smiles, spreading his arms wide, either for a hug or for one of those power-gestures men sometimes do. Either way, I ignore it and brush right past him and stride inside like I own the place.

Once I'm a few feet past him in the foyer, I spin around to face him.

"What the *hell* have you done?"

"What do you mean?"

"Don't play dumb, jerk face! I'm fucking pregnant!"

Jason cocks his head to the side. His eyes narrow. "Are you sure?"

"Am I sure?" I scoff. "No, I'm *not sure*. I'm just a girl, and it's been four months, and I'm not sure by now. I'm just missing periods because I have been using my special superhero, abilities to skip periods! Yes, I'm sure!"

I lift my shirt and show him my baby bump, and I could swear that for a brief second, the tiniest of smiles comes over his face.

"Did you-?" I point a finger and take a step closer to him. "Did you just *smile*?"

"It's not like that," he replies, shaking his head. "You're just...you look sexy, that's all. Can you blame me for that?"

"Um, I can blame you for knocking me up when you told me you got *the snip*!"

Jason throws his hands in the air like a guilty criminal being arrested by the police, in this case me.

“Listen, Lucy, it’s rare, but those things can sometimes reverse themselves—”

“Yes, I know that,” I snap. “But I don’t think that’s what happened here.”

Jason pauses and gives me a look I’ve never seen before. It’s almost suspicious, with his chin up, looking down at me.

“Oh? And what do you think happened, Lucy?”

I take another step closer, and the smell of his aftershave hits my nostrils, triggering my scent memory and dumping even more feelings on me like a torrent of unexpected rain.

“What *I think*, Jason, is that you *lied*.” I stare straight into his eyes, projecting a confidence that I’m not even sure I have at this moment. “I think you haven’t had *the snip*. I think you came in me *knowing* you would get me pregnant! Why you would do that? I don’t know. But that’s what I think happened.”

Jason nods slowly. He slides both hands into his pockets and turns away from me, pacing the foyer as though deep in thought.

My heart is racing. I knew there was going to be a confrontation when I got here, but my body is reacting even more intensely than I thought it would. I’d forgotten just how tall Jason is. How broad his shoulders are. How thick his arms are. I know he’d never hurt me, but he’s so imposing, and I’m just this tiny girl shouting up at him with this very serious accusation.

“That’s what you think happened, huh?” Jason asks, slowly stepping forward. “That I impregnated you, Lucy? That I *took* you as mine the way a wild male beast would take his mate?”

His caramel brown eyes stare down at me, hypnotic, filled with power.

“Are you telling me it isn’t?” I reply.

I force myself to keep my eyes on his. To not break his stare. But it’s so hard. I know I’m imagining it, but it’s like I

can feel his child moving around in my stomach as our eyes remained locked to each other.

Finally, his lips twist into the slightest hint of a smile. An impish smile. A knowing smile.

“Well, Lucy, you’re right. That’s exactly what happened.” A gasp falls from my lips. He reaches out with speed and snatches me by the hips and pulls me to him. “I lied. I’ve never had the snip, and I would *never* have the snip. I came in you knowing what the consequences would be.”

“Jason—”

“I *bred* you, Lucy. It was my plan all along.”

His words hit me like a punch to the chest. All that accusing, and he just comes out and admits it? “But...but why?”

“Because, Lucy. I want you. I *need* you in my life. And I knew that this would be the only way to get you and to keep you.”

This time, his words are more than a punch; they’re like a spear through my heart. I can’t believe what I’m hearing. I’m also sure I can feel his child stirring in my belly. How can this be happening right now?

“You...you can’t be serious, Jason.”

“I told you one lie, Lucy,” he replies. “But I promise you I will never lie to you again. I am *absolutely* serious.” He reaches down and places a gentle hand on my baby bump. Despite the fact that I’m angry, confused, and overwhelmed with emotion right now, I like how it feels.

“Jason, how could you ever think that would be okay? How could you ever do that—?”

“I did it for you, Lucy.”

“For me!?” Something inside me snaps. I shove him away from me and scream, “Do you have *any* idea what my parents are going to do when they find out about this? Zack proposed to me tonight!”

“And *that*, Lucy. That is why I did this,” Jason replies with a smile.

My head is spinning. I press my hand against the wall, starting to feel light-headed. “What are you talking about?”

“Your life, Lucy. You’ve had it all planned out, but you’ve it planned all wrong. You’ve been living for everyone *but* you. Your parents, this boyfriend you don’t love.” He moves back to me and slips a possessive arm around my waist. I don’t know why, but I let him. “You want to be a lawyer because your dad says you should. You want to marry Zack because your mom says you should.”

“Jason, I...”

“But you need to live for what *you* want, Lucy. Not what everyone else wants.”

I can’t believe what’s happening. But I know it’s a good thing he has an arm around me because my legs are going weak. “And I want *you*? That’s what you’re telling me?”

Jason smiles that dashing smile that even now, I simply can’t resist.

“You’re telling me you don’t?”

I stare up at him. God, what a day this has been. My pulse is racing. All I wanted to do was come home, go upstairs and take a shower, then crash down on my bed and go to sleep.

But instead, I had Zack propose to me and Jason make probably the most major confession he could make to me. And I’m still struggling with what I should think about all of this. But at the same time, as I look at Jason, my heart is telling me something that’s very easy to listen to.

“What I’m telling you...is that while I’m still mad at you,” I say softly, placing my hand on the hand he has covering my belly like a protective shield, letting me know nothing will ever happen to me under his watch, “the rest of what you said might be right.”

LUCY

“MIGHT BE?” Jason replies, sliding his hand slowly beneath my shirt.

“You heard me,” I tease. “Don’t push it.” After his admission, I’m not going to make this easy for him, even if I do love the feel of his callused hand against my skin. My heart flutters as he slides it up and cups my breast. I’m reminded instantly of the last time we were together, and my body starts to react in other ways.

“Christ I’ve missed you,” Jason mutters, pressing his body against mine. I can feel the bulge beneath his pants and how hard he’s getting already. All that does is turn me on even more. It feels so good to be *genuinely* wanted.

Jason found me at the airport on his own. I was sitting alone at a gate, just waiting for my flight. He saw me, and he immediately thought that I was the one for him. I didn’t have to be introduced to him by anybody, and there didn’t have to be a reason for us to be dating. He just wanted me for me.

And that makes me feel so special – makes this feel so right.

I reach out and cup his bulge. He groans back, and I immediately begin unzipping his pants. I remember what’s beneath from last time and still can’t believe I lost my virginity to that thing. It seemed impossible at the time, but somehow Jason made it work.

I feel like Jason could make *anything* work, and not just his business. He could make our life together work, and the

fact that I'm thinking about giving over even a tiny bit of control of my life to someone else is blowing my mind. I've always been the one doing the planning. Me, me, me.

The thought of someone else doing any of that planning always terrified me. But when I picture Jason in that role with me, beside me as a partner, I'm not so scared.

His pants fall to the floor, and I take his cock in both hands. I *need* both hands to hold the monster protruding out from between his legs. I gasp as his fingers slip down my pants. He finds my clit and applies pressure, instantly setting my body on fire.

"You're dripping, baby," he whispers, using his other hand to peel my pants down over my hips. "You're ready for this cock, aren't you?"

