



TWELVE  
TALES  
OF A  
SNOWED-IN  
CHRISTMAS

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

KAT T. MASEN

**TWELVE TALES OF A  
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CHRISTMAS**

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**Twelve tales of a snowed-in Christmas**

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## **BLURB**

Lex Edwards will do anything for his family.

But can the billionaire make miracles happen when a snowstorm threatens his favorite time of the year?

Twelve Tales of a Snowed-in Christmas features chapters from each family member, including the ever-so-dramatic Eric, as they all try to make their way to Manhattan to celebrate Christmas together as a family.

*This short novella is best read after the Dark Love, Forbidden Love, and Secret Love series.*

# PROLOGUE

*“Weather advisories are warning us of the intensity of this snow storm. The low-pressure system is expected to affect the tri-state area, and all airports are on the verge of closing. People are encouraged to remain indoors and cancel all travel plans due to the icy conditions on the roads.”*

The news and weather channel play on repeat as everyone watches with bated breath. This is not the outcome they were all hoping for, especially Lex, who is stuck in London and unable to get home.

You see, the Edwards family has certain traditions to uphold. From decorating the tree to Lex playing on the grand piano as his family surround him, singing Christmas carols.

The children, and now grandchildren, place their milk, cookies, and carrots by the mantel, waiting for Santa to visit with his reindeers.

In the morning, the tree is surrounded by gifts. Of course, the patriarch of the family enjoys spoiling everyone. Wrapping paper and boxes are strewn around the tree as smiles and laughter fill the room with joyous sounds.

Then, the traditional Christmas lunch is when all the extended family join to celebrate.

No matter how much life has changed or people have grown, Christmas has always been their favorite time of the year.

It's the time to slow down, reflect, and spend time with the ones they love and cherish the most.

A long time ago, Lex Edwards was a lonely billionaire sitting in his castle, or more accurately, a penthouse in London, pining for the woman who always and forever owned his heart.

Then, in a twist of fate, Charlotte Mason walked back into his life, and they created their happily ever after.

Four beautiful daughters and now six grandchildren with another on the way.

So, as you can see, family is not an important thing.

It's *everything*.

With everyone traveling to Manhattan to meet the newest addition to the Edwards family, a once-in-a-lifetime snowstorm is set to ruin the merriest time of the year. Nothing can stop this happening.

But, of course, we must not underestimate the power of Lex Edwards.

His family will be together no matter how challenging it may be.

So, here are twelve tales of a snowed in Christmas ...



CHAPTER  
**ONE**

## LEX

**M**y eyes are glued to the TV screen as the news anchorman continues to report on the snowstorm.

Every channel is covering the same story, and each report makes me highly anxious.

“What we’ll experience, folks, is something we haven’t seen in a long time. High wind warnings and blizzard conditions are in place. This is certainly going to be a challenging Christmas for many families.”

I press mute on the remote, pacing the penthouse suite with my hands buried in my pockets. There has to be a way. In the years I’ve been a husband and father, not once have I missed Christmas. A few times, there were close calls, but nothing like this.

London was supposed to be a four-day business trip to wrap up loose ends before the end of the year. Initially, I was supposed to leave yesterday, but the private plane I hired had some mechanical issues, and the replacement plane was due to arrive last night.

Last night is now morning, and time is running out. The trip to JFK is just over eight hours. If I want to make it, I need to leave now.

My phone rings in my pocket, prompting me to pull it out.

“Edwards here,” I answer in a short tone.

“Mr. Edwards, it’s Jeff, the pilot for your requested replacement plane. I’m calling with some bad news, I’m afraid.”

I knew it, but suck in a breath and close my eyes in anticipation. “What is it?”

“We’ve been advised JFK will shut down in a few hours. We won’t be able to make it in time.

“What about La Guardia or Newark?”

“We don’t have a permit to fly into those airports. I’m sorry, Mr. Edwards, we are doing our best to get you home.”

*“Your best is not good enough,”* my voice raises. “I don’t think you understand. I have never missed a Christmas with my wife and daughters, nor do I ever plan to. Am I making myself clear?”

Jeff’s sigh echoes over the speaker. “Let me speak to a few people and see what I can do.”

The call ends, but my frustration only grows the longer I sit inside this penthouse without Charlotte. I quickly press her name on my phone, but the call rings out.

“Fuck,” I mouth, praying the phone lines aren’t down.

I wait impatiently for ten whole minutes. Charlotte should be home before catching a flight in two hours. Will made sure his private jet will be ready to fly them across the country, and when Will demands something, he is rarely let down.

The phone finally rings, and I rush to answer it. The icon flashing is a video call, so Charlotte’s face appears.

As soon as I see her, my chest swells, and I miss her like crazy.

“Sorry I didn’t pick up. I was rushing upstairs to pack a few more things. Will said our flight is now leaving an hour earlier.”

“Charlotte,” I begin with in a rasp. “They’re saying we can’t fly in.”

“What do you mean you can’t fly in?”

“To JFK. The airport will be closed by the time we’re due to land.”

She purses her lips, and even though she's not with me, I ache to kiss her beautiful mouth and taste all of her. Sweet, soft, and utterly perfect.

"Lex," she murmurs. "You promised on our first Christmas together that we'll never be apart."

I can hear the disappointment in her voice. Despite it killing me, the truth is I'm no miracle worker. I'm not God.

I'm just a man with billions, but money can't fix everything.

"Charlotte, I promised you we'll never be apart, and I refuse to break a promise."

"I know, but it's awful on the East Coast. Austin and Ava are stuck in Miami. Their flight has been delayed, too."

"Miami?"

"Ava had an event to attend for her clothing line. Austin managed to bring the girls a few days ago, but now they're all stuck."

I forgot Ava told me about her event. When it comes to the girls, it's hard to keep up. Each one of them is busy with their lives, and with husbands plus children, there's a lot of information to retain. Ava is exactly like me. She can't keep still and is always throwing herself into work. Though, I'm proud of everything she has built for herself and of Austin for advancing his career in medicine. I see a lot of myself in both of them.

"And Addison and Masen?"

"They're already in Manhattan with Haden and Presley."

Thank God I need at least one daughter to be where I need her.

"So, you'll fly in with Will and Amelia, the kids, plus Adriana and Julian?"

"Yes. Noah and Kate are in the air now and due to arrive any minute," she informs me. "Eric, Tristan, and the kids are in the Hamptons with Eric's mom and brother."

“I’m assuming Rocky and Nikki are home?”

“Oh yes.” Charlotte laughs softly. “Rocky sent me a picture of a giant penis he made out of snow. The balls were quite big if we’re being honest.”

A smirk spreads across my face. “It’s not Christmas without his crude snow-building efforts.”

“The time he made a snow woman giving a snowman a blow job was probably my favorite.”

“Mine too.” I chuckle, then release the tense breath I’d been holding in. “And, what about Alexandra?”

“She and Beau are traveling back from New Haven. I know Hunter and April have Elijah.”

When it comes to Alexandra, I worry about her the most. After all, she is our baby. Despite our differences over the years, we’ve become quite close. Something Charlotte teases me about but admits she’s jealous of Alexandra wanting my time over hers.

The situation with Alexandra, Beau, Hunter, and April blew up last year. I’m not entirely sure of all the details, but what a goddamn mess. I tried to stay out of it as per Charlotte’s request, but as soon as Hunter admitted his feelings for April weren’t exactly platonic, I made my opinion well-heard.

I think, and use the term loosely, everything has been resolved. Everyone is with the person they love. End of story.

“Of course,” I say, then continue, “our family keeps growing.”

Charlotte’s radiating smile warms my heart. All of this, all of who I am, is because of her.

My beautiful wife.

“I miss you.” She sighs.

“I miss you too, baby. I’m too old to be apart from you. Four nights is too much.”

“Agreed, four nights is too much. It’s time we slow down and enjoy life.”

“New Year’s resolution?” I tease.

“Yeah, sure.” She laughs. “Listen, I have to go. The driver is here. Please update me as soon as you have news so I can inform all the kids.”

“I will,” I tell her. “And Charlotte?”

“Yes?”

“I love you.”

She closes her eyes briefly, but the smile across her perfect lips lingers. “Obsessed together forever.”

“Obsessed together forever,” I repeat softly before ending the call.

With an urge to solve this problem, I call Jeff back since waiting is not something I’m used to.

“Jeff, here’s the plan. You fly me into the closest airport to JFK, and from there, I will drive to Manhattan.”

“I, uh, could probably fly into Washington Reagan National Airport if we get clearance?”

“Do whatever it is you need to do to make this happen. Do you understand me? I’m going to head to Heathrow now. I’ll see you soon.”

Without wanting to further entertain Jeff’s worry, I hang up the call and make another to my driver. My bag is already packed, ready for the long trip home. So, whatever it takes to get home, I will make it happen.

After all, I am THE Lex Edwards.

And my family ... they’re my entire world.

As for Charlotte, she’s my ride-or-die.

My soul.

The reason I’m breathing.

And I will *never* break a promise to my wife.

CHAPTER  
**TWO**

## ERIC

**M**y mother's China set has always been my favorite thing in this house. The bone China is crafted beautifully with an intricate design and gold edges to complement the exquisite pieces.

From when I was a little boy, my parents would bring me and Dominic to our house here in the Hamptons to spend our long weekends and summers. We made so many memories. Mainly of Dominic ignoring me because he was too cool, and me pretending to be busy reading when I was *really* just checking out the pool boy.

This house means so much to me, and for as long as I can remember, I adored this China set hoping one day my mother would gift it to me. I even married my husband here. Me, married. Who the hell would have thought?

Let's be overly honest here—I was notorious for sleeping around. At one point, I brought a guy home, forgetting I'd already given him head a year before. Only when his full bush came out did the flashbacks feel like a giant slap in the face. It didn't help that his dong actually did slap me in the face. He thought it was funny. I was still traumatized by how much pubes one could grow. Oh, little black curly hairs, how much therapy was needed to move on with my life.

Wait, where was I?

“Eric, sweetheart. Are you eyeing my China again?” my mother gently chastises me. She links her arm to mine as the



smell of Chanel No. 5 lingers in the air between us. “You’ve always had impeccable taste.”

“The perfect son,” I boast.

Behind me, someone clears their throat. We both turn around to see my brother Dominic leaning against the door frame with his arms crossed. Look, the guy can pull off a beige turtleneck, and not many people can. The weather has dropped to below zero, so winter must-haves are coats, thermal underwear, and anything so our peckers don’t shrivel up. T’is not the season to stand naked in your bedroom trying to perform for your husband.

*Just saying.*

“My beautiful boy.” Mom sighs while glancing at my brother. “Come here and give your mother a kiss.”

Dominic has suddenly become a Mama’s boy. Well, suddenly is perhaps an exaggeration. Ever since he broke up with what’s-her-face, he’s changed.

I’m not one to feed into drama, but boy, was I front seat to all the tea.

About three years ago, some woman showed up at his door and told him he had a daughter. The kid was already thirteen. It turns out that during a fight with his ex, Emile was it? Gee, I don’t know. They broke up for like two seconds years ago, and of course, my brother couldn’t keep his dick in his pants. It was at the beginning of their relationship, which surely Emile should have understood.

Enter Kennedy. Yes, the mother named her Kennedy, which is also our surname. According to my mom, the woman, Lila, never intended to tell Dominic he had a daughter until she was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

When Dominic told Emile, she bolted. I mean, what a ... you know what, I won’t call her that. They’d been together forever, and though he never wanted kids, and Emile did, it was the final straw for her. But to me, something never sat right with her. Maybe because I knew he still had feelings for

Kate. Like unrequited love but too bad my brother was a jerk and couldn't get his shit together for Kate.

Good riddance, I say.

“Uncle Eric!”

Kennedy runs into the room with the biggest grin, dressed in skinny jeans and a sweater only Mom would have bought her since it's designer and from the latest winter line. Her long jet-black hair bounces in its high ponytail as her hazel eyes dance upon seeing me.

My niece is a supermodel.

Absolutely gorgeous.

“Kenny!” I gasp. “Are you not the most beautiful supermodel I have ever seen?”

Dominic smirks. “Don't start.”

“Dad would kill me.” She laughs, her perfect white teeth flashing a smile. “Besides, you know I'm studying to get into an Ivy League school. I'm going to be the next Supreme Court judge. Either that or a pilot.”

I burst out laughing. “How do you go from Supreme Court judge to pilot?”

She shrugs, then leans into Dominic as he wraps his arm around her shoulder, bringing her in for a fatherly hug. As I watch them, I can't help but get all teary inside. She is by far the best thing to ever happen to all of us.

And the best thing to happen for my brother.

Yeah, so what if he's single? Unconditional love means everything.

Dominic kisses the top of her head. “You will get into an Ivy League school. I have never met anyone as smart as you. Just stay away from boys, and you'll do just fine.”

Kenny rolls her eyes at the same time I let out an accidental snort. Dominic is overprotective when it comes to his daughter, so much so that when he gained full custody of her after her mother passed, he changed completely. He sold

his clubs years ago but still had some shares. Given the whole 'sex club' isn't exactly something you want your kids to know about, he cut ties with everything and invested elsewhere. The guy is loaded, so it's not like it hurt his pocket or anything.