I'm so overwhelmed by sensation that I'm unable to speak. All I can do is nod. He stares deep into my eyes and slides his fingers down and slips them inside me, one knuckle deep. "That's what I thought."

The next thing I know, I'm pressed up against the wall and Jason has his hands around my hips and is grinding his cock against my ass like we're dirty dancing, teasing me with the threat of penetration.

I grind back against him. I'm begging for it, and I'm not ashamed of showing it. It's right now, at this moment, that I realize just how much I've missed him over the past four months.

"Don't tease me," I whine. My whole body is tingling with desire. I feel empty without him inside me.

"Oh, you mean like this?" Jason takes the tip of his cock and teases my hole with it, sending me spinning into the stratosphere. It's then that *I* realize just how wet I am.

"God, yes," I moan, pushing back against him, desperate to be filled. But just as he begins to penetrate me and stretch me, he pulls back, denying me.

"No. Not yet."

I gasp and look back at him over my shoulder. He grins at me like a scoundrel and pulls me away from the wall, and like we're dirty dancing, begins to lead me up the stairs to the second floor.

I can feel my own arousal dripping down my thighs as we walk. I can't remember ever being this turned on before in my life. With each step, Jason's manhood slaps against my ass, a constant reminder of his size. I've taken him once before, but I still wonder if I'm going to be able to again.

We reach the second floor, and he stops me, spins me, and pushes me up against the wall. This time I'm facing him. I can see the hunger in his eyes as he strips me of my shirt and drags his gaze all the way up my body.

"Your body is perfection, baby. Perfection."

Before I can respond, he drops to his knees. A brief spark of unease shoots through me as his eyes level with my baby bump. I used to have a nice flat stomach there, but not anymore.

"Then you don't mind the...?" I tilt my eyes down and indicate my little belly.

"Mind it? You've got to be kidding, sweetie. I think it's *so* sexy."

And then his mouth is on me. He drags his wet, warm tongue up my slit without a moment's hesitation. From hole to clit, like he's done this to me a thousand times. A massive shiver flows through me, and I cry out as the pleasure follows.

"Oh my God, Jason!"

It's almost too much to handle, and when I look down, I see his gorgeous caramel eyes looking right up at me.

He grabs my butt firmly with both hands and squeezes hard. His tongue is pure magic, and it's not long before I feel my climax approaching. And somehow, Jason must know. I can see it in his eyes. He groans against me, enhancing the sensation. But just as I'm about to go over the edge, he pulls back. He stops.

It's like a splash of cold water in the face.

“Wha-what are you doing?” I stammer. “I was right there!”

He grabs me by the wrist and pulls me down the hall to his bedroom. I can tell he wants to be rougher with me, but he's being considerate because of my pregnancy.

He lays me down beneath him and slides inside me. I gasp as he stretches me. Without even thinking, I reach out and grab on to him. My hands find his shoulders, so thick, so wide, so strong. I remember what he told me when he first took me, and I take a deep breath as he plunges deep inside me.

So deep.

So thick.

And I love every bit of it. And as Jason begins to pound me faster and faster, I now see why he stopped when he did out in the hall. Why he denied me my climax.

“Oh my God,” I moan. “I'm right there! I'm going to come!”

“Yes, you are, baby.” He grins. My God, he's so sexy. He knew exactly what he was doing, and each thrust gets me closer and closer. I can feel him swelling larger inside me too – which I did not think was even possible. “And seeing as how you can't get pregnant now...”

“Oh, you mean because I already am?” I ask.

Jason leans in and kisses me deeply. Somehow even with his cock inside me, the feeling of his lips against mine and his tongue in my mouth is even more intimate.

My climax hits me like a meteor plunging down from space.

I grip Jason and pull him as close to me as possible. I want to melt into him, become one with his incredible body.

At the very same time, I feel his cock flex inside me. His arms clutch me tight as he sprays his seed, coating what feels like all of my insides.

My God, it's so warm. So sticky. Like it's meant to stay there for good.

So hot.

We hold each other there for a while. I don't know how long, but it's a long time. Finally, I groan, take a deep breath, and shove Jason off me.

"You're a real bastard, you know it?"

Jason turns quickly and looks at me. "What did you just say?"

"You heard me," I reply, fending off his playful rib-attack as he pokes at me. "You're a bastard!"

"Oh, yeah? For making you come again?"

"Not for that," I sigh.

"For what then?"

"Because...I'm just not ready for this."

"Ah." Jason smiles. He turns onto his side and wraps a caring arm around me. "The girl who got herself into Yale is doubting herself?"

"That's so much different, Jason! This is a *baby!* I'm gonna have to tell my parents about it. And I can't go to Yale with a child, Jason."

"That's true." He nods. "You could, however, get back into piano."

"Oh God, Jason," I groan. "I haven't played in years. I don't even know if I'm any good anymore, I—"

"Don't worry about that," he says, gently caressing my breast. "I just so happen to know Barry Smith, world-class piano teacher. I'll have him come by the house tomorrow and you can play for him."

The baby stirs in my belly, along with another dose of anxiety that courses through me. "You can't be serious. Barry Smith? *The Barry Smith?*"

"Oh, you've heard of him?" Jason asks.

“Every piano player on earth has heard of him, Jason!”

“Don’t tell me you’re scared. Lucy Anderson isn’t *scared*, is she?”

This man knows just how to push my buttons. The ones that get me going in *all* the ways possible.

I narrow my eyes at him and give him a poke right in the chest. “Scared? Who said I was scared?”

“Oh, I just thought because of the way you were talking that you—”

“Of course, I’m not scared,” I reply. “You have that teacher over here tomorrow, and I’ll show them just what I can do.”

JASON

I'M UP BEFORE LUCY, which is no surprise. I'm an early riser, adhering to the CEO stereotype. So I leave her in bed and head downstairs and make myself an omelet and a protein shake and get a few calls out of the way. I have Barry, the piano teacher, on call for the entire day. I basically just paid him to be ready for whenever I need him, so whenever Lucy is up and good to go, I'll give him a call, and he'll be on his way.

I knew she'd go for it. My plan. I knew she had a fire inside her that was looking to get more out of her life. Is she anxious? I'm sure she is. But will she conquer that anxiety and succeed?

Absolutely.

How do I know? I just know.

If Lucy was not a gorgeous girl but an investment to be made, she would be a solid investment. I saw it the moment I saw her.

I'm on a call with one of my VPs of production, going over some issues we've been having with supplies coming out of China, when Lucy comes downstairs wearing nothing but one of my T-shirts.

"Paul, you're going to have to take over," I say. "Something's come up."

I disconnect the call and turn to her. She clearly hasn't showered. Her hair is a tousled mess, which somehow makes her even sexier and instantly causes my cock to begin to harden.

“Hey there.” I grin, getting up from my seat and going over to her. She still looks slightly sleepy as I take her into my arms.

“I thought you’d maybe gone into the office and left me alone again. But I didn’t see a note, so...”

“Oh, shut up.” I smirk, kissing her heavenly lips. “You know we have plans today.”

“I know,” she replies, a hint of nervousness in her smile.

“Don’t tell me you’re worried? What happened to that *I’m-not-scared* Lucy from last night?”