"Don't listen to Daddy, but stand your ground. You're stunning and definitely deserve to be picky."

"Stop calling me Daddy. It's disturbing," Dominic complains.

Mom caresses Kenny's cheek with the back of her hand. "My pride and joy."

I pull back, frowning. "What about me?"

"Eric, sweetheart, it's about time you shared the limelight."

The moment she tells me I'm no longer the most important human being in her life, Tristan walks in with the kids. Sailor runs straight to me, her chocolate brown curls bouncing in the air with every step she takes. I'm utterly obsessed with the red velvet dress with white lapels Mom bought for her.

"Daddy!" she says with a loud voice.

I pull her into my arms, smothering my face into her hair. She smells just like a baby, though, she's a talkative four-year-old on the verge of turning eighteen. Unlike his sister, George looks ready to fall asleep as Tristan carries him in his arms. I reach out to touch George's hair, the poor boy is so exhausted.

"Did you go for a swim with Papa and George in the indoor pool?"

Sailor nods. "Papa showed me how to dive in."

I smile at Tristan, only to see him grinning from ear to ear. If truth be told, we've had our ups and downs. I was unsure whether we would make it, especially since I wasn't on board with the idea of having kids.

But, the moment I learned of Sailor and George becoming orphans, I knew we were destined to be their parents.

And parenthood has changed me in so many ways. Charlie told me it would, but experiencing it was so much more than I

could ever imagine. The closest to parenting I'd ever experienced was with Lex and Charlie's girls, but now they're grown up.

Time is moving too fast. We're all getting old.

*Oh God, don't fall into this depression again! It was one gray hair, Eric. Just one.*

As I'm about to take George from Tristan, my phone begins to ring, and coincidentally, it's Charlie. With Christmas Eve tomorrow, the whole family is on their way to Manhattan where the Edwards celebrate every other year. Ava called me earlier because she is stuck in Miami. Like Miami is the worst place you could be stuck. According to her, with kids, it is.

"I hope you're calling me from Manhattan?" I begin, knowing the weather bureau has predicted a snowstorm.

"We're just about to board, but Lex might not be able to make it. He's stuck in London," her voice trembles. "Eric, I can't celebrate Christmas without him."

"Relax. Just breathe," I tell her over the phone while making breathing noises. Tristan's expression is mixed with worry and amusement. "Lex has never missed a Christmas before. Remember that time he got mono? He still made it home."

"He didn't get mono," Charlie corrects me. "Which, by the way, mainly occurs in teens from kissing. He had shingles."

"Wait, only teens get mono?" I gasp.

I could have sworn there was this guy I hooked up with before Tristan, Harry, or something similar. He was hot, like hot, hot. I would have been maybe twenty-five at the time, and he said he was the same age. Now, I'm questioning my whole existence.

My body shudders at the memory.

"Eric," Charlie whispers. "We're getting old. How many more Christmases will we have?"

Great, now Charlie has lost the plot.

“Now, you listen to me. We are not getting old. Lex will be home for Christmas, and you need to spread some holiday cheer to your sad coochie and believe in Christmas miracles.”

Everyone in the room turns to face me, but this should come as no surprise since it is me, after all.

“You’re right.” Her tone shifts. “I need to remember who I’m married to. If anyone can make a Christmas miracle happen, it’s my man.”

“You’re damn right. So, see you on Christmas day for lunch?”

“Yes, I miss my babies, Sailor and George.” Charlie sighs dejectedly. “And Eric?”

“Yes, my buttercup?”

“Thank you. You know, for talking me off the ledge.”

“Honey, the number of times you’ve talked me off the ledge would be ... well, I’ve lost count.”

“I’m forever grateful to have you in my life.”

My lips begin to tremble. “Stop. You’ll make me cry, and you know I’m an ugly crier.”

“It’s one of your many flaws,” Charlie teases.

“Many? Fine, I’m hanging up now. Bye, wench.”

As the call ends, Tristan purses his lips at me.

“Was that necessary?”

“Yes,” I answer while cocking my head arrogantly, but then I clap my hands and bring a smile to my face. “Are we ready for Glemma’s performance?”

My mother, also known as ‘Glemma’ because she is the most glamorous grandma ever to exist, proudly smiles as she gets the kids to sit around her while she begins to sing Christmas carols.

Tristan places his arms around my waist as Dominic stands beside us. It’s different again this year, with my father still gone, and oddly so, nothing feels the same since he left us. My

father was never as loving as my mother, but his presence was always known.

I watch my mother in her element, singing with the most angelic voice. The kids adore her, as we all do. But I want to capture this moment. The memories, all of it.

Outside the window, the snow begins to fall. It's beautiful and white, making me appreciate everything more. How did I get to be this lucky? Me, out of all people, the pimply, scrawny geek in high school who knew he was gay but was afraid to tell anyone.

"Are you okay?" Tristan whispers in my ear as I tightly hold his arms around my waist.

"I'm perfect," I tell him. "Our family is perfect."

The moment is distracted by the ping of a text. I take my phone out of my pocket to see a message from Lex. Geez, Lex and Charlie apart never ends well. They're like two lost puppy dogs crying for home.

LEX

I won't let Charlotte or the girls down. Please make sure she gets to Manhattan safely, and everything is set up for Christmas.

I quickly respond.

ME

It's all ready to go. The tree is ready, the decorations are up, and your surprise present will be unveiled at Christmas lunch. I've got you, boo.

LEX

What would I do without you?

ME

I love you too, Daddy.

I can almost imagine Lex cringing for calling him Daddy, but he chooses to ignore me after such a loving sentiment. The thing about Lex is, he rarely shows how much he cares, but when he does, it hits home.

“It’s going to be a big Christmas lunch. Are you nervous? You know you’re an ugly crier?” Tristan questions with a smirk.

With a gentle shake of my head, a smile graces my lips. “We’re doing a great thing here. Charlie’s dream is going to come true. So, what if I cry like when Rose let go of Jack on the Titanic or when the old people were holding each other? But when the mother was reading to those kids ...”

I bring my fist to my mouth, trying to control my emotions.

“You are, and I’m proud of you. You’re not the Eric I first met all those years ago.”

And with my husband’s arms wrapped around me, everything in the world feels right.

I may not believe in many things, but I believe in Christmas miracles. Lex will find a way home, and we will reveal the secret we’ve been working on for the last year. We don’t agree on many things, but Charlie’s happiness is one of them.

Who would have thought I could keep a secret from my bestie?

Not me.

But here I am. A changed man.

A better man.

Mom finishes her song, and everyone claps. George is most excited, jumping up to hug her with a sudden burst of energy while the girls just sit and chat amongst themselves. Beside me, Dominic is quiet but not broody like he usually is. There is an expression of satiation on his face. Given he ain’t getting laid, I’m surprised he’s so chill.

“You happy, big brother?” I ask him.

“I have everything I want.”

“Yes,” I reassure him. “You do, but um, you know it wouldn’t hurt you to get back onto the dating scene. There is this woman at my gym, she’s fresh out of a divorce, and yes, she’s got some baggage but would eat you up like a well-cooked steak.”

Okay, I may be a better man, but some things never change with me.

I’m Eric Kennedy-Baker. Best friend, matchmaker, and the go-to expert for all fashion advice.

And once I find a woman to satisfy my very picky older brother, I’ll add miracle worker to my ever-growing list of talents.

Tristan knocks into me playfully. “Leave him alone.”

“Fine, but what do I get for leaving him alone?”

With a gentle palm on the small of my back, Tristan leans into my ear. *“I’ll show you tonight outside in the Jacuzzi once the kids are asleep with your mom.”*

A grin spreads across my entire face. “I’ll be ready ... Daddy.”



CHAPTER  
**THREE**

## AMELIA AND WILL

### *Amelia*

“**M**om, it’s going to be okay. Dad just messaged me, saying he’s getting a flight into Maryland. As long as we ...” I trail off as Archer walks into the kitchen in tears.

“Lexi broke my Lego house!”

I grit my teeth, wondering why the hell my kids are playing Lego right now while we’re trying to leave for Manhattan. It took me over two hours to pack everyone’s clothes, even though we have our own place in the Upper East Side, so it wouldn’t be the end of the world if we were to forget anything.

My hand covers the speaker. “Go find Daddy.”

Archer crosses his arms and stomps his foot. He looks exactly like Will with his dark hair and light eyes. “Daddy said he’s working!”

Briefly closing my eyes, I muster up the patience to deal with these boys. Yet, the more I try to zone out the noise, the more my mind ticks with chores that need to be done before we leave.

“Archer, Mommy needs time to clean the kitchen and double-check the suitcases, okay? I will deal with your Lego emergency when I’m done.”

“I hate you!” he screams.

My eyes widen in shock. This is the first time Archer has used the word hate. Usually, he is such a sweet and loveable brother, though stubborn. Sure, he has his moments, but never with such malice.

He runs out of the room before I get a chance to say anything.

“Mom,” I choke, still in shock. “I need to go.”

“Amelia.” She gently changes tones. “I’ll be over soon to help, okay? Ignore my mini-meltdown.”

“You have every right to be upset, Mom.”

“See you soon, honey.”

The call ends, and with my feet moving before I can even reason, I head straight for Will’s office to discuss Archer and how we should handle his behavior. Instead of knocking, I open the door to hear someone on the speaker. Will glances at me with his ‘I’m working face’, only leaving me more annoyed. I want to slam the door but do my best to act maturely, given he’s on a work call.

With the door closed, I head back to find the boys. Ashton is in his room, sitting by the window, quietly playing on his Nintendo. His suitcase is packed, including his mini backpack for the flight. *Why can’t all the boys be like him?*

Archer and Lexi are fighting inside the den while the TV blares SpongeBob SquarePants loudly. I swear, this show gives me anxiety. My hand reaches out for the remote so I can mute the sound.

“Alexander Romano,” I say sternly. “What is the rule about playing with Lego?”

“Mama, it was an accident.”

“No, it wasn’t,” Archer shouts.

I turn to face Archer. Arguing with him is like arguing with Will.

“Archer, we don’t use the word hate. Do you understand me? And we especially don’t tell anyone we hate them.”

He crosses his arms, turns his back to me, and drops his head. He does this when he's angry but sorry at the same time. Instead of apologizing, he suppresses his emotions. Again, just like Will.

"Now, both of you play nicely while I finish getting things ready," I tell them calmly, then glance at Archer. "When you're ready to apologize, Archer, I will be in my room."

In the solace of my bathroom, I stare into the mirror with a tired face. Life, lately, has been stressful. Between work and juggling the boys with school and sports, I've been putting off the signs I've seen in my body.

Cramps, sore breasts, but no periods.

Five-fucking-days late.

I switched my pill about two months ago, just because the one I was on previously made me nauseous. But last month, we had a big night in Vegas. I drank more than I had in my entire life and spent the next day vomiting so much that I regretted all my choices.

And, given we were kid-free, Will ravaged me all night long. I lost count of how much sex we had, but all I know is drunk sex is great sex.

Until now.

With a deep breath, I reach under the vanity and pull a spare pregnancy test from the back, leftover from when we were trying for Archer. Lexi was a surprise, but we were just happy to conceive without trying for over a year and dealing with the heartache that comes from negative tests every month.

I haven't told Will yet, given this week he's barely been home due to some work crisis. A part of me was praying for my periods to show, but with every day passing, the signs became more apparent.

"Pee on a stick, wait for lines," I mumble to myself.

My fingers carefully rip the packaging as I pull the stick out, then proceed to shove it between my legs. Of course,

knowing I need to pee gives me stage fright, but I manage to let it flow while I close my eyes. When I'm done, I place the stick on the counter, clean myself up, and then flush.

The kids are still quiet through the monitor which sits inside our room. I pace the bathroom with a queasy stomach because the anticipation is too much.

Then, I slowly glance at the vanity.

Two blue lines.

*"Fuck, fuck, fuck,"* I mouth.

Four kids. *Four kids.* How am I going to cope with four kids? Yeah, so what if Mom did it? Doesn't mean I'm like her, even though everyone thinks I'm exactly like her.

"Breathe," I tell myself while clutching my stomach in a panic.

"What a fucking nightmare," Will complains, entering the bedroom.

In a mad rush, I throw the pregnancy test into the vanity closet and manage to close it just before Will walks in. He's still in his work shirt and pants, even though we need to leave in less than an hour to catch our flight.

With my hands pressed against the vanity, trying to control my emotions, Will wraps his arms around my waist.

"I need a release, baby," he whispers in my ear. "I'll be super quick."

Before I can say no, Will locks the bathroom door and lifts my skirt up, pulling my panties aside. The smell of his aftershave is intoxicating as I close my eyes and lose myself in his touch. Wait, no, this is how you ended up pregnant in the first place!

"Will, we need to talk."

He kisses my neck, then slides himself in, causing me to gasp.

"Talk," he commands. "I promise, I'm listening."

I bite my lip, falling prey to his cock pressing deep inside me. As I do my best to ignore the impending orgasm because my husband knows what he's doing, I try to talk, but my moans escape instead.

"That's it, baby. Come for me," he whispers.

"I can't ..." I barely manage. "Will, I'm serious. We need to talk."

"It sounds like your pussy wants more, and talking is the last thing on your mind."

*"I'm pregnant,"* I blurt out.

Will's body stiffens, but he remains inside me. "You're pregnant?"

"Yes," I answer quietly. "It's okay, you can pull out, and we can talk about this."

"I've never not finished."

"Will, did you hear me? I'm pregnant. Four kids. It's okay, pull out."

"No," he argues stubbornly. "I must finish."

I glance at his reflection in the mirror and call his bluff. He slowly begins to thrust, closing his eyes tight, but I can tell by the way he moves he's freaking out and won't be able to finish.

"Oh, baby, more," I tease to see his reaction, almost rolling my eyes at his attempt to fuck me.

He grips my hips tight, opening his eyes with a frustrated stare. Glancing at me, he presses his lips tight before pulling out.

"Fuck, another baby?"

I turn around to face him. "We knew this could happen since you refuse to get the snip."

"And? You're saying this is my fault?"

"I'm saying we were both blind drunk in Vegas. Happy wedding anniversary to us."

A loud bang echoes in the bathroom from the sound of our bedroom door. I rush to pull down my skirt as Will zips up his pants, almost catching the zipper on his cock. His momentary freak-out is met with relief once they're up. "Mommy! I need to go potty!"

Since we started toilet training Lexi last week, I push Will aside and open the door.

"Quick," I urge Lexi, placing him on the toilet. "One or two?"

He points two fingers up, the same time, we hear his poop hit the water. We both clap our hands with pride as Lexi grins at us.

"You did it! You're such a big boy now!"

I quickly clean him up, flush the toilet, and wash my hands. At the exact time he jumps for joy, the other two boys walk into the room.

"Grandma is here," Ashton informs us. "Are we going now?"

"Give me and Daddy a minute, please. Tell her we'll be there in a second and take your brothers with you."

Ashton takes his brothers out of the room, leaving me alone with Will.

"We need to talk about this at one point."

Will shrugs. "Yeah, I guess."

"Are you angry with me?" I ask, crossing my arms in defiance. "Because the last time I checked, it takes two people to make a baby. Your cock is one of them!"

"Oh, so now it's my fault?" he argues back.

I throw my hands up in the air. "We don't have time for this. I need to get three kids ready for a flight."

Refusing to deal with Will and his stubbornness, I grab the suitcase I'd packed earlier and quickly grab the boy's suitcases. Inside the kitchen, Mom has cleaned up and given the boys a snack. When she sees me, a smile graces her face

but follows with a frown from my less-than-enthused expression.

“Are you okay, honey?”

I force a smile. “Sure, just dealing with a big baby of a husband.”

“Oh, I know how that story goes,” she reassures me. “The car is here, so let me get the boys loaded.”

Mom is so good with the boys. They obey everything she says, following her instructions and doing it without a fight. When they’re loaded into the car, I quickly do a mental check off my list, though it feels like I’ve forgotten something.

As Will walks out ten minutes later dressed casually in sweats and sneakers for the flight, he can barely look at me.

Merry Christmas to me.

## *Will*

*Another baby.*

The words repeat in my head the entire flight to JFK. Thankfully, the boys were settled for most of the flight. Ashton and Archer were busy on their Nintendo Switches while Lexi fell asleep in Amelia’s arms an hour into the flight.

With him fast asleep, Amelia closes her eyes to get some rest.

I’m not angry with her.

Who I’m angry with is myself. I’m a chicken, always making excuses for why no doctor should put a scalpel near my balls. The topic of conversation was raised several times, and each time, it ended in an argument.

But no, the fucking joke is on me.

Four kids.

*Four kids.*



The more it rings in my head, the more my chest tightens. Three boys are a handful. Granted, Ashton has grown out of the small kid phase and is quite the protector of his brothers. But Archer and Lexi, Lord help me. These two are constantly fighting. I don't know why Amelia thinks Archer is some little angel because the kid is far from it.

Over the speaker, the pilot warns us of some slight turbulence due to the poor weather. We were lucky to be able to fly in early, and despite Amelia's reluctance for me to make such a large purchase, this private jet has been a godsend. With traveling being a huge part of my job, I always try to bring Amelia and the kids with me. Perks of being a billionaire.

"Is everything okay?" Charlie asks softly beside me.

"Your daughter is angry with me."

Charlie smiles. "What's new? The two of you are very stubborn at times."

"Like you and Lex?" I smirk.

"You could say that. Though, I think Lex has softened over the years."

I try to hold back my laughter. "Lex is not the man I remember. You've tamed him."

"Glad to hear. The man needed to relax a little, don't you think?"

"Considering he's not busting my ass as much as he used to? I think it's a miracle he's become so relaxed."

Charlie places her hand on my arm. "It will be okay, whatever it is troubling you."

Glancing out the window into the sky, I clear my throat but keep my voice low. "Amelia is pregnant."

"Oh," Charlie mouths, then warmly smiles. "That explains a lot. Well, it goes without saying congratulations is in order, though I'm sure you don't want to hear it right now."

"Four kids, Charlie," I whisper, careful not to wake Amelia and Lexi or for the other two to hear about a new sibling.

“How the hell can we manage four kids?”

“You will, and honestly, four is no different to three. I think three kids was the game-changer. It’s when you’re officially outnumbered.”

“I never looked at it that way.”

“It takes a village to raise a family, and you have the biggest village there is. I’m always here, as is Lex, anytime you need us.”

“I know,” I say faintly. “It’s just ...”

“It’s okay, Will. Feeling the way you feel is normal when you weren’t expecting another child.” Charlie eases my worries. “When I found out I was pregnant with Alexa, I was in shock, especially since we were told it was twins.”

“Twins? I didn’t even think of the possibility ...” I trail off in a mild panic attack.

“You’ll get through this together. In the meantime, just be there for Amelia. She will need you the most.”

And that’s what I’m most afraid of, letting the person down who means the most to me. We were just getting out of the baby stage, able to catch a few weekends away since they were older. But now ...

The pilot announces our descent into JFK. Amelia wakes up but keeps Lexi snuggled in her arms while we land. All three kids are excited to see snow when we get the clearance to get off the plane. Lexi has a new burst of energy from his almost five-hour nap.

Charlie kisses the kids goodbye as she heads straight to Mom and Dad’s place while we head to our home, reminding us she’ll see us tomorrow. The kids stare out the window excitedly during the car trip into the city. Each one of them loves Manhattan. Something about all the people watching and tall buildings.

When we arrive at our brownstone, the kids run up and down the stairs, excited to be back. The tree is already up as

Eric organized a decorator to complete the job. Apparently, the same person did Lex and Charlie's place, too.

Amelia is avoiding me. Perhaps it's a blessing since my thoughts are scrambled. For the rest of the night, we're busy getting dinner sorted, bathing the kids, and getting them to bed at a reasonable time. Given the time zone change, they end up falling asleep close to midnight.

By the time we manage to get to bed, it's well after midnight. I climb into bed as Amelia lays quietly beside me.

I hate fighting with her because, frankly, I fucking miss her. I always do when we argue.

My body shuffles, so I'm lying on my side, facing her.

"I just thought we were ..." I stall, trying to find the right words. "It's just the boys are growing up, and we're finally getting some us time. I know it sounds stupid, but sometimes I get jealous because they take up all your time. I don't mean jealous, but I don't know, it's hard to explain.

Amelia sighs. "I get it, I really do."

"You do?"

She turns to face me. "I love our kids, but I miss us. No one said balancing a marriage and kids was easy. I thought it would be. I'm scared, Will, of doing this all over again. Another boy smashing up Lego and fighting with his brother? What about the newborn stage of sleepless nights and breastfeeding?"

I reach out and touch her lips with a smile. "But you are beautiful when you're carrying my baby."

Amelia closes her eyes. "Will ..."

"And what if it's a girl? Not a boy."

"A girl who screws an older guy who happens to be her dad's business partner? Then falls pregnant, loses the baby, and they're apart for four years?"

"Not all girls are like you, Mrs. Romano," I tease.

"I just ..."

“We’ll get through this together,” I assure her with a promise. “If it means I need to restructure things in the office so I’m home more, then that’s what I’ll do.”

As we lay beside each other, I stare into the eyes of my beautiful wife. Life is nothing without her, and now, she’s carrying my child again.

“Come here,” I whisper.

Amelia shuffles closer so our bodies are touching. I reach down, placing my hand on her stomach and gently caressing it.

“I promise you, baby, I’m here, always and forever.”

“I know.” She places a kiss on my lips, soft yet sensual, making me instantly hard.

*I fucking missed her so much.*

“So,” I begin with, a smirk playing on my lips. “When does the can’t keep your hands off your husband stage start?”

A big grin spreads across her face, then she trails her hands down my chest, slowly reaching out until my cock is firmly in her grasp. I jerk at her touch, letting out a groan. Her body slides down beneath the sheets, and with her sultry eyes glancing up at me, her mouth is inches away from the top of my cock.

*“Right now, Mr. Romano ...”*

But just when my wife is about to take me in, we hear a knock on the door.

Fuck. My. Life.

The two of us shuffle apart just as Archer walks in.

“What’s wrong, buddy?” I ask, concerned over his sad expression.

“I want to tell Mama I’m sorry for saying I hated her.”

Amelia extends her arms. “Come here, baby.”

Archer runs to the bed and climbs in between us. As Amelia strokes his hair, he glances up at her with sorrowful eyes.

“I’m sorry, Mama.”

“It’s okay, baby. We all get a bit angry at times, but let’s not use that word anymore, promise?”

“Promise, Mama.”

And just like that, we’re cockblocked again by our kids.

Though the truth is, I wouldn’t want it any other way.

“I love you,” I whisper to Amelia as she holds onto our son and carries our unborn child.

“Back at you, baby.”

CHAPTER  
**FOUR**

## ADDISON AND MASEN

### *Addison*

“**Y**ou two make quite the ravishing couple.”

The older couple glides past us on the dance floor as the band continues to play Christmas melodies. Around us, people are dressed in their best gowns, all for the sake of charity. The dance floor is full of couples, young and old, but definitely with deep pockets.

I knew this wasn't exactly Masen's idea of fun, but given it was for charity, he agreed to come and wear a tuxedo. Besides, I sold it to him as networking. We've become quite the sought-after power couple when it comes to extravagant events. Numerous charity events, lunch on private yachts, to guests at many parties in The Hamptons. Given that we live in the Bay area, traveling back and forth from the West to the East Coast can be exhausting. So, we bought a small place in the East Village. With the bustling nightlife and restaurants surrounding us, we are never short of entertainment. We have the best of both worlds.

The grand ballroom is lit up beautifully. The chandeliers hung from the ceiling, delicate yet a feature of the room. Fresh Christmas trees surrounded us, the smell of pine in the air. I glance around, admiring it all as Masen leans in to kiss my neck.

“Do you know how sexy you look in this red dress?”

“Yes, I do.” I grin, keeping my eye on the people around us as we whisper to each other. “You told me in the car while

you made me come with your fingers.”

“Well, you deserved to come in such a beautiful dress. It’s just a shame you couldn’t finish me off.”

“It explains why you’ve been rock-hard against me for the last hour,” I tease with a wicked smile. “Careful, Mrs. McCallister has been eyeing you all night.”

“Hmm, I’m not into the whole older woman thing.”

“Oh yeah?”

“I like my woman—”

I place my finger on his lips. “Choose your words wisely, Mr. Cooper.”

“I was going to say I like my woman in my arms,” he answers smugly.

“Interesting, because I could have sworn you were going to say, I like my woman reverse cowgirl.”

“Sure, that too.”

A board member of the charity takes to the stage to talk about what they’ve achieved this year with all the donations. We take to our seats but make sure to pour some champagne and wine since this man loves to talk. The crowd claps at each milestone, but all in all, they’ve done so much for homeless shelters and sick families. I’m pleased our sizeable donation will make a difference.

When he finishes, everyone at the table makes small talk. Masen sat us with people he knows in the publishing industry, so he is distracted talking about work.

Mrs. Lowry, married to the chief executive of a major publishing house in Manhattan, turns to face me with a smile.

“I was admiring you both on the dance floor,” she begins, eyeing the ring on my finger, then continues, “How long have you been married?”

“About four years now.”



She laughs. “Oh, so passed the honeymoon stage and ready for the family stage?”

I don’t particularly want to correct her about the so-called honeymoon stage. If she knew what my husband did to me in the limo over here, I’m sure she would rethink her assumption.

But the psych in me wants to set the record straight.

“While there is a stage in the marriage that is new and exciting, often referred to as the honeymoon stage, it shouldn’t be defined as a period of time. Each couple can continue to have marriages, which brings them excitement with each other,” I tell her informatively. “As for the family stage. We have decided children are not in our cards right now, or possibly ever.”

Mrs. Lowry presses her lips while tilting her head in confusion.

“So, you don’t want children?”