“I’m not scared!” she protests. “I’m just tired. I need to wake up. Care to join me for a shower? You smell like you could use one.”

I fake being offended and grab her by both wrists. She’s so adorable pregnant, but it does make me want to treat her much more delicately, which is why I don’t lift her up and throw her over my shoulder and carry her up to the bathroom. Instead, I just walk her up there, strip down, and step beneath the warm water with her.

“I could do this all day with you, my princess,” I whisper as I take the soap and lather up her delicious body.

“Right back at you, my king.”

I’m hard in seconds and take her again. I simply can’t resist. I’m instantly thinking about what it would be like living with her, and if this what it would be like living with her, I am going to be in some serious trouble keeping my hands off her.

When we’re finished, we dry each other off and go back into the bedroom. I take a seat and watch as she dresses. She looks back at me and smiles. “What?”

“Oh, nothing.”

“No, what?” she replies, sliding into a simple pair of black yoga pants. They probably cost no more than ten dollars, but she makes them look like a million bucks.

“Just admiring the view.” I grin.

I watch as Lucy blushes. She's just too adorable. It's amazing how she can go from shy and cute one minute to confident and a girl on a mission the next.

"I can see how you got to where you are today."

"Oh, yeah? How's that?" I ask.

She walks over to me and puts both arms around my neck. For once, I'm looking up at her as I'm sitting and she's standing over me. "With your insatiable charm," she says with a smile.

I stand up and take her into my arms. Her lips somehow always seem to be calling out to me, and I answer with a deep, passionate kiss.

"Care for something to eat before your big performance?" I ask her.

"Big performance?" She glares playfully back at me and gives me a slap on the chest. "Jason, would you stop?"

Laughing, we both go downstairs to the kitchen. I call Barry and let him know Lucy will be ready in an hour or so, and the two of us make pancakes and eggs. Lucy eats light, as she says performing on too full of a stomach makes her feel sick.

We're cleaning up when I hear the doorbell.

"That'll be him," I say.

Lucy is still playing it cool, but she can't hide the deep breath she takes beside me. As we're walking to the door, she stops and turns. "It didn't even occur to me, Jason. Where am I playing? Do you even have a piano?"

"Oh, I've got one all right," I say with a grin, reaching for the doorknob. "Don't you worry about that."

I tug open the door to reveal Barry, looking as grim and dower as ever. I reach out to shake his hand, but he completely looks past it, and me, and turns his eyes to Lucy.

"Is this her?" he asks. His voice is somehow deeper and more growly than I remember. But then again, I haven't seen

him in years.

“Hi, Barry. How are you?” I ask, sort of joking, not expecting an answer. “Yes, this is Lucy. Lucy, this is Barry Smith, renowned piano teacher. He’s doing me a great favor by being here today—”

“Well, let’s get started and see what you’ve got.” Barry pushes past us and strides into the house with no hesitation. “Where’s the piano?”

“Downstairs, Barry,” I reply, taking the lead. I motion for Lucy to follow, which she does. God, I hope this isn’t driving her anxiety levels up.

I show Barry the way downstairs to the entertainment room with the piano, and he immediately takes his place beside it and motions to Lucy. “Well, have a seat, girl. Let’s see what you’ve got.”

Lucy glances over at me quickly, an ounce of anxiety in her eyes, but I reply quickly with a smile of affirmation. *You’ve got this.*

Barry wastes no time getting Lucy playing. He starts with exercises that I don’t understand but I assume have something to do with musical theory. As far as I can tell, she holds her own too. Her hands and fingers move well, and Barry’s face shows no signs of dissatisfaction.

Then he breaks out the sheet music and starts having her play actual songs – simple at first, but progressively harder. It’s incredible. I actually can’t believe the feelings that hit me as I watch her play.

I knew she would be good, but just seeing her fingers actually dance across the keys...it’s like watching an amazing movie. My heart feels like a sun about to go supernova inside my chest. And Barry, who has a reputation for being incredibly harsh and speaking his mind at all times, has yet to say anything that might upset Lucy.

When it’s all over and Lucy takes her hands off the keys and sets them on her lap, Barry simply nods, and there is a

long moment of silence. She turns and looks back at me, and I raise a finger. *Give him a moment.*

“Why did you give up piano, Lucy?” he finally asks.

I can see the surprise in her face. She was not expecting this from him. “Oh, I...I guess too many other things in my life got in the way. School, ya know?”

Barry nods. “Well, if I’m not mistaken, Jason here was implying that he had hoped you would get back into it. Pursue it. Make a career out of it. Is that right, Jason?”

“Very much so,” I reply.

Again, Barry nods. “Well, I would have to say that after watching you play this morning, I agree with Jason.” I have to stop myself from shouting at the top of my lungs. I see Lucy’s body go tense as well. “If you have the time, I would recommend that you pursue the piano. You have immense talent, Lucy. And have retained an incredible amount of your abilities given the length of time you have taken off from practice.”

Lucy looks like someone has cast a petrification spell on her, rendering her unable to speak. She turns to me, and I immediately go to her side.

“Thank you very much, Barry,” I say. “I think Lucy is a bit taken aback right now – overwhelmed maybe. But we both thank you for coming by the house today.”

“It was a pleasure,” he says, his face twisting into something *resembling* a smile but not quite getting there. Again, I reach out for a handshake, but he ignores it and pushes past me for the door leading to the stairs. I glance at Lucy and whisper to her that I’ll be right back before seeing Barry out.

When I come back, I find Lucy sitting in the living room, a stunned expression on her face. She looks up at me as I step through the door.

“Did that just really happen?”

I laugh. “See? I told you you were good.”

“But you’d never even seen me play, Jason!”

“I didn’t need to,” I laugh, going over to her. I wrap an arm around her and smile. “I just knew, baby. I just knew.”

Without warning, Lucy squeals and leaps on top of me, kissing me all over. “Can you believe it? Barry Smith thinks I should pursue being a professional pianist!?”

“Yes.” I smile. “Yes, I can believe it, baby.”

We kiss, and I slide my hand under her shirt to get a good feel of her sweet little baby bump. “Gosh, now I just have to tell my parents that I’m not going to Yale this year,” she says, nuzzling closer. “And that I’m pregnant.”

Both of us laugh, and I gently thread my fingers through her hair and turn her head so she’s facing me. I love to stare into her eyes. It’s like looking into the rest of my life.

“And that you’re not marrying Zack.”

LUCY

FIVE MONTHS LATER...

TELLING my parents the news wasn't easy. Neither of them took it well. There was lots of *What in the world is wrong with you?* and *Have you completely lost your mind?* and *Do you know how many girls your age would kill to go to Yale?* And that was just when I told them I was giving up college to pursue being a pianist. Then there was the whole pregnancy thing...

I thought both of their heads were going to explode when I told them. My mom didn't speak to me for a week after she gave me a big speech on how I wasn't ready and how this wasn't the 1920s where a woman's only job was to churn out babies.

My dad gave me a stern talking-to about how I could still make law school work and how all we'd need to do would be to hire some help for the baby when it came. And then I'd go to Yale in a couple of years and get *back on track*. That would be the right thing to do as far as he was concerned.

I had to tell him that there was no way I was going to have a baby and let someone else raise it. Whether he liked it or not, I was going to be a mother and a pianist from now on.