If I had a dollar for every time we’re asked this question. I’d probably be richer than my father. I don’t understand why people are so opinionated on this subject. It’s almost like women, specifically, are trained from a young age to attach marriage and babies to the idea of happiness and fulfillment.

I’ve seen my sisters. Having children has changed their lives. Millie is forever complaining about trying to juggle it all, while Ava is quick to mention how little time she gets to spend with Austin. As for Alexa, well, she’s put a lot on hold to be a mother. I commend them all for trying their best, but the more I’m exposed to it, the less appealing it is.

“Both my husband and I have demanding careers. We travel quite a lot and expect to travel more in the new year. Children need stability and nurturing, something we don’t believe we’re able to give at this point in time. Besides, we have so many nieces and nephews. We’re just a plane ride away if we need a fix.”

“I see ...” she trails off, yet I sense her judgment. “You would make beautiful kids.”

With a smile, I gently touch Masen’s hand. “We know.”

The event begins to wrap up, which I'm incredibly glad for. It didn't stop at Mrs. Lowry. A few other ladies came over to compliment me on my dress, which turned into a conversation: "When you have kids, you'll be lucky to keep that body of yours."

Outside on the streets of Manhattan, we walk holding hands as the snowflakes fall from the sky. Our bodies are warm from the coats we wore over our formal attire and the copious amounts of champagne we drank at the event. Perhaps I drank more to deal with all the overbearing women.

I was just glad to get out of there.

"Do you ever wonder why everyone seems so fixated on us having children?" I ask as we walk toward Rockefeller Center to watch the ice skaters.

Masen's cheeks are rosy from the cold air, but he looks so handsome beside me. "People are bored, so they fixate on other people's lives."

"It's just, this time of the year is hard. Our families will no doubt bring up the whole 'when are you going to have kids' lecture. I love your mom, but she is dying for a grandchild. And my sisters watch every move of mine, trying to decipher if I'm pregnant. If I don't respond to their messages, they think I'm gatekeeping."

He brings my hand to his lips and then kisses it softly. We stop in the middle of the sidewalk, but luckily, the streets are empty.

"What are you trying to say, Addison? Do you want to start a family?"

"We are a family," I say with ease. "Kids don't define the word family."

"Okay, so ..."

"I want to live our lives without being under the microscope for our choice to choose ourselves and our careers."

Masen points his finger into my chest. “Then let it go. Ignore the noise, and you do you.”

“You would think, as a psych, I’d have this under control.”

“You would think as a CEO of a publishing house, I would read our bestseller, which happens to be a dark romance. Yet, I haven’t read a single page,” he informs me with a smug expression. “Addison, let’s continue to enjoy ourselves. Right now, I want to take you ice skating.”

My face lights up at his suggestion. It’s been years since I last skated, possibly in college, but once the skates are on, it feels so natural. The blades glide effortlessly against the ice, and I feel so free as we skate around the rink.

In the middle, amongst the crowd, Masen grabs my waist and brings my body in flush with his.

“I need to take you home and devour every inch of your body,” he says teasingly.

“I guess.” I start with a grin. “This is the perk of us with no kids.”

“I’ll follow your lead, Addison, when, or if, you’re ready. For now, I want to enjoy you being all mine.”

As I stare into my husband’s eyes, I realize the outside noise means nothing. In the end, all that matters is us.

And just like Masen said, I want to enjoy us for as long as possible.

“Take me home, baby.”

Masen’s lips curve upward. “Your wish is my command.”

### *Masen*

My wife is the sexiest woman to ever exist.

The way she does reverse cowgirl is something else. I watch her rock back and forth as her round ass teases me. My hands squeeze her cheeks tight while I stop myself from blowing inside her.

Fuck. Think of something else.

The stock market.

Shares.

Then, she lets out a moan because she's just about to come.  
Fuck, fuck, fuck.

*Game over.*

"I'm ... I'm coming, baby," she warns me.

She arches her back while I admire her muscles tighten as she rides me. When I begin to feel her contract, I'm done for.

"*Fuck,*" I groan.

I begin to see stars as my whole body shudders in delight. My eyes shut, focusing on the intensity of her tight pussy clenching my cock until a louder groan escapes me.

Addison climbs off, lying naked beside me as I bring her close. The beat of her heart is fast, thumping against my hand, which sits against her chest.

"You're perfect," I whisper. "And mine."

She kisses my arm. "This is nice. Everyone is rushing around doing last-minute Christmas shopping and kid's concerts, and we are here in bed with snow falling outside."

I feel myself getting hard again, pressing against her ass with a desire to fuck it slow until she screams again, desperate to come. "I plan to do whatever I want to this body tonight."

"You're so greedy."

"Yeah, I am."

I climb on top of her, spreading her legs as our kisses become ravenous. My hands reach for her beautiful, full tits, playing with them until my phone rings on the nightstand.

"Fuck me," I complain, leaning over to see my brother's name appear on the screen. "It's Cruz."

Ignoring his call, he doesn't let up, calling again.

"Answer it, it's probably important."

“Fine. Who needs kids when you have a co-dependent brother,” I grit, then hit answer on the phone. “What’s so important you had to call me twice?”

“Dude, the hotel won’t let me check in,” Cruz slurs. “Like what the fuck, right?”

I close my eyes and pinch the bridge of my nose. The kid is damn drunk again. This isn’t the first, and I’m sure it won’t be the last, he’s called me on a drunken rant.

“Where are you?”

“The Pla ... zaaa,” he says with a hiccup.

“Get into a cab and come here. Do you remember our address?”

Cruz laughs hysterically. “Bruh! Of course, I do.”

He ends the call, prompting me to check the screen. I let out a huff, climbing out of bed to put on some clothes.

“Get changed,” I command. “Cruz is staying the night.”

“What happened?”

I shrug. “I guess we’ll find out soon.”

It takes over an hour for Cruz to turn up at our apartment, although he is only four blocks away. As he stumbles out of the elevator, I anxiously wait at the door.

“Merry Christmas!” he cheers with a brown paper bag in his hand.

Son of a bitch. The Mutha fucker is still drinking.

“Get inside,” I demand, then take the bottle from his hands, only for him to sulk like a baby.

Addison is inside, dressed in her gray sweats. Like me, she seems displeased with Cruz turning up and spoiling our alone time.

“What’s happening, Cruz?” she asks patiently. “Drunk before Christmas is never a good sign.”

“Would you like me to lie on the couch for a session?” he teases.

Here's the thing: I never truly accepted my brother attempting to hook up with my wife. Yeah, so what if it was years ago? Shit like that never leaves my mind. Whenever he's near or attempts to tease her, my jealousy rears its ugly head.

"Is there something you want to offload? Then, lie down and spill."

Cruz laughs but plonks himself on the sofa, resting his head back and closing his eyes.

"You know what's fucked up? Love. Every time I fall in love, someone screws me over."

Addison tries to keep a blank face, but I know she's fed up with Cruz's wild behavior. He's gotten himself into trouble everywhere he's gone, and given his football career, it won't be much longer until he loses his contract. Dad is going to go ballistic if this happens.

"Why do you think you're being screwed over?"

Cruz shrugs. "You tell me? I was in love with you, and you screwed me over?"

"Hey," I threaten him. "Don't be a jerk. You show up drunk, causing trouble again? Honestly, what the hell is wrong with you!"

In a split moment, Cruz jumps on his feet unsteadily and attempts to throw his fist at me. Given his delayed reaction, I managed to avoid him and then grab his wrist.

"You come into my home, disrespect my wife, then try to knock me out," I sputter beyond words. "Give me one good reason why I should let you stay in my house tonight?"

Cruz deliberately raises his brows while jutting his chin. With an arrogant laugh, he shakes his head and then wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

"Masen Cooper always gets everything he wants. Our parents' approval, the top job, and, of course, the beautiful wife. You know what I have, huh? I have nothing!"

My lips press into a white sash, trying to keep my anger at bay. Clearly, he's going through something, but honestly, I'm

sick of this shit.

“The way you’re going, I agree. You will have nothing.”

“You have no idea what’s going on,” he says bitterly, then he glances at Addison. “I can’t stay here. Not while the two of you fuck like crazy to rub it in my face. It should have been me. She was mine first!”

“Get out,” I shout, pointing to the door. “I don’t give a goddamn fuck where you stay or what you do. You do not come into my home and act like a fucking moron.”

Cruz sways as he walks past Addison. She drops her head in disappointment, unable to look at him.

“You know where to find me, baby.” He chuckles.

My blood is boiling, but his careless comment has tipped me over the edge. With my veins pumping, I stomp toward him to yank his collar, then sucker punch him, but Addison pulls me toward her.

“Don’t, just leave him. He won’t remember this tomorrow.”

As Cruz slams the door, my wild eyes fixate on Addison.

“It’s perfectly clear, Addison. He’s still in love with you.”

“Masen, stop. What does it matter? As long as we love each other, the rest is just noise.”

“It does matter! Fuck, our whole relationship has been me watching over my shoulder to make sure he isn’t trying to get you back.”

Addison throws her hands up in the air. “Why can’t you get it through your thick head that I love you? I chose you, not him.”

I pace the room, running my hands in my hair, fueled by frustration. “I don’t know. I mean, you’re so adamant you don’t want kids with me. Did you imagine kids with him?”

Baring her teeth, she glances at me with cold eyes.

“How dare you. You made me feel it was our decision. You didn’t want a family, either.”

“Well, it would be one way to show him.”

Addison walks away, grabbing her coat and phone. “You know what, Masen? You’re a goddamn jerk.”

With our anger plus tension at an all-time high, she slams the door and leaves me to stand here alone.

This wasn’t how it was supposed to turn out.

But if history has taught me anything—I’m much like my father. If it walks like a jerk and talks like a jerk, then I am a jerk.

And I’ve possibly just lost the best thing to ever happen to me ... the night before Christmas Eve.



CHAPTER  
**FIVE**

## ADRIANA AND JULIAN

### *Adriana*

**T**he hardest thing about being a parent is—the worry never ends.

When our kids were small, it was easy to fall victim to lack of sleep and patience as you fight unreasonable tantrums. Then, puberty hits, and emotional teens are a bigger headache, only for you to wish you could bring back the old days of tantrums and daytime naps.

College life and living away from home should be easier for us. But my worry never subsides because there is a big world out there with endless possibilities. Yeah, so what if I'm a Mama bear, and my job to protect my children never stops?

Luna is back from her European vacation. She'd been gone for four months, traveling through Spain and Italy before settling for a bit in Amsterdam. She still emailed or texted us with updates during her absence, keeping us informed about her travels. Overall, I knew she was having the time of her life, living her best single life.

But now, she's back, on Christmas Eve, and with a friend.

Across from us, Luna is sitting on the white sofa with Georgia beside her. Georgia's long ginger hair flows to the side as I admire her light green eyes. I must say, she's gorgeous, and I totally dig her style. Boho, chic, with her own flare to it.

Luna smiles nervously, then reaches out to touch Georgia's hand. I immediately observe the gesture but stare in confusion.

Am I missing something here?

“Europe was amazing, Mom and Dad,” Luna begins with, full of energy. “I especially loved Amsterdam, which is where we met.”

“It truly is a beautiful city, Mr. and Mrs. Baker,” Georgia follows.

“Please, call us Julian and Adriana,” Julian suggests with a warm smile. “We’re not so formal in our home.”

“Of course.”

Beside me, Willow is on her phone. No doubt, to some boy. She’s home from college, and according to her update this morning, she’s in some love triangle between two best friends or brothers. Something to that effect. Honestly, kids these days.

“You’d love it, Mom. The fashion ... it’s something else.”

“I’m sure I would.”

“And, well, while Amsterdam was great, we wanted to come back home to, um ...”

Georgia places her hand on Luna’s shoulder, rubbing it softly.

“We’re in a relationship.”

My mind goes blank, trying to grasp what my daughter said aloud. I glance at Julian, but his face remains the same. Blank, yet a smile fixated on his lips as if he can’t move.

“So, let me get this straight ...” I pause, unsure what to say.

The thing is, Luna has always been a woman who followed her own rules. While she dated men, she never settled, often joking they were too young. The joke in our family is she liked older men. But this is the first she’s ever mentioned being in a relationship, let alone being interested in a woman.

“Georgia is my girlfriend,” Luna blurts out.

Again, I'm unable to get the words out. I stare at the two of them, completely blindsided by the introduction. My heart is racing a million miles a minute, but I can't seem to connect sentences in my head.

Willow covers her mouth and then giggles. "Cool, my sister is a lesbian."

I glance at her with dagger eyes. "Willow, maybe you should leave the room while we talk."

"No way." She latches onto her dad's arm because Julian is such a softy with her. "You always say family is everything, so I'm part of the family."

"Fine, stay," I muster, then focus back on Luna. "So, Georgia is your girlfriend?"

"Actually ..." Georgia begins, quickly looking to Luna, who looks nervous. "Wife."

"*Wife?*" I repeat in an unsteady voice. "You're telling me you got married without us there?"

"Mom," Luna rushes. "If I told you I was getting married, you would have made a big deal out of it. I'm not into those fairy-tale weddings with the big hoopla dress and silly bridesmaids."

Julian presses his lips flat, unimpressed. "Luna, you didn't think me or your mother would want to be there on your big day?"

"I ... I ..." she stammers. "It was a spur-of-the-moment decision. It just felt right."

The anger boiling inside of me is immeasurable. My eyes won't even look at her as I bite my tongue. It's as if we were *nothing* to her.

Unable to say another word without my feelings being known, I exit the living room and head toward Julian's office because his space always calms me down. Closing the door behind me, I pace the room, trying to make sense of this all.

The sound of the creaking door warns me of someone entering. I lower my head, smelling his aftershave, before

lifting my gaze to meet his.

“Adriana,” Julian softly begins with. “It’s okay to be upset.”

I shake my head, not wanting him to see my tears, but my daughter running off to get married to someone we only met warrants a good sob.

“Are you kidding me?” I cry, unable to hold back any longer. “Luna did not think this through!”

“I understand why you’re upset.”

“Do you?”

Julian wraps his arms around me, bringing me in for a tight embrace as I bury my face into his chest. A very long time ago, I gave my heart to one man—Elijah Evans. I never thought he would leave us after a short time. When Julian entered my life, it wasn’t love at first sight. It took me a lot of healing to let go of my guilt and fall in love again.

And the truth is, I can’t imagine my life without him.

He is my *home*.

“She’s our baby girl, all grown up and exploring the world. While it does come as a surprise, she’s chosen to be with a woman, we made a pact to always support our children no matter their decisions.”

I nod. “I know, it’s just, I’m shocked. She was so into men. I mean, the stories she would tell me.”

Julian pulls back, pressing his lips flat.

“Adriana,” he warns.

“Okay, but the marriage thing? She could have called us. We would have flown anywhere for her. They’ve known each other for how long? I mean, let’s be honest, if she was with a man, we’d assume she was pregnant, but clearly, that’s not happening here. I just don’t understand why she couldn’t wait for us.”

“I know,” he whispers. “It would have been nice to walk her down the aisle.”

I pull him close to me again, holding onto him tight. This isn't exactly how I expected Christmas to turn out, but with time ticking and the roads already chaotic trying to get in and out of the city, there's nothing left to be said about the matter.

At least, not right now while tension is at an all-time high.

"We need to go. I don't want to miss seeing Andy and the kids for Christmas."

"Of course," Julian says, then pulls his phone out of his pocket. His brows furrow as he concentrates on reading a text, then lets out a long-winded sigh.

"What's wrong?"

"Lex is stuck on a flight to Maryland, but the reports say the roads are icy, which means they may close them soon."

"He just texted you?"

Julian nods. "This Christmas is surely testing all of us."

"But we'll get through it, right?" I ask short of a beg.

He places his lips on mine. His soft, warm taste is enough to ease my worries.

"We always do, baby."

### *Julian*

Adriana has always been an emotionally driven woman. It's one of the reasons I fell in love with her.

She wears her heart on her sleeve, and with Adriana, you know exactly how she is feeling. There is no holding back with her.

So, it comes as no surprise that Luna's announcement shook her. The truth is, I felt the same way. I just didn't want to add fuel to the fire, knowing Adriana relied on my calm reaction when, deep down, I was disappointed. Walking our daughter down the aisle is something I've envisioned ever since Luna was a little girl.

I've always been fond of traditions, something we didn't have much of growing up with a single mother. Yet, as I grew older, it was something I wanted to start with my own family. Granted, it was supposed to be with Charlie, but the universe knew exactly what I needed.

*Adriana.*

The drive over the bridge to Brooklyn is relatively quiet. Willow keeps the conversation alive by talking about what's happening on her campus. Mainly boy-girl dramas that involve frat parties. Given she's smart and wants to become a marine biologist, I'm praying she keeps her head down and ignores all the college nonsense.

Christmas has evolved over the years. We alternate our time between LA and Manhattan since Andy, Jessa, and the kids spend most of their time here. I'm so proud of my son and everything he has achieved. It's not like I'm not proud of Luna, it's just that she's not Andy when it comes to making wise choices.

Great, I'm spiraling in thoughts and now comparing my children. Something I said I'd *never* do.

Adriana sits in the front beside me but is quiet. She stares out the window with a blank expression, which is unusual for her. I know she wants to talk to Luna privately, but given Georgia joined us unexpectedly on this trip, it'll have to wait.

The tension inside the car is palpable with the main conversation between Willow and Georgia. Luna hasn't helped ease things either, most likely feeling guilty for her actions. We never ask for much, but this is upsetting for both of us.

The snow picks up as I slow my driving to a safer limit. It takes us longer to get to Brooklyn, only managing to grab a parking spot outside.

Andy and Jessa greet us at the door, but the kids take the center of attention in their matching Christmas jumpers.

"Oh, how adorable are my babies!" Adriana almost pushes me over to hug Bentley as his face cringes when she squeezes him too tight.

“Me.” Mackenzie jumps up and down. “Hug me, Mimi!”

Adriana’s smile is exuberant as she embraces Mackenzie and compliments her on the outfit. When Mackenzie was born, Adriana was over the moon. We always wanted to expand our family but had trouble doing so naturally. After adopting Luna, we considered adopting again but thought we’d try naturally. Nothing came of it, not even after five attempts at IVF.

We gave up and accepted our fate, on the waitlist for another child up for adoption. That’s when we found out we were pregnant with Willow, and our world forever changed.

Seeing Adriana pregnant with our child is an experience I’ll never forget, but now, I get to watch her be ‘Mimi’ to our grandkids.

“Pops!” Bentley rushes to hug me. “I want to show you the new books Dad got me for Christmas.”

Bentley loves to read anything and everything. When I visit the city, I often take him out to the State Library, which he loves so much. Frankly, I think he’s going to be a journalist because his penmanship is advanced for his age.

“How about we let Pops, Mimi, Willow, Luna, and ...” Andy trails off, unsure who Georgia is.

“Oh, that’s Georgia, Luna’s wife,” Willow blurts out unapologetically.

“Um, excuse me?” Andy questions.

“Yes, I’m gay, okay?” Luna almost rolls her eyes at him. “I’m also freezing my tits off, so if you don’t mind, I’d like to be inside your warm home right now.”

Andy appears to be in shock, only for Jessa to jokingly click her fingers in front of him, prompting him to move.

Inside the house, the air is warm with the fireplace turned on. I remove my coat and then help Adriana with hers. After placing the coats on the rack, I receive a text message from Lex.



LEX

I just stopped to put gas in. I should get there before midnight if they don't shut down the interstate.

ME

They're still monitoring the conditions, but I'll let you know as soon as my buddy, Gus, gets back to me.

LEX

Thank you, I appreciate it. Give my love to Andy and the rest. I'll hopefully see them tomorrow.

ME

I will, and don't worry, Lex, you will get home.

There was a time in our lives when Lex wouldn't even look at me. After all, I was the man who threatened to take Charlie away from him. Yet, as the years passed and our families became the core of our existence, things between us shifted. No, we're not best friends, but he is my brother-in-law, and we have one thing in common—we only want the best for Adriana.

When Lex and Adriana's parents passed away, it was a tough time for all of us. But the life lesson we learned is that family is everything. However, we may come into it.

And with that in mind, I pull Luna aside. "I want you to know your mother and I will support you no matter what. All we want is for you to be happy."

Luna nods, her lips trembling. "I know, Dad. I'm happy. I'm sorry we didn't invite you to the wedding. I wasn't thinking, just caught up in the moment."

I reach out to caress her cheek. "You're still our little girl, Luna Bear."

“I know.” She smiles with ease. “I’m sure Mom is planning a wedding already.”

A laugh escapes me. “I’m sure of that, too.”

Andy and Jessa stand beside the fireplace, glancing at each other. I suspect something is going on, and I wouldn’t be surprised if they’re expanding their family. Though, Jessa carrying a glass of red wine in her hand would trump that theory.

“We have some exciting news,” Andy begins, taking a deep breath. “It happened today and really fast, but we wanted to tell you first before Noah and Kate arrive.”

“You’re a lesbian too!” Willow teases jokingly.

Luna and Georgia fall into a fit of laughter, and even Adriana can’t help herself.

“What’s a lesbenim, Aunty Willow?” Mackenzie asks.

“It’s when two women love each other,” Bentley informs her.

Andy closes his eyes momentarily to cue his frustration with Willow. I don’t blame him, the three of them often rile each other up on purpose. Yet, I must say, I’m impressed with Bentley’s knowledge on the subject.

“Jessa, I’d love for you to tell everyone since it is your big news.”

With a proud smile on her face, Jessa grabs Andy’s hand. “It’s our news.”

Adriana throws her arms up in the air. “C’mon, what is it?”

I’m married to the most impatient woman ever.

“I’ve been offered a TV deal based on my first novel,” Jessa tells us with excitement.

“Oh my god!” Adriana jumps up to hug Jessa. “This is amazing news, sweetheart. A movie deal? Who is playing the lead? It better be someone sexy like ...”

“Ew, Mom, stop,” Willow complains.

Jessa grins. “That’s kinda not all ...”

Adriana pulls back. “Okay ...”

“They’re filming most of the series in Australia, so it looks like we’ll be moving there for a year. Sydney, well, Byron Bay for a month of it.”

“A year?” Adriana asks softly.

I reach out for her, touching her hand to bring her close to me. After Luna’s bombshell, Adriana is vulnerable, and I know she thinks she’s losing her grandbabies. Even though we’ve slowed down with work, and traveling more than ever, it was always hard on her when Andy chose to live in Brooklyn.

“You know what?” I begin with, then continue, “This calls for a celebration. Your mother and I have been eyeing a place in Sydney since that’s where we first got together.”

“Dad, when you say got together, do you mean hooked up?” Willow questions with a sly smile.

“Somethings are best unknown, Willow,” I scold her gently, keeping my smile fixed. “So, we get to travel more? This is a win-win for everyone.”

Andy looks relieved. “Thank you, Dad. It means so much to us that you’re on board our new adventure.”

He moves toward me, embracing me tight. “I love you.”

“Love you too, son.”

Jessa follows, hugging me tight. “Thanks, Julian. I just hope my dad is as calm as you, but you know what he’s like. Stubborn like Uncle Lex.”

“It’ll be fine,” I assure her.

Andy stands in front of Adriana. “Mom, you know we will need you, right? Jessa may have to work long hours on set, and I can’t cook like their Mimi can.”

Adriana’s eyes begin to well up. “Of course, kiddo. We’re always here to help you achieve your dreams. And since we’ve

been supposedly eyeing a place in Sydney, I'd like to find a place the kids can stay if you two need a break sometimes."

"Um, excuse me, what about me?" Willow questions with annoyance. "Are you leaving me?"

Adriana waves her palm. "Eh, your love triangle will preoccupy you. I doubt you'll even know we're gone half the time. By the way, everyone always chooses the older brother in romance stories. There's your answer."

"Great," Willow sulks. "Thanks for reminding me."

Then, Adriana turns to Luna. "I expect both you and Georgia to visit. Just because you're married now doesn't mean you forget about us."

"Mom." Luna grins, placing her hand on Adriana's shoulder. "Stock up on the bridal magazines. You can plan the proper wedding. Just no tulle!"

"What's wrong with tulle?" Adriana complains with raised brows.

Georgia giggles. "It's okay. I love tulle, so count me in."

Adriana pulls Georgia in for a hug. "Welcome to the family, honey."

It had all the signs of a troubled Christmas, but we've made it through as a family.

"To new traditions and new beginnings." I raise my glass. "May we all count our blessings on this beautiful Christmas Eve."

Everyone raises their glasses. "To family."

And as we toast together, Noah and Kate arrive, followed by a newly widowed Morgan.

*The night is only just beginning ...*

CHAPTER  
**SIX**

## JESSA AND ANDY

### *Jessa*

“We have exciting news for you. Are you sitting down?”

My heart beats fast, knowing big things happen every time my agent calls me and starts the conversation this way. It’s been six years since I took the leap of faith and decided to put pen to paper. Well, fingers to keyboard. The writing journey has had many ups and downs, but overall, I’m living my dream, and Ingrid’s call has me on edge.

“Yes, Ingrid, what is it?”

“Okay, here goes,” she says with excitement. “The Endless Possibility of You and Me has been picked up for a series.”

“Wait, what? You mean TV series?”

“Yes, and we’re talking about a multi-million-dollar production with a top streaming service.”

My hands begin to tremble. “I, uh, but how?”

“How? Because you’re an amazing writer, Darling!” Ingrid complements with an enthused tone. “A well-known actress read your book, fell in love, then pitched it to her husband, who happens to own the production company.”

“Ingrid,” I manage to whisper. “This is huge.”

“It sure is. Now, a few things we need to go over. They are happy for you to have full control over the script, and let me

tell you, this is not something many producers allow. However, they want to stay authentic to the story.”

“Oh, okay.”

“As for filming, they’re shooting most of the series in Australia. I know you’re thinking about your family,” Ingrid rambles incessantly, “but the production company is willing for you to bring your whole family for an all-expenses stay in Sydney. The actress has a spare house or something for you to live in and a month in Byron Bay.”