And then there was Zack.

Surprisingly enough, Zack took our "breakup" pretty well. Part of me wants to believe that he was being mature and he understood that we were never truly meant to be together, but in reality, I have a feeling that once he learned I had a baby in my belly, he just wanted to get the hell out of there.

Eventually, once they cooled off, my parents met Jason (not like they didn't already know who he was, of course), and I moved in with him. He hired a piano teacher named Wendy, who I continued to work with four days a week, and things have been going great ever since. I've also taken up writing my own music in my spare time, and even my parents are slowly coming around to the idea that this might be something I could make work.

My pregnancy has caused me to blow up like a balloon, though, which has been making playing a little...awkward. Jason says he doesn't mind how big I am. In fact, he says he finds me sexier than ever, but I think he's just being sweet.

He's also been spending a lot more time at work lately. He says there's been something that's come up that he's had to deal with personally that's been cutting into his time, but I really can't complain. He's the boss, and I've been used to him making his own schedule for the entire time we've been together. Most couples don't have that kind of luxury.

"So keep working on Beethoven for Friday," Wendy says as we walk together upstairs to the door. "And even though they're obnoxious, it's always good to keep up with your finger, chord, and scale exercises. Oh, and if you'd like, we can delve into that Chopin as well?"

"Yes, that would be great. Thank you so much, Wendy. I really hope I can pack as much in before..." I tap my belly. "The big day."

Wendy's eyes light up. "I'm so excited for you. Do you and Jason know the gender yet?"

"No." I shake my head. "You see, I've had this habit of over-planning everything in my life, ever since I can remember. So we decided not to find out. To be surprised."

Wendy smiles happily. "Well, won't that be exciting! I'll make sure to find time in my schedule for beginner lessons once he – or she – is old enough to play."

We both laugh, and I see Wendy out, then make my way into the kitchen and pour a glass of iced herbal tea from the

fridge. The session with Wendy went very well, and my confidence as a pianist has gone through the roof since we started together, but that doesn't change the fact that I feel like I'm walking like a seal that's trapped on land as I waddle into the living room.

I am *so* ready to have this baby, and not just because I want my old body back. I want to give Jason his gift. I want to give him the family he knew he wanted when he saw me nine months ago. I want that change in both of our lives to come true.

It's hard to believe just how much has changed in my life already, and it's all because of him.

Jason.

A man I never would have met had things gone the way I had planned for them to go. But now I go to bed beside him every day feeling like the luckiest woman in the world. I pursue a passion I never even knew I had because he planted the seed of the idea inside me.

Every day that goes by, I fall deeper and deeper in love with him. I know he's going to propose to me soon, just like I knew Zack was going to one day. But unlike with Zack, I actually cannot wait for Jason to pop the question. I'm dying for him to. I think about it every day.

How will he do it? Where? When?

I don't care about the size of the ring. He's a billionaire. He could put a diamond the size of a boulder on my finger and it wouldn't matter to me. All that matters is that we end up engaged and then married. That's all I want.

Just the thought makes me smile as I place a hand on my belly and pick up the TV remote and begin flicking through the channels. Normally this process goes on for up to ten minutes before I find something and stop on it, but today is different.

Today I stop almost instantly. Today I see Jason's face on the TV.

It's a news channel, and it's something serious. Not just some kind of fluff trying to tie Jason to the latest supermodel or something like that. There's an earnest-looking male anchor in a blue suit staring down the camera as he speaks and big letters at the bottom of the screen that read:

Rooke Industries accused of dumping chemical waste and polluting drinking water of many small towns in Connecticut.

A chill runs through me, as if ice water has been injected directly into my veins. I raise the volume.

“Frightening news today for the multi-national company run by the billionaire CEO Jason Rooke. It appears the company has been ignoring waste disposal laws and regulations and has been instead dumping chemicals in the woods of Southern Connecticut. Experts say this has caused those chemicals to leech into the ground, poisoning the drinking water of the homes for many of the towns in the surrounding areas...”

I can feel myself going numb as another face fills the screen. Some kind of expert – a scientist or something who starts going on about the side effects that could occur if people drink the poisoned water.

“Well, it's certainly not good for you, Jeff. It's not safe. I urge people in the following towns to stop drinking from their taps and to only drink bottled water until this matter has been sorted out. Symptoms such as nervous system damage, organ damage, damage to the reproductive system, or even cancers can be experienced from long-term exposure, so I urge people to stop drinking from their taps right away.”

The list of towns on the TV is pretty large. How could something like this happen? How could Jason allow this?

But then my eyes stop on one town in particular.

Redding. The town where my grandfather lives.

My heart nearly stops. My grandpa *with cancer*, who lives in the zone the news just highlighted that has been exposed to chemical waste dumped by *my boyfriend's company*.

I don't even know how to process this information now.

I press mute and slowly stand. I pace the house slowly, doing my best to come to terms with everything I just learned. So many questions plague my mind. Did Jason know about this? He must have, considering it was his company. Why did he do such a thing? Why not dispose of the waste like he was supposed to? It's not like he couldn't afford to.

Was it the drinking water that caused my grandpa's cancer? And if so, how am I ever going to be able to live with knowing that? How will I ever be able to look Jason in the eye again?

Is this the end of us?

I step outside and look up at the sky. I take a breath. This is a pivotal moment that will define the rest of my life. I place a hand on my belly. I'm carrying this man's child – the man whose company is being accused of potentially poisoning thousands of people. And I just don't know what to do.

But I do know I need to talk to him. So I take out my phone and dial his number.

And it goes straight to voicemail.

I try several more times, and all I get is voicemail. *So he's either crazy busy dealing with his corporation, or he's fielding requests from the media and reporters who want to talk to him...or he doesn't want to talk to you.*

All of those could be possible, but it's the last one that's burning a hole in my heart.

Do I know the real Jason? They say you make a few enemies getting to the top, but what if Jason made a lot of enemies? What if he was ruthless, brutal, and did whatever it took to build his company up to where it is now? And what if that included dumping chemical waste and polluting the drinking water of innocent people along the way?

And what kind of man would that make him?

"No," I curse at myself as I feel a splinter sink itself into my heart. "Please, no."

The splinter sinks deeper, twists and wrenches to the side, paining me as I think about the man I thought Jason was, and the man Jason may be now that this news has just come to light.

My phone rings. My heart leaps, and I answer it instantly.

“Jason!?”

“No,” my mother’s voice replies in a tone that I really don’t need right now. “It’s your mother.”

“Mom, now is really not a good time—”

“Yes, your father and I saw the news, but we’re calling to let you know your grandfather’s condition has worsened. You may want to consider taking some time to go down to the hospital to see him soon...”

As she’s speaking, I see Jason’s car pull into the driveway. I see his face through the windshield. His eyes are locked on me as he pulls up just in front of me.

“Mom, I’ve got to call you back.”

I hang up as he parks and steps out of the car. I barely even know how to react as he walks up to me. My heart is racing, and a thousand thoughts are running through my mind with such speed I can barely even get ahold of one of them.

“I’ve been calling you,” I finally manage to say, waving my phone at his face. “Many times. Couldn’t get ahold of you, though.”