“My whole family?” I choke as my head begins to explode from all the information.

“Yes, Jessa. We know you don’t want to leave the kids and your beautiful man behind, so bring them along.”

Ingrid is right. I would never leave my kids behind, nor would I leave them with Andy here. It’s all of us or nothing. We’ve been fortunate to have creative careers in which we can spend time with the kids, but moving to Australia, this would be *huge*.

It’s literally across the other side of the world.

Ingrid continues to talk with lots of details, but the main one catching my attention is production starting in four weeks.

“Four weeks? What do you mean?”

“Well, casting has to start. Without casting, we have no actors!”

“I get it,” I say, trying to catch my breath. “Listen, Ingrid. Can you send the contract over?”

“Already in your inbox. The lawyers have read over it and given the green light. We just need your signature, and the deal is done.”

I race to my laptop, opening up the screen to my inbox. There it is, the email that will change my career.

“It’s ... this is big.”

“Jessa,” Ingrid says more calmly. “It’s big but well overdue. The world needs to see your magic, you understand

me?”

I nod, though she can't see.

“Yeah, let me have a read, okay?”

“Speak soon, and congrats again, Darling. You deserve all this success.”

When the call ends, I open up the attachment and read through the contract. It's a straightforward contract, but the money is, well, a lot. So much so that it would be hard to say no. It's not like we need money. We are comfortable with owning our place here in Brooklyn. Andy works freelance, and of course, I write novels, so we converted our spare room into an office. We hold a small house in Orange County but lease it as a short-term rental and use it when we visit our family.

A goal of ours is to one day own a chateau in France, just like my parents. This could be it, a step closer to our goal.

Closing my screen, I stare out the window and into the street, allowing myself to daydream. There was a time in my life when I felt utterly trapped. I was stuck in a loveless marriage with a baby and in a country that didn't feel like home. I'd lost my identity, becoming this mindless robot of a wife to conform to my husband's standards.

Then, along came Prince Charming.

My best friend.

The life I and Andy have created together is everything we've dreamed about. Andy is a fantastic stepfather to Bentley, and now, watching him raise our daughter is something else.

As I sigh wistfully, I hear the front door.

“Mommy!” Mackenzie yells through the house. “We have hot mint cocoa for you.”

A smile graces my lips as I exit the room and find the three of them in the kitchen.

“Is this for me?”

“Yes, Mommy. Daddy said it's your favorite.”



I grin at Andy, then lean over to kiss him. “Daddy knows me well.”

“Daddy is cold,” Andy complains with a laugh. “They’re predicting the roads will close due to the snowstorm.”

“Oh no. Do you think everyone will make it? Aunt Charlie will be devastated if she can’t fly in.”

“I already spoke to Millie. They’re on their way. The problem is Lex.”

“What’s wrong with Lex?”

“He’s stuck in London.”

My heart sinks, knowing he must be devastated. Uncle Lex has always been a father figure to me, welcoming me into his home like I was one of his daughters. Ever since I can remember, we spent Christmas lunch at his place.

I quickly pull out my phone to send him a text.

ME

It won't be Christmas without you and your extraordinary turkey carving skills. I'm sending you positive vibes to get here on time. We miss you, Uncle Lex.

There’s no instant response, so I put my phone down, hoping it all works out. Bentley is busy trying to finish a Harry Potter puzzle while Mackenzie sits at the window, people-watching. She knows not to wave nor interact, but her fascination with people is an odd pastime for a four-year-old.

“Um, so, we need to talk about something super important,” I say in a low voice, not wanting the kids to hear me. “Can we go to the study?”

Andy follows me to the study, closing the door behind him.

“Is this about your dad inviting your mom and not telling Kate until the last minute? Because I’ll be honest, your parents have been kinda chummy since Jack passed.”

My eyes widen at his insinuation.

“Are you suggesting my dad had other motives? Dad would never cheat on Kate.”

“Hey!” Andy raises his hands. “I never said cheat. I just mentioned their relationship has shifted.”

I let out a sigh. “No, you’re right. They have been chummy. I’ve just been in denial, I guess. Maybe I should ask Nash?”

Andy snorts. “Your brother is too busy chasing pussy to notice anything else.”

“Gross.” I cringe, then remember why I pulled Andy away to talk privately. “Okay, so big news from Ingrid today.”

“Ingrid? Okay, should I be sitting for this?”

I nod, then suck in a breath. “I’ve been offered a TV deal for The Endless Possibility of You and Me. It’s with a big streaming service and, honestly, a lot of money.”

Andy’s face lights up with a proud smile. “Baby, I knew you could do it!”

He stands up and lifts me into his arms, overjoyed.

“That’s not all ...” Slowly, he places me down in anticipation. “They want me to have full control over the screenplay. Something about staying authentic to the book.”

“That’s amazing and not common. This sounds like a dream come true.”

“But ...”

“There’s a but?”

“A huge one. They’re filming in Australia. Production starts in four weeks. They’ve offered an all-expenses stay for a year. House, everything. Meaning they’re willing for us to travel and stay as a family.”

Andy nods slowly. “I see. Wow, okay, Australia is far.”

“I know.”

“But this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

“It is,” I say in a low voice. “But there’s so much to think about.”

“We’re not doing this apart if that’s what you’re insisting.”

I roll my eyes, then slap his chest. “As if. We’re a package, all of us. You want one. You take us all. It’s just ...”

“Bentley?”

“Yes. I don’t know if Benedict will approve of being far apart from him.”

“We won’t know until we ask.” Andy softens. “We can make this work. I can get some jobs down under, and McKenzie doesn’t start school for a year. I’m sure we could find a preschool for her, and she’ll fit right in.”

“And Bentley?”

“I’m sure we can find a solution. If I need to home-school him while you work, then that’s what I’ll do.”

My eyes begin to well up, clouded with tears threatening to give way. This is such a big decision, and here I am with the most amazing man ever.

“You would do that for him? For me?”

Andy lifts my chin with his finger, staring into my eyes with a loving gaze.

“I will do anything for our family,” he murmurs. “I promised you the day I placed this ring on your finger, no matter what life throws at us, we’ll get through it.”

I place my hands on his cheeks, bringing him in for a deep kiss. As I pull away, grinning from ear to ear, I keep my arms around his neck.

“So, we’re moving to Australia?”

Andy chuckles, his eyes dancing with excitement. “We sure are, mate.”

*Andy*

When Jessa told me the news about the TV series, I was so damn proud of her. Sure, Australia is going to be a big move, but the biggest hurdle would be staying within the custody arrangement for Bentley.

Jessa had been dreading the conversation with Benedict. So, when it was time to call him, I sat beside her for support. Surprisingly, Benedict didn't act like an asshole. Given he's remarried with another son to his new wife, he agreed for Bentley to go as long as he returned for one trip back here for the summer holidays. Benedict planned to take him to Maui for two weeks. He also agreed to visit him in Sydney at least three times during the year.

With the biggest worry off our plate, we now had the daunting task of telling my mother. It was hard enough when we decided to move permanently to Brooklyn. She thought it was the end of the world not being near her grandchildren. So much so that Dad bought a place in Manhattan so Mom could visit anytime.

Jessa thought we should tell them earlier in the night before her parents arrived, like ripping off a Band-Aid. While Mom took it reasonably well, I'm stuck in shock over my sister. I mean, who shows up with an unannounced woman who happens to be her wife?

Luna has constantly screwed around with men. Despite being her older brother and deeply disturbed by a promiscuous sister, this comes as a shock.

I pull Luna aside after Dad finishes toasting Jessa's success, and Mom manages to handle the news like a normal person.

"What kind of a stunt is this?"

"It's not a stunt, dear brother. It was the right thing to do," Luna corrects me.

"Since when? The last time we spoke, you were drunk in Rome and crying over the phone because Cruz posted a story with some chick," I whisper so no one hears.

“Oh, that?” she answers nonchalantly. “Yeah, just a drunk rant.”

I try to bite my tongue, but I know her feelings run deep. No one knew they had been seeing each other for over a year besides me and Jessa. Things got intense, and Luna basically ran away to Europe. As for Cruz, the last I heard was that he wasn't doing well. He's always in trouble and close to losing his NFL contract. They were on and off, but Luna's meltdown in Rome revealed just how invested she was.

“Luna,” I say softly. “You were so in love with him. What happened?”

She glances at me with a forced smile. I know my sister well. She's covering up something.

“Andy, I'm in love with Georgia. She's my wife. You need to accept I'm no longer your crazy sister who jumps into bed with random guys. What I have with Georgia is special, okay?”

“But Cruz wasn't a random guy,” I remind her.

“It's all in the past.”

How do I argue with her when I know deep down inside this isn't the end of the story? Luna no longer entertains my interrogation, walking away to grab something to snack on. Since she's been here, she's nearly eaten a whole bowl of pretzels and the cookies McKenzie made.

It isn't long before Noah and Kate arrive, followed by Morgan. Nash comes a little later, minus his mom, who couldn't make it. As for Jessa's younger sister, Sienna, she brought her new boyfriend, who appears petrified of Uncle Noah.

Jessa did a fantastic job at setting the table with a beautiful Christmas theme. Mom is impressed, taking photos of absolutely everything. Willow follows Mom's suit but loads them onto socials and tags everyone.

We all sit down and say grace before enjoying Jessa's delicious dinner. Across the table, I observe Noah and Kate, barely speaking to each other. Trying not to seem obvious, I

glance at Jessa, who is also watching them. With Morgan sitting across from Noah and their light-hearted conversation at the center of my attention, I see Jessa dig her fork into the turkey aggressively.

I lean into her to whisper, “Why don’t we go upstairs to talk for a moment, huh?”

We excuse ourselves, which no one seems to be bothered by, as everyone is immersed in different conversations. As I close the door to our bedroom, Jessa begins to pace.

“My dad is a jerk.”

“Jessa, calm down.”

She crosses her arms in defiance. “Do you see what is happening?”

“Look, it’s just a rough patch. All marriages have them.”

“Are you saying we’ll have a rough patch?”

I shake my head with a warm smile. “You’re too stubborn to allow a rough patch.”

“Andy, I’m being serious.”

My hands reach out to embrace her. “Baby, what will be will be. Your parents are adults. Let them figure this out. As for us, we’ve gone through too much to waste time on rough patches. I love you. I’ve always loved you. I didn’t fight to have you as my wife to waste time fighting over trivial matters.”

“You’re right.” She nods, letting out a long-winded sigh.

“So, are you ready to tell your parents about the move to Australia?”

Taking a deep breath, she wraps her arms around me with a devilish grin. “Maybe I need a bit of tension relief, if you know what I mean.”

A grin spreads across my face. “Now? With everyone downstairs?”

“Why, you chicken?” she teases.

I cup my hands beneath her ass and throw her onto the bed, watching her curls fall against the duvet.

Who would have thought when we were kids we would end up right here?

I'm with my best friend, and I get to call her my *wife*.

I bite the corner of my lip, eyeing her with my cock already throbbing.

“Are you ready, Mrs. Baker? Let's see how quickly we can do this. Just be very, very, quiet ...”

CHAPTER  
**SEVEN**



## KATE AND NOAH

### *Kate*

**N**o matter where Lex is in the world, he will always make sure to video conference in for the fear of missing out.

Yes, Lex has FOMO.

Who would have thought?

I'm sitting at the head of the boardroom table in our LA office, trying to close some deals before the holidays start. Over in London, Lex is giving his demands because the man knows how to negotiate to get what he wants.

"Can we please agree now on what we'll settle for moving forward? Our bid is in. Frankly, they can take it or leave it."

On the monitor, appearing on another screen, Will is rubbing his temple. He's worked long and hard on this project, so I know he wishes this would be done before everyone leaves for Manhattan.

"Lex, can we be reasonable here? I say we play our cards right instead of forcing them into a corner."

Lex closes his eyes, then opens them with an exhausted face. "Fine, Romano. You lead this deal. I need to catch a flight back home."

As quickly as he says it, Lex wishes everyone a merry Christmas before exiting the call. The company performed well this year, so naturally, he gave out good bonuses. Everyone was mighty impressed with his generosity.

Across the table, Noah looks less than enthused. He's been traveling the last week and is in a *mood*. In fact, it's not just the previous week. He's been short and temperamental of late. You would think he's menopausal with the attitude he's been dishing. Given we're about to travel across the country to see the kids, his mood better improve.

"Are we done, folks?"

Everyone nods after what has been a long and tedious meeting. Will appears agitated but hangs up immediately as they fly out in an hour. Noah and I managed to book business class, which is leaving first thing in the morning. Will offered for us to join them on the private jet, but we wanted to wrap some work up before leaving.

The day should have ended, but there are more calls and meetings. Not everyone cares for Christmas, that's for sure. By the time it reaches five, the office is almost deserted, so I wander back to my own office for solitude.

I take a deep breath, twisting my head from left to right to alleviate the tension in my neck. Just when I feel better, I receive an incoming video call from Eric.

Great, here comes my stress again. He's probably got some fashion emergency.

"Hiya, Doll," I greet with a smile, observing his knitted sweater. "Well, well, well. Mr. Kennedy-Baker in burgundy. I thought you repelled that color?"