“I’m so sorry, I’ve been crazy busy dealing with... something.”

“Let me guess. Ignoring chemical waste disposal regulations and poisoning the water supply of Southern Connecticut?”

Jason’s face drops when he hears this. I guess he was hoping I hadn’t seen the TV today. Or gone on any Internet news sites.

He nods slowly and looks at the ground. “So you heard.”

“How could I not hear, Jason? You’re one of the most famous men on the planet. Did you think you could hide this from me?”

“No, I wasn’t trying to hide—”

“Remember my grandpa, Jason?” I snap, aiming a finger in his face. “The only one in my family who ever believed in me? The one *with cancer*? Well, he lives in Southern Connecticut, right in the area that *your company* was dumping its waste chemicals. And I just got a call from my mom saying his condition has worsened, and I should go visit him while I still have a chance.”

“Lucy, I can explain.”

“I have to go,” I reply, brushing past him to my car. The splinter in my heart twists, pushing deeper, causing a pain in my chest as I open the door and slide inside. Part of me is telling me to stay, but I just can’t. Not now. Not after what I’ve seen. Not after what my mom just told me.

I close the door as Jason shouts something at me that I can’t hear. I slide the key into the ignition, start the car and slam my foot on the gas. The tires spin and kick fancy rocks up behind me as I pull out of the driveway.

And that’s when the tears start.

This wasn’t how it’s meant to be. This wasn’t how any of it wasn’t meant to be.

I guess that’s what I get for not sticking to my plans.

LUCY

THE HOSPITAL where my grandpa is staying always kind of reminds me of the hospital from *Scrubs* minus the humor. Kind of rundown, a little bit shoddy, and not exactly state of the art or overloaded with money. The doctors there always seem like they are distracted, too busy, or just kind of waiting for my grandpa to die. At least that's the impression I get when I go to visit him, which I admit, hasn't been since before I got pregnant.

I am a little bit embarrassed by that, but he has always told me that I shouldn't worry about coming to see him and that he didn't want me to see him weak like he is now. So when he sees how pregnant I am, and I see his face and eyes light up, it makes me feel just so happy inside.

"Lucy, dear, that's just so wonderful," he says with a smile.

"Thanks, Grandpa." I smile back, taking his hand in mine. I try to ignore just how frail it feels compared to how it felt when I was young and he used to play ball with me in the back yard.

"Your mother tells me you're playing piano again?"

I nod, feeling myself blush. "Yes, I've been pursuing it quite heavily. I have an amazing teacher who I work with four days a week—"

"Four days a week?" My grandpa interrupts, looking happily aghast, his mouth open. "Your parents must be sponsoring this?"

“No,” I reply. A few hours ago, I probably would have laughed, but now I find myself nearly tearing up. “My...my boyfriend. He’s been paying for it.”

“Ah, a boyfriend.” He smiles. “I’d like to meet this man. Must be quite well off if he’s able to hire a well-respected piano teacher for his girlfriend.”

“Oh, he is, all right. And you don’t need to meet him. You already know him.”

“I do?”

“Yes.” I nod. “His name is Jason Rooke.”

My grandpa frowns like he’s processing, then licks his lower lip. “Jason Rooke the billionaire?” I nod and sigh. “I saw something on the television this morning about his company. He’s in a bit of hot water, isn’t he?”

A bit of hot water. That’s one way of saying it. “Yes, Grandpa, he is. His company is being...” I stop. Bringing all this up to him, a possible victim of Jason’s crimes, isn’t going to do anything for his mental health. It’s only going to make him worry. Make him feel worse. And that’s the last thing I want right now. They say so much of your physical health is tied to your mental health and how you’re feeling emotionally, so I need Grandpa’s spirits to be up. I need him feeling great. I don’t need him worrying about Jason or me or anything related to what’s going on at Rooke Industries.

“His company is going through some things right now, but we don’t need to talk about all that. How have you been feeling? You’re looking strong! Should I sign you up for one of those Ninja Warrior style reality-TV show competitions or what?”

I giggle and pat his hand, causing him to laugh. It feels so good to see him laugh. We both know I’m just teasing him, but he plays right back along with me.

“Oh, I’ll be signing right up,” he chuckles, his lips twisting up into as much of a grin as he can manage. “Be passing those twenty-year-old boys like they’ve never even hit the gym before!”

Just then, two people appear at the door: a woman who is clearly a nurse, and a man in a navy blue suit who looks like he could work at the pentagon.

“Hello, Henry,” the nurse says with an amiable smile as she comes over to the bed. “This is Mr. Tyson from Administration. How are you feeling today?”

“Hello, Krista. I’m feeling better than normal today, now that my granddaughter has come to visit.” My grandpa turns to me. “Lucy, this is Krista, the number one nurse in this place.”

Krista gives me a knowing oh-he’s-too-sweet smile and turns back to him. “Well, Henry, it doesn’t look like you and I will be getting along with each other for much longer unfortunately.”

“Hey,” he replies, laughing morbidly. “I know I’ve got cancer, but is that any way to tell an old man he’s dying?”

“Oh, no! I didn’t mean it that way!” Krista says quickly. “What I meant was – an anonymous donation has come through on your behalf. A *major* anonymous donation, and with your consent, you are to be transferred immediately to Hallowed Heart Hospital where you will receive state-of-the-art, around-the-clock care, your own room, and I’m sure many other things I’m not even aware of.”

“Wait, what are you saying?” I ask, stunned, doing my best to process what was just said. “What – who is this person donating this money?”

“As I said, Miss Anderson, the donator has asked to remain anonymous, but the donation itself is significant, I can assure you. And care for your grandfather will continue to be provided at Hallowed Heart.”

The look in my grandpa’s eyes when he turns to me is a mixture of disbelief and astonishment. For a split second, I’m in shock, but then I the realization hits me.

Jason.

I smile and nod to reassure him, and he looks back at Krista and Mr. Tyson. “I...I don’t even know what to say.”

“You don’t have to say anything, Henry,” Krista says warmly. I can see now why grandpa called her the number one nurse in the hospital. She knows exactly how to treat him. “Mr. Tyson and I will run you through everything you need to know.”

“Grandpa? I’m gonna just go step outside real quick and call Mom and Dad and let them know what’s going on, okay?”

“Okay, hon.” He nods. “I’ll be right here.”

Emotions flow through me. Excitement and resentment. I don’t know which one I should be feeling. What Jason is doing is going to be a major help for my grandpa. Better treatment could potentially even save his life. But at the same time, I still haven’t been able to process my anger toward him for being the one who could have put Henry in that bed to begin with. For being the one who led a company that poisoned so many other people. For being a scumbag businessman like you see in the movies and breaking my heart.

I’m practically jogging as I make my way down the hall and out the front door into the parking lot, that’s how anxious and excited I am. I can’t believe all this is happening. I don’t even know how I’m going to break it to my parents either. But I don’t even bother thinking about it. I just reach into my pocket, grab my phone, and scroll to my recent contacts list for whichever one of them appears first.

It happens to be my mom, so I go to press her name with my thumb, but just as I’m about to, that’s when I hear a voice from behind me.

“Hello, Lucy.”