"It brings out my eyebrows."

"Uh, okay ..."

"The kids are having the best time. You should see the snow. So perfect. I don't know about the icy roads. We may leave earlier tomorrow to make sure we don't get stuck. Tristan has been glued to the weather channel."

To see Eric as a father is such a joy. He never thought he had it in him, but I always knew he could love someone else besides himself.

"I want to see your beautiful babies," I plead.

Eric calls them over, and they sit on his lap. Oh gosh, they're the cutest things ever. It makes me miss Bentley and Mackenzie, though Jessa would never make them wear matching outfits.

“Their outfits are adorable, Eric!”

Little Sailor is dressed in a red velvet gown with classic white lapels. Everything about the dress screams Eric. When he moves the screen, and George appears waving, he looks so handsome in his matching velvet suit. They look like little kids from the Royal family.

“Auntie Kate can't wait to hug you guys in two days,” I tell them with a big grin. “And, maybe I have some extra special presents for you.”

Sailor's face lights up. “Is it designer?”

God, what has Eric done to them?

“No, but you'll have fun playing with them.”

George looks tired, almost ready to fall asleep. Eric continues to ramble, moving the phone around so Tristan and Eric's mom can say hello. Then, I notice Kennedy, Dominic's daughter, at the piano.

She's gorgeous, and it's hard to believe Dominic is a changed man. According to Charlie, who heard from Eric, he is nothing like the man we knew. Now, he's a doting father who will do anything for his daughter.

Dominic catches a glimpse of me on the screen and smiles warmly. All those years ago, we ended on bad terms. Then, he met Emile, my former assistant, and they started a relationship. They were together for a long time, though they never married or had kids. There have been a few occasions when we've run into each other, but for the most part, as time went on, we kept it amicable.

Eric notices and then brings the phone to his brother.

“I'm sure you guys can say Merry Christmas to each other,” Eric drags.

“It’s fine,” I inform Eric, then smile at Dominic. “Kennedy has grown so much.”

Dominic grins proudly, and I can’t help but remember how this is the man I once fell in love with despite his flaws.

“Almost senior year. Time is surely moving fast.”

“Yes, fast and slow sometimes.” I sigh wistfully. “We’re empty nesters now. All the kids have left.”

“Have you been well?” he asks, keeping it friendly.

“Yes, and you?”

“Surprisingly, the best I’ve ever been.”

I nod with my lips quirked. “I’m glad to hear, Dominic. Merry Christmas.”

“And to you, Kate.”

Eric moves the phone back onto himself but then needs to leave because George wants to sleep. As I say goodbye, I can’t help but do so with a smile on my face.

Placing my phone onto the table, a voice clears their throat. Noah is standing at the doorway of my office, leaning against the frame with his arms crossed. His expression is cold and uninviting.

“How long have you been friendly with him?”

“Excuse me, with whom?”

Noah presses his lips together, keeping his gaze fixated on me. “You know who I’m talking about.”

It takes me a moment to register. Then, I refrain from rolling my eyes.

“Are we having this conversation, like twenty years later?”

“Yes, we are,” he states.

I fold my arms, annoyed at him. “I’m not sure why. We have three children together. One of which I spent twenty-four hours in labor with!”

His stare penetrates into me. “You’re not a man.”

“And what’s that supposed to mean, exactly?”

“It means you don’t understand how a man’s mind works.”

“You know, you’re right. I don’t understand how a man’s mind works because you are making zero sense to me right now.”

Noah has always been a jealous man. Come to think of it, it’s probably because he spends too much time with Lex. Talk about a bad influence.

I grab my things and shut down my computer, desperate to get out of here.

“There’s something I need to tell you,” Noah continues, ignoring my frustration over this conversation. “It’s about Morgan.”

“What about Morgan?”

“I didn’t think she should be alone this Christmas.”

When Morgan’s husband passed, it was a shock for everyone. Yet, if I’m being honest, Morgan didn’t take it as hard as I would have thought. Of course, she was devastated, but she seemed to carry on, rarely mentioning his name.

“No one should be alone for Christmas,” I tell him. “So ...”

“So, I booked her flight with ours, and she’ll join us at Jessa’s place.”

I force a smile. “Oh, it sounds perfect.”

Deep down inside, I didn’t want to admit the truth. While Morgan and I got along for the sake of Jessa, Noah always kept his distance. They spoke about Jessa’s matters, but they weren’t close friends or anything. If anything, Noah was closer to Nash’s mom, Olivia.

But lately, Noah has dropped hints of him talking more and more to Morgan. At first, I thought he felt sorry for her, given she’s widowed. Then he drops this, buying her tickets and flying with us?

He’s your husband. There’s no reason not to trust him.

Yet, why is my gut telling me something isn't right?

### *Noah*

It had been a grueling week.

My patience wore thin as I found myself dealing with morons. Why can't people just do their jobs? Lex had been on edge, and it was his usual style to take it out on everyone else. I'm used to him, but others aren't, so they fell under his wrath.

What pushed me over the edge was hearing Kate talk to Dominic. It was like de-ja-fucking-vu. The call, his voice, everything was so triggering, and maybe I shouldn't have doubted her, but I was overwhelmed with jealousy. That night, we went home, and she completely ignored me, so I slept in the spare room. I don't know why I did it, only adding fuel to the fire, but I couldn't rest my weary mind.

Kate kept our conversations short on our flight to JFK. With Morgan traveling with us, she opted to sit next to her rather than me. It didn't bother me. I used the time to catch up on emails since work never stops.

Occasionally, I'd glance over to make sure Morgan was okay, only for Kate to catch me looking and turn away hurt.

I wanted to tell her the truth.

But it wasn't the right time.

For now, the secret had to remain just that—a secret.

There is no time to stop at our penthouse in the city, so we head straight to Brooklyn to catch up with everyone. Upon arriving, the kids are jumping up and down excitedly, dressed in their winter clothes since it is freezing outside. We'd been monitoring the weather with a potential blizzard hitting the city. I'd texted Lex earlier, but he wasn't responding. I knew Charlie was already here, but Lex hadn't contacted anyone. I assume he has no coverage and will call as soon as he can.

Everyone is in the festive spirit despite the snow falling heavily outside, but Kate is still ignoring me. Across the table, I glance at Morgan as her food is barely touched.

“You need to eat,” I tell her softly.

Morgan smiles. “I will.”

All of a sudden, Jessa and Andy excuse themselves. Bentley is between me and Kate, talking a mile a minute about Harry Potter. Given that I’ve never watched the movies, but Kate has, I listen to them talk about some guy named Hagrid or something to that effect.

“I’m just going to grab more wine,” Morgan says, leaving the table.

I wipe my mouth with the napkin, then slip out of my chair to follow her. Inside the kitchen, she stands near the sink. I move close to her and rest my hand on her shoulder.

“Are you okay?”

She barely manages to nod, so I turn her around and bring her in for an embrace.

“We’ll get through this.”

“I know,” she whispers.

The door opens to Kate standing at the entrance with wide eyes. She’s taken aback by Morgan in my arms.

“What the hell is going on here?”

“It’s not what you think,” I tell her quickly.

Her breathing accelerates as she clutches her stomach.  
*“Don’t lie to me, Noah.”*

Morgan shakes her head, tears filling her eyes. I’m torn between wanting to keep the secret between us and not wanting to lie to my wife anymore.

“We need to tell her,” I say softly to Morgan. “Kate needs to know.”

With a gentle nod, Morgan opens her mouth but then closes it shut. “I can’t ... you do it.”

My heart is heavy, but the truth needs to come out.

“Morgan has been diagnosed with stage three breast cancer.”

Kate's mouth falls open. Then, she begins to shake her head. "I ... I don't understand. When did this happen?"

"I found out three weeks ago," Morgan answers with a tremble, consumed with emotions and fear. "I told Noah last week because I'm going to undergo treatment soon, and we were trying to figure out how to break it to Jessa."

I lower my head, staring at the floor. My stomach is twisting, unable to swallow the truth even though I've known all week.

"What exactly does stage three mean?" Kate questions with a quiver in her voice.

Morgan takes a deep breath. "Stage three means that the cancer has spread from the breast to the lymph nodes. My doctor is deciding the best course of treatment, but I will need a mastectomy."

Kate falls silent, then rushes to Morgan's side and tightly holds onto her. When she pulls away, doing her best to contain her tears, she reaches out for my hand, holding onto both of us.

"We're going to get through this, you understand me? And maybe today isn't the best day to tell Jessa. Let's just get through Christmas?" Kate suggests, gripping my hand super tight.

"You're right." Morgan lets out a breath. "Let's get back inside, shall we?"

"We'll join you in a moment. I just need a minute with Kate."

As Morgan leaves the kitchen, Kate rushes into my arms.

"I'm sorry for doubting you. I had no idea," she cries.

"Hey ..." I lift her chin, wiping away the tear on her face. "I wanted to respect Morgan but struggled myself. I'm sorry for acting like a jerk. I don't know how to get through this. We can't lose her. It will break Jessa."

Kate shakes her head. "We won't lose her. She's family. We need some big, mighty prayers and the best doctors to treat



her. I'll take time off to take her to appointments. We can do this."

I bring Kate's face to mine and gently press my lips against hers.

"I love you," I whisper. "It's always been you."

With a relaxed smile, Kate places her hand in mine. "Let's go back inside and give our kids the Christmas they deserve."

"Sounds like a plan, Mrs. Mason."

It wasn't the Christmas we wished for, but as we opened presents and the tree stood in all its glory, I couldn't help but make a wish upon the star.

And pray for a Christmas miracle.

CHAPTER  
**EIGHT**

## AVA AND AUSTIN

### *Ava*

“**A**va, may I tell you how amazing we think you are? The work you’ve done here tonight is nothing short of spectacular.”

Johann Krause is a highly influential fashion designer in Europe. When labels rejected him as a designer, he started his own company, and now he rivals all the luxury names. The fact he even came to this event is *huge*. Considering this is a pre-launch and not the actual launch, I’ll consider myself lucky. In the last year, I’ve spent a good portion of my time creating jewelry pieces for my soon-to-be online store. The brick-and-mortar store is close to finished, and I expect the grand opening to go ahead next month if the contractors stick to the schedule.

Jewelry has always been a passion of mine. The pieces I’ve designed look high-end but are affordable for everyone. Elegant, classy, and stylish.

Everything is moving ahead according to plan, and I couldn’t be any happier.

“Thank you, Johann. It’s an honor for you to attend this event. I know your schedule must be busy so close to Christmas.”

“Ah, yes,” he gloats in his thick German accent. “But you, my dear, make it all worthwhile. However, I must ask you an important question. Have you considered returning to modeling?”

“Modeling?” I quirk my brows. “I never really modeled besides my own designs.”

“But you’re beautiful, my dear, and as you know, I’m collaborating with another designer to make a high-end sleepwear line.”

“Yes, I’ve read about it,” I inform him. “There’s a demand for it, that’s for sure.”

“So, you’ll consider, then?”

“I, um ...”

“There you are.” Austin smiles as he wraps his arms around my waist. “The star of the show.”

I grin, basking in the attention. “You have to say that because you’re my husband.”

“She is the star, yes?” Johann asks with a smirk. “A shining star we need in our show.”

Austin cocks his head. “Your show?”

“Yes, my show is in Frankfurt and Paris. I want your beautiful wife to be our headliner.”

“You never said headliner?”

“Well, a woman as beautiful as you deserves the attention.” Johann’s assistant pulls him aside to whisper something in his ear. “Ah, I see. Will you excuse me a moment?”

As he walks away, Austin turns to face me with a curious gaze. He looks so handsome in his dark gray suit, a far cry from the scrubs he’s usually in.

“You’re going to say no, right?”

“What are you talking about?”

“The modeling gig, or whatever the hell it is.” He changes his tone. “I don’t want you on some stage half-naked.”

“Firstly, I wouldn’t be half-naked,” I assure him. “I haven’t had time to think about it. Johann only sprung it on me like literally two seconds ago.”

Austin juts his chin with a dismissive glance.

“I never heard you say no.”

I fold my arms beneath my chest. “Johann Krause is an influential designer. There is a time and place to have this discussion. Just because I didn’t shut him down doesn’t mean I’m going to say yes. Honestly, Austin, why do you always have such a problem with what I do?”

“Because you’re my wife, Ava. I don’t want men salivating over your body when you’re the mother of our daughters.”

Austin’s stubborn and caveman-like behavior is getting on my nerves. He wasn’t always like this, but maybe, when I look back and think about it, he was always busy studying to become a surgeon. There was no time to worry about me when he had exams to pass and people to operate on.

He’s always tried to be present for the girls, yet for the longest time, he hasn’t been present for *me*.

“I need a drink,” I say out loud, looking for the waiter.

“Don’t you think we should get back to the girls?”

“Your mom is taking care of them. She knows very well we are going to be late,” I remind him.

“We have an early flight tomorrow.”

Whatever is bothering him is getting on my last nerve. We were lucky enough for Austin’s mom to join us, so she was able to watch the girls in the hotel room. She has a two-day cruise to the Bahamas with her girlfriends, so the timing worked out perfectly.