I nearly jump out of my clothes from fright, yelp so loud I bet they hear me in California, and manage to drop my phone right out of my hands. Thankfully I’m standing by the shrubs, and it lands in the mulch instead of on the concrete, which would have meant yet another cracked screen to add to my collection.

I spin around and see Jason leaning against the wall of the hospital, looking like he just got done signing the papers to

buy the place.

“Christ, you scared the shit out of me,” I say with a sigh. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“I came to see you,” he replies, as though the answer couldn’t be more obvious.

“And you knew I’d be here?” I ask. “What, are you stalking me or something? Tracking my phone like some Bond villain?”

He laughs. He actually laughs and starts to saunter toward me. “Don’t be silly.” He shakes his head. “I spoke to your parents and they told me you were here.”

“Oh. Oh, okay, that actually makes sense...”

He’s right up on me now. Close enough that I can smell him. I try to ignore how handsome he is, but that’s impossible. He smirks and leans in like he’s going to kiss me. My whole body freezes despite the fact that I want to move out of the way and deny him.

But he just leans right past me and grabs my phone out of the mulch and hands it to me.

“I had to turn my phone off until this media circus cools down. I had so much to deal with at work, and when I finally was able to get home, you weren’t there, so I went to your parents’ house to find you.”

“You couldn’t have just called me from one of their phones?”

“And skip making a dramatic entrance?” He grins, chipping away at the barrier I’ve been building up inside of me since I saw his face on the news. “Come on, you know me better than that.”

“Do I?” I ask. “Do I really, Jason? Because from what I saw on TV today, you’ve got me questioning that quite a bit.”

“Oh, come on, Lucy—”

“No, don’t give me that, Jason,” I snap, aiming an angry finger at his face. “Dumping chemicals? Ignoring

regulations—?”

“Would you keep your voice down?” Jason hisses, snatching me by the arm and pulling me around the corner of the building. “I’ve been ducking reporters all afternoon. I don’t need the press showing up here, all right?”

“My grandpa is dying, Jason!” I can feel the anger rising back up inside me, mixing with confusion and feelings of love and attraction, spinning together like a terrible tornado of pain. “What if it was *your* company that caused his cancer?”

“Lucy.”

“What if it was *your* illegal dumping that put him in the situation he’s in now?”

“Lucy.”

“What if there are more people like him that are suffering because of *you*—?”

“Lucy!” Jason raises his voice and squeezes my arm, not hard enough to hurt, but enough to get my attention. “Look, I’m sorry about your grandfather, okay? You *know* I am. Who do you think is paying for his new treatment and transfer to Hallowed Heart? But it wasn’t *me* who dumped those chemicals.”

I snort and yank my arm away from his grasp. “What do you mean it wasn’t you? I saw it on the news. Rooke Industries—”

“Yes, it was my company, but it wasn’t *me*.”

I pause as he stares at me, as if waiting for me to understand his meaning. “What are you saying? Like you didn’t go out there in the woods with the barrels of chemicals and *personally* dump them yourself? Well, no shit, Jason—”

“No, Lucy. What I’m saying is that I don’t oversee every single aspect of my company on a day-to-day basis. I make big decisions. Move the company in the directions I want it to go, and I hire people to manage things for me. That’s the way it’s done at every big company, trust me.”

“Trust you? How can I trust you after all this? You didn’t even tell me—”

“Lucy, I didn’t even know until now.” Jason leans in and quickly takes my hand in his. “I found out just before the news broke. The person responsible has been fired and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. On top of that, Rooke Industries is going to be funding a cleanup of the entire area and looking into anyone who could have had any health issues due to the poisoned water.”

“Jason...” I don’t even know what I’m feeling now. But more emotions than I know how to handle are boiling up inside me.

“I’ll treat them just like I did your grandpa. We’ll provide care, treatment, medicine, anything they need. I’ll personally make sure *all* of this mess gets cleaned up. And I don’t care how much it costs me. If it bankrupts the entire company, so be it.”

There he is. The man I fell in love with. I knew it couldn’t be true. I knew he would never be behind something like this.

I nearly collapse into his arms, inhaling his scent, feeling the warmth of his body and the strength of his arms as he holds me.

“I didn’t want to believe it,” I whimper. “I didn’t want to believe it could be true.”

“Never,” he whispers back. “That’s not who I am, baby. That’s not the kind of man I am.”

The relief I feel washes over me like a golden wave. I wish I could stay here in Jason’s arms forever. I know he has more than his fair share of problems going on right now, but right here, right now, in this moment, it’s as though nothing else in the world matters.

Right now, it’s just us.

“But I can tell you this, baby,” he says, gently pulling back so he can look me in the eyes. I feel my heart flutter just looking up at him as he smiles and threads his fingers through my hair. “I can tell you what kind of man I want to be.”

“Oh, yeah?” I smile. “What’s that?”

What happens next absolutely takes my breath away.

Jason lets go of me and in one movement – one graceful, movement – reaches into his pocket and gets down on one knee before me. He produces a black velvet jewelry box and opens it, his eyes on me the entire time.

I gasp as my heart skips a beat and I find myself staring at the most beautiful ring I could have ever imagined. Even if someone had asked me to design the most perfect ring for myself, I never could have designed something so exquisite.

I clasp both hands over my mouth. *Is this really happening?*

“Lucy Anderson,” Jason says slowly, a smile on his face, his eyes twinkling up at me. “Will you make me the luckiest man in the world and marry me and be mine forever?”

EPILOGUE

JASON

FIVE YEARS LATER...

I'M SITTING in the front row at the David H Koch Theater in New York City, waiting for the concert to start. Beside me is my son, Jeremy, who at the moment is distracted by the little wooden puzzle block I bought for him that involves trying to move the pieces in just the right way to get to unlock the cube and get to the red ball hidden on the inside. But I imagine that will only last a few more minutes until he gets bored or annoyed and starts fidgeting around and wanting to go run around and explore the venue.

He's a handful, but that's what his mother and I love about him. He's smart, curious, loveable, and always wants one of us to take him to do something or teach him something. He passes any developmental exercises his mom or I give him, and I have a feeling he's going to grow up to be smarter than both of us.

"I got it, I got it!" he cries out, and I glance over just in time to see him slide out a long wooden block and open the box. The red ball drops into his hand, and his eyes light up as he looks at me. "Do you think it bounces!?"

He stands up and raises his hand to bounce it on the ground, but I quickly stop him. "Oh, don't do that, Jeremy. If it does, chances are it's gonna bounce out of sight and you're going to lose it in here, okay? Wait until we get home to try it."

He frowns but looks down at the ball and thinks for a moment.

“Okay,” he says. “I’ll wait.”

“Atta boy.” I smile and ruffle his hair as he sits back down in his chair beside me, and it’s at that moment that the sound of the orchestra tuning fills the hall. Jeremy looks over at me as the lights dim.

“Here we go, son,” I say, putting my arm around his shoulders. “Time to see your mom perform. Are you excited?”

I don’t even need a response. His eyes say it all. But he nods enthusiastically and looks back at the stage as the curtain slowly begins to rise.

I glance to my left and smile at Lucy’s parents, Martha and George, and seated beside them, Henry. I lean over and whisper to Martha, “Bet you never thought this day would come, eh?”

“Oh, hush, you,” she says, giving me one of her gentle Martha smacks on the hand that we both know don’t mean anything. “Do you want to get us thrown out for being too loud?”

Martha and I never really had a conversation where she told me she that she fully accepted me as Lucy’s husband or that she approved of me, but it became obvious as time went by that it was so. So we’ve maintained this back and forth, almost sibling-like banter over the years, where neither of us really needs to come right out and say what we mean, because the other always understands.

And of course she’s very appreciative of what I did for Henry, her father. As it turns out, the extra care and treatment he received at Hallowed Heart really made the difference. He started getting better almost immediately, and his condition started improving dramatically within weeks. It wasn’t long before he was on his feet and moving around again, “Like a kid again,” as he said with a smile when we, and the nurses, first took him out for a walk around the hospital park.

I kept my word too. I funded a massive cleanup program for all of Southern Connecticut where Rooke Industries had been illegally dumping chemicals. Thankfully, the water table wasn't too polluted, and we were able to work day and night, along with the help of some environmental agencies, to clear it up. It still took a while, and in the meantime, we paid for everyone's water and even had trucks brought into towns with clean water for all the citizens to share.

On top of that, I covered medical bills for people like Henry. My shareholders thought I was insane. Everyone was telling me to just cut and run – lay the blame wherever I could, let the bad press blow over, and eventually everything would just go back to normal. But I knew I could never do that.

First, I'd made a promise to Lucy – a promise I could never break. And second, that's not the kind of man I am. I may have been a bit of a ruthless businessman on my way up, but I never ruined people's lives, and I wasn't about to start.

I took those people responsible for the waste dumping to court, and they're now doing time in prison.

I used every resource Rooke Industries had to fix the terrible situation the people under me had put me in, and by the time I was finished, I'd cut our net worth more than half. But that's not what matters to me. What matters is that I can live with myself. I can sleep at night.

What matters is that I have a wife who loves me and a son who looks up to me and who I can one day tell this story to without lying, and that he will hopefully learn something from it about how to be a man and what a man should do when faced with a tough decision.

The media eventually took my side and realized it wasn't me that was responsible for what happened, and the last few years have been good. It looks like I may be able to build the company back to what it was before this whole debacle hit, but that's not what I care about now.

The company used to be everything to me. But now I have more. So, so much more.

The curtain finishes rising. The orchestra is there on the stage before us, cloaked in shadow. The sound of the instruments tuning slowly fades away into silence, and then the lights go up to reveal the musicians.

The audience claps as the conductor appears and begins his walk out, politely nodding, but my eyes are not on him. My eyes are on the piano. The pianist.

My wife.

There she is. My beauty.

I can feel my entire body light up like a mile-high Christmas tree. I've seen Lucy perform before, and she's always killed it, but this is her first major performance at a major venue. She was nervous all morning, so we had her parents watch Jeremy so I could be there to calm her down. But I have no doubt in my body that she's going to be nothing but absolute perfection. As she always is.

The conductor raises his arms. We're only seconds from starting. And it's just then that Lucy glances in my direction. Her eyes meet mine, and I know exactly what she's looking for, so I give it right back to her.

The look saying that she's going to crush it. The look saying that she's the love of my life and I'm here for her no matter what. The look saying that she has nothing to be worried about because she is talented and has practiced enough that she could play tonight's arrangement blindfolded.

Our eyes stay locked for only a second or two before she looks back to her music, but so much is said in that moment. And so much love is sent through the air between the two of us.

Then the conductor waves his arms, and the music starts.

"YOU WERE PERFECT, BABY," I whisper into my wife's mouth, taking her into my arms and swinging her onto the bed we've shared for the last five years. "Watching you play was

unbelievable. You blew me away. You blew *everyone* in that theater away.”

“Stop.” Lucy smiles. “You’re just saying that.”

“I am not!” I reply, acting offended that she would even suggest such a thing. “I passed several people in the lobby who were talking about *that incredible pianist* and how they were going on to Google to look you up and see who you were.”

She’s blushing as I grab the hem of her dress and pull, exposing her sweet thighs. They’re so smooth and so creamy looking. I always joke to her that they’re my two delicious ice cream cones.

“You put Jeremy to bed—?”

“Of course I did.” I grin, pulling her dress higher, exposing her bright red panties beneath. “Stop worrying. You’ve worried all day. You crushed it. Your first *major* concert and you *crushed* it, baby. Now just lie back and enjoy yourself.”

Threading my fingers up through her hand like she loves, I brush my lips against hers, teasing her with the threat of a kiss. She lets out a moan as I tug her panties aside and slide a finger inside her.

She’s already nice and wet and ready for me. Just feeling that causes me to grow for her. My cock swells beneath my pants, and I grind against her thigh so she can feel it as I curl my finger inside her, applying pressure to her sweet spot, causing her back to arch up off the bed.

“Oh, Jason,” she whines, slipping her arms around my shoulders, clutching on to my body like I love. “Yes, oh my God, yes.”

“You want it, don’t you?” I ask.

She nods, locking eyes with me as I tighten my grip in her hair. She loves it when I hold her tightly, making her feel owned, possessed, letting her know that she’s mine.

I slip my finger out of her, causing her to gasp from the loss, and quickly tug my zipper down. In two seconds, I have

my pants at my ankles and I'm climbing on top of her. I dip my cock into her dripping hole and watch as her jaw drops in expectation.

This is my favorite part – seeing her face change as I enter her and hearing the sounds she makes as I first take her. That and when she comes, of course.

I pump my hips hard and drive my cock deep, giving her all my inches at once. She lets out a gasp and a moan at the same time. Her eyes go wide, and her nails dig into my back as she clutches on to me like she's afraid I might fly off at any moment.

“Christ, you still feel as tight as the first time I fucked you, baby.”

“Yeah?”

“Oh, yeah.” I lean in and press my lips against hers as I begin thrusting. I tug her dress up farther and scoop one hand beneath her so I can grab her nice tight ass. Then, without me even saying anything, Lucy tugs the top of her dress down, exposing her incredible perky tits.

Christ, I love this woman.

“God, you're so sexy,” I growl, leaning down and taking a nipple into my mouth. Lucy gained a cup size after Jeremy, and somehow wasn't sure if I would like it. I told her she was crazy the night she told me that and made love to her gorgeous tits and came on her chin, then took her again a half-an-hour later downstairs in the living room while we were watching TV.

“Jason, I...I...” I know what it means when she starts talking like that – when she can't finish her sentences. Her climax is right around the corner. Not only that, but I can feel her sweet walls starting to tighten around my shaft as well.

“I know, baby,” I tell her, laying my body down on her and wrapping her in my arms. “I know. Let it happen. You know I want you to.”

“I...I'm going to, baby–”

My wife's pussy clamps down on my manhood, her back arches up off the bed, and her entire body goes tight under the strength of her orgasm. That's all it takes to send me spiraling over the edge as well.

I spray my seed inside her, causing her to wail out as she grasps even harder on to me. "Jason! I can feel it. Fill me up, yes!"

And I do. I fill her completely, down to every last drop I have to give as her thighs squeeze around me and she moans my name over and over. Our bodies shake and quiver in unison until we both finally come down together, whispering how much we love each other.

And it was just last week that Lucy came off birth control. She was taking it while we raised Jeremy and she worked on her piano career and I cleaned up the mess created by Rooke Industries. But now, we've both decided there's really nothing holding us back. No reason not to keep expanding our family.

So who knows? Maybe this was the time I just bred my wife again. And if not, well then, I'm just going to keep on going until she's pregnant.

NOW AVAILABLE, [CLICK HERE:](#)

[THE RENT JUST WENT UP](#)

At eighteen, Erika is not sure what she wants but she is sure that her high school boyfriend is not the one for her. In fact, Chris may be more of a player than long term material, and her suspicions are confirmed when she discovers he is cheating on her.

Erika is driven to a bar by her friend where she meets a handsome man who she ends up losing her innocence to. She thinks she's met someone kind, someone she can trust. Until he never calls her again...

A month later, Erika is forced out of her apartment by her roommate. After scouring town for a new place to live, her final hope seems perfect. That is until she meets the landlord, who must approve her for the lease...a familiar face from a month ago.

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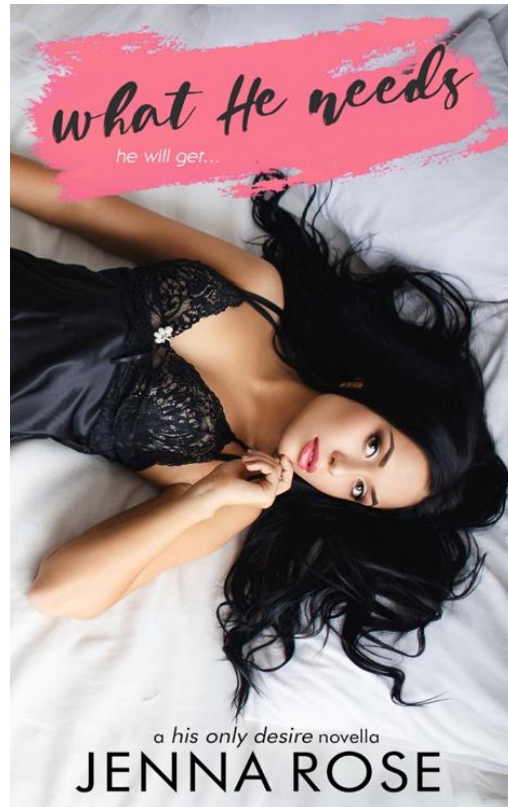
What readers are saying about His Only Desire:

I love me a short hot read; there is something about these stories that just recharged my spirit. This story was just that, insta lust/love, hot and fun!

I always look forward to reading this author books and can wait to get my hands on all her new releases. This is book #1 in the series His Only Desire #1 and I cant wait to read the second in the series. This book is a real romance story and a real Insta love book that I totally loved.

Short read, just what I need, check. HEA and heat index H.O.T., check. This was one story I loved reading and couldn't put down!

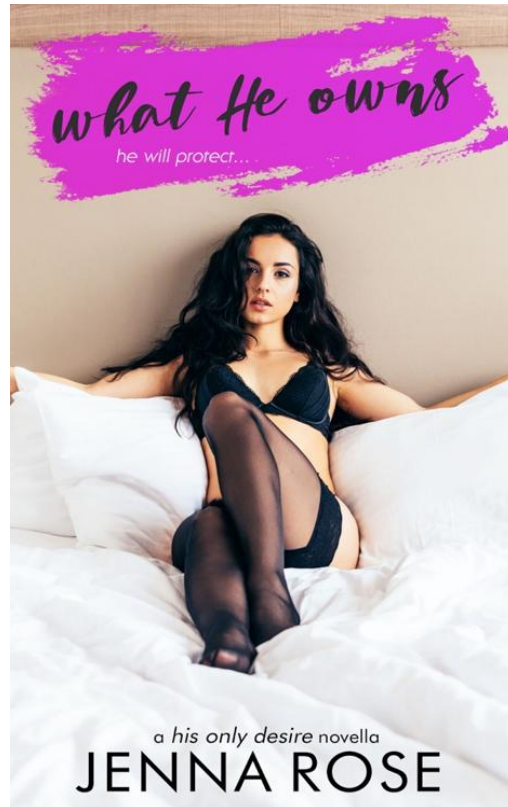
WHAT HE NEEDS



Percy Rankin is professional fighter, but he's also a professional ladies man who needs to clean up his image. So when his manager suggests paying a nice girl to be his fake-girlfriend and stand by his side when the cameras are snapping, Percy figures why not? What's the worst that could happen?

But then he sees Whitney, a proper, gorgeous, innocent music student studying violin, and everything changes. There's nothing fake about his desire—a desire he's never felt for anyone. But Whitney isn't falling for it. She knows guys like Percy and won't be convinced that this "relationship" is anything more than just business. But Percy has fought for everything he has in life, and he's not going to stop until she's his...

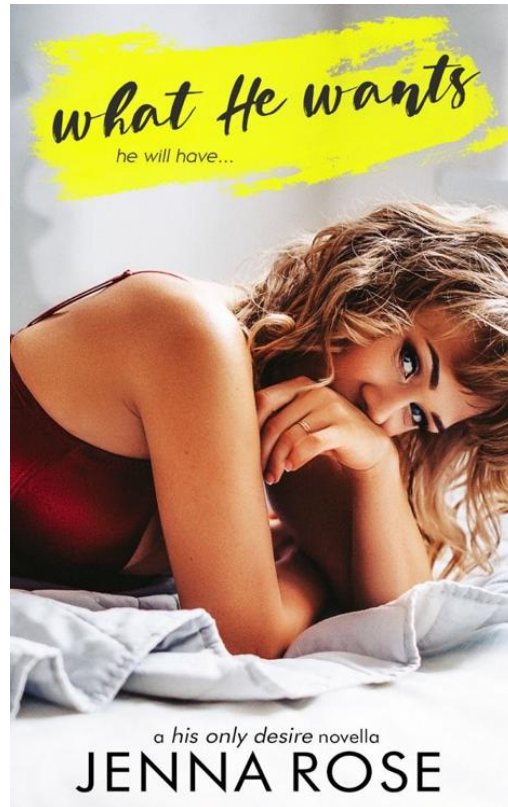
What He Owns



Gwen Thompson is hot on a story involving town development and corruption. The trail leads her to the home of Harrison Night, billionaire-playboy-business-man. All she wants is an interview, but when the rakish bachelor looks at her, Gwen knows he wants to do a lot more than answer her questions.

But Gwen won't sacrifice her integrity; she backs off. But Harrison wants her, and didn't get to where he is today by giving up on what he wants. He agrees to the interview, but on one condition: he and Gwen have dinner together first. Gwen agrees, but she is a professional. She's here for the story and just the story. At least, that's what she keeps telling herself...

What He Wants



While working undercover to bring down a dangerous crime boss, Fletcher becomes entranced by the girl living across the street. He keeps his eyes on her. Watching. Waiting. She's an angel in the wrong part of town, and he's going to make sure she's safe—no matter what.

AURORA IS STRUGGLING, working, saving her money for school, but one night she sees something she shouldn't have and suddenly, she's whisked away by a mysterious man who claims to be her protector. But he wants something from Aurora—something she's never given—and she's not sure if she can.

DON'T WAIT! Grab your copy and fall in love with these alphas today!