Just as I’m about to argue with him, my phone rings with Addy’s name flashing on the screen.

“Hey, is everything okay?”

“Can you talk?” she asks, but her voice is out of character.

“Yeah, hold on.” I move toward the foyer, where it’s quiet, leaving an annoyed Austin behind. “Is everything okay?”

“No, I’m at Mom and Dad’s place. Masen and I got into a huge fight about Cruz.”

“Cruz?”

“Yeah, he got drunk and came over. Basically, he admitted he’s still into me. Masen lost his cool and blamed me for enabling the situation.”

I furrow my brows in confusion. “How did he think you were enabling the situation?”

“My reluctance to have kids. He said if we had kids, maybe Cruz would finally let go.”

“Oh, stupid, silly, Masen.” I sigh heavily. “Look, he’s hurt and said a stupid thing. I’m sure he doesn’t actually believe kids will solve the problem because, trust me, it doesn’t.”

“He was mad, but I’m madder,” her voice changes to a whisper. “Listen, I have to go because I don’t want Mom to overhear. You’re flying in tomorrow, right?”

“We are,” I say, but hold back my own issues. “See you then. Oh, and Addy?”

“Yeah?”

“Must be a full moon or something. Austin is also being a dick. Chin up, and it will all work out, okay?”

“Thanks, sis.”

We hang up the call, but my shoulders tense from the stress of everything. Just as I’m about to go back inside, Austin walks out of the room. I can tell by his stiff posture that he’s not in the mood to be here to support me.

“I’m leaving.”

“Okay.”

“Are you joining me?” he demands rather than asking politely.

“No. I have work to do.”

And with that said, I head back into the room and straight for the bar. For the rest of the night, I drink and mingle, or

should I say—network. So many people came out tonight, even a few celebrities who wanted to see the pieces before they launched. My marketing team is over the moon, with major retailers looking to place orders as soon as we launch. All in all, I couldn't have asked for a better night.

For my *career*.

As for my marriage, I have no clue what will become of us. The God-honest truth is we've been drifting for months. Austin has his life, and I have mine. Sometimes, when he's not working, or on rare occasions like tonight, we manage to be together and with the girls.

But it's not enough. Denial will only get me so far, and with the truth becoming more apparent, it gets harder to face reality.

We are only one step away from falling apart.

### *Austin*

The girls sleep inside the hotel room as Mom says goodbye and heads back to her room. I'm glad she's cruising with her friends since Dad is busy golfing in Hawaii and couldn't care less about Christmas.

*What a fucking night.*

I shouldn't have picked a fight with Ava, but the coward in me doesn't know how to bring the conversation up. Not only that, but the people tonight were so superficial.

As Ava was on stage talking about her jewelry line, I got the call I'd been waiting for. In my wildest dreams, I never anticipated they would even consider me for the cardiovascular surgeon role at the Oregon Health and Science University Hospital.

So, I never brought it up.

About two weeks ago, I zoomed in for a discussion that was supposed to be a casual chat.

But here we are.

A job offer on the table.

I pace the room, careful not to wake the girls, contemplating how I'm going to bring this up with Ava. With Christmas only two days away, this can go either way with her. All the family will be in Manhattan, so the last thing I want is to cause tension between us. Yet, I know Lex would understand my predicament. I just haven't had the chance to talk it over with him.

As the night drags on, Ava stumbles through the door at three in the morning. I can tell by the way she walks she's had too much to drink. A part of me wanted to chastise her, but I brought this on myself.

She uses the bathroom, then falls into bed, ignoring me, and before I can even get in a word, she's snoring beside me.

Staring at the ceiling, insomnia rears its ugly head. I toss and turn, but at dawn, I give up, heading for the hotel gym to get a workout in. When I return, Ava is awake and dressed. Surprisingly, she looks beautiful and not hungover.

"We should talk about last night before the girls wake up," she suggests.

I take a seat on the sofa beside her, wiping my forehead with the towel I'd used to work out.

"We should."

"What the hell happened last night?" she questions with annoyance but keeps her voice down. "You made a big deal out of nothing."

"I've been offered a role as a cardiovascular surgeon," I blurt out.

"But you are a cardiovascular surgeon?"

"It's more than just that. They want me to teach as well. It's a step up from where I am right now."

"Okay, but what about opening your own practice?"

"I can still have my own practice one day, but ..." I trail off, then clear my throat. "The job is in Portland."



“Portland? As in Oregon?”

I nod, lowering my gaze. “They called me last night.”

Ava stares at me in complete silence, which is unusual for her since she has the tendency to blurt out whatever she’s thinking.

“How long have you been thinking about this? Or should I say, hoping for this?”

“It’s only been two weeks. See, it’s a multi-specialty academic medical center and includes the Doernbecher Children’s Hospital, recognized as one of the best pediatric facilities in the state. I’ll be learning more in this facility with room to grow.”

She drops her head, toying with her wedding ring. “Two weeks is a long time to hide something from your wife.”

I reach out to touch her hand, and even though she doesn’t push me away, I know she’s trying her best to ignore my touch.

“We have some time to think about it,” I quickly inform her.

“How much time, Austin?”

“A week,” I mumble. “They need me straight away. The caseload is too much, and the waitlist is beyond their standard times.”

“A week?” Ava repeats, this time with a raised voice. She stands up, pacing the area around us. “You expect us to move our whole entire life in a week? What about the girls’ school? I’m about to open my store in LA and need to be present in the office and warehouse. And what about our families? Our whole support network is in LA.”

“I know,” I reply quietly. “Maybe I could head up there first and get a place set up for us, then you could follow with the girls?”

Just as I’m about to open my mouth to continue my suggestions, Emmy walks into the room, dazed and confused.

“Are we leaving for the airport now?”

“Yes, Emmy,” Ava says with a forced smile. “Can you slowly wake up your sister?”

Emmy drags herself to the room, only for River to begin crying.

Ava closes her eyes momentarily, then opens them to comfort River. When she appears moments later, trying to soothe River in her arms, she gazes at me with resentment in her eyes.

Either way, one of us is giving up our dreams.

The question is, who will it be?

CHAPTER  
**NINE**

## ROCKY AND NIKKI

### *Rocky*

**M**y wife is the hottest woman to ever exist.

But, this young chick serving me at the counter is something else. A tight purple dress with big jugs.

“Sir, do you know how the Venus works?”

“I have a fair idea, but it wouldn’t hurt for you to explain it in detail so my wife doesn’t get it wrong,” I say, smirking.

The chick looks unimpressed. “So, the tip here is for the clit. You want to make sure your wife is sitting up with her legs spread to get the best angle. As for the remote, you will have full control with just one click. There’s a slow setting, then medium, and super-fast is great. But is your wife a squirter?”

“Yes, she is.”

“Then you’ll probably want to get the matching dildo. We sell more as a set than singular.”

“Is that so?”

“Now, I should probably ask. Do you or your wife have a pacemaker?”

My lips press together as the chick waits for a response. Her face is serious, but let’s be fucking honest here, how old does she think I am? Yeah, so I’ve got some gray hair, but ladies have been calling me Silver Fox. That, or Daddy.

“I can assure you, I’m not old enough for a pacemaker.”

“Right, but we have to ask. Any heart conditions? Seizures?”

Narrowing my eyes, I tap my foot while crossing my arms. “Look, I can still get it up, and no, I don’t use Viagra. Will you just ring the items through so I can go home and enjoy my wife, who is not old?”

The chick nods with a knowing grin. “Right, so are you like a sugar daddy or something?”

I pull my black Amex out, which doesn’t help squash the whole sugar daddy comment.

“Sweetheart, been married for over thirty-five years.”

“Oh, so you just like this stuff? Weird, I’d freak out if my grandparents were still having sex.” She shudders upon mentioning it.

And this is my cue to get the hell out of here.

On the way home, I mumble while walking the streets, annoyed at the whole experience. I should have just bought online, but I wanted to see the items myself.

The streets are blanketed in snow, with the air cold and a gust of wind making it even more miserable. I’m not a fan of winter. In fact, I prefer summer.

Poolside, beaches, and women in bikinis.

My kinda perfect.

When I reach the apartment, Charlie is sitting in the kitchen with Nikki. Their laptops are open, which means they’re working.

“Ladies, why are we working on Christmas Eve?”

Charlie releases a heavy sigh. “Because I’ll be cooking a meal soon even though I’m not sure my husband will be here.”

I let out a snort. “Lex will be here. Stop stressing. I sent him some photos earlier, but he hasn’t responded.”

“What photos?” Charlie questions as Nikki rolls her eyes. “It’s not two women scissoring again, is it?”

“My friend, Laurel, is married to a woman, and she said real Lesbians don’t scissor,” Nikki quips.

“Really?” Charlie raises her brows. “But in porn ...”

“Porn isn’t real, Charlie.”

“Hey,” I shout. “Why you gotta do this to me on Christmas Eve? I don’t know what crack your friend Laurel is on, but I refuse to believe it’s all made up.”

“Of course you do, daddy.”

Charlie cringes. “Okay, maybe I should go. This is getting awkward, and when you call Rocky ‘daddy’, things start to go downhill, like my appetite and will to live.”

Only a true friend like Charlie knows us well. When Nicky grins at me, I know she needs a good spankin’, or maybe I need one.

“Will and Amelia are coming over later, so you’ve got Beau and Alexa coming here tonight, right?”

Nikki shakes her head with disappointment.

“What the hell happened?” I ask.

“Alexa hasn’t been feeling great. Beau thinks she caught the flu, so her Braxton Hicks are making her uncomfortable as she tries to sleep it off.”

“The last I spoke to them was last night. Beau mentioned the Braxton Hicks but nothing about the flu. Maybe I should go see them,” Charlie says with worry etched in her voice. “At least bring soup or something.”

“I offered, but Beau doesn’t want us to catch anything, especially with all the kids around,” Nikki tells us.

“Okay, so do you want to come over for dinner?”

Nikki glances at me. “Um, we have plans. So, we’ll see you at lunch tomorrow?”

Charlie eyes the both of us dubiously.

“I’m not going to even ask.”

When we hear the door close and Charlie is gone, I turn to face Nikki. “We have plans?”

Inches away from me, Nikki is staring with dominating eyes.

“The queen commands you to wait for her in the dungeon.”

Fuck.

Yes.

The dungeon is our closet, which we converted into our playroom. With both kids long gone, we wanted to do something for us.

And boy, do we enjoy ourselves.

I scramble to the room, removing my clothes and tossing them onto the floor. Then, I remember how OCD Nikki is so fold my clothes nicely and place them on the chair. As I stand at the entrance of the room, I enter the pin code. The door opens, and the smell of leather lingers in the air, turning me on instantly.

Flicking the switch, the dim red lights turn on. Nikki organized the room so one side of the wall had all the paddles lined up, and the other had all the cuffs and chains. I reach out to grab the submissive collar and wrap it around my neck, then zip it up to secure it.

Beside where the collar sits are the leather cuffs. I take them off the hooks placing them on my wrists. Finally, I get the blindfold, place it on, and then wait on the floor on all fours.

The door creaks as my excitement builds. I’m fucking hard, waiting in anticipation for Nikki to *dominate* me.

“The queen has entered the room,” she commands with a sultry voice.

Then, the whip cracks against the floor.

I refrain from grinning.

Fuck, I *love* my wife.

## *Nikki*

I strategically place my phone on the tripod to film the experience. It's something we do weekly, then watch it back in bed while fucking vanilla style.

It took me forever to get the gear on. The corset is tight, but I've learned to dress myself without help. Tonight, I opted for the latex crotchless body suit with my eight-inch platform thigh-high patent boots. Now, this took *forever*.

My sub is positioned on all four, just the way I want him. With his collar on, I grab the leash and whip from the wall.

"The queen has entered the room," I voice with authority. Leaning down, I link the chain to the collar, then give it a nice pull. "Good boy."

As I pull him along, he follows me on all fours until I command him to stop. Placing my heel on his back, I'm just about to reach over and grab the butt plug to slide into his asshole, but I stall on which one. I decide I'm in the mood for the silver one since it always makes Rocky squirm.

"Be still," I insist, spreading his cheeks to spit over his asshole before sliding it in.

He stiffens beneath me, but he knows not to make a single sound.

My nipples are hard, the pool of wet building around my pussy, but just as I'm about to use the whip, my phone starts to ring.

Fuck.

Taking a deep breath, I don't even look over, ignoring it. Closing my eyes momentarily, I do my best to get back into character, but the phone rings again.

I whip my head sideways to see the phone. It's just Beau. Honestly, how can our kids still cockblock us, and they don't even live here?



It can't be that important, probably asking what medication or flu remedy they can have. Just as the thought leaves my mind, my phone pings with a text.

BEAU

ALEXA IS IN LABOR ANSWER YOUR  
FUCKING PHONE

“Holy shit!” I yell out, reading the text and then dialing his number.

“Mom, Alexa’s in labor. The contractions are five minutes apart,” Beau panics.

“Labor? But she’s not due for another month! Are you sure it’s not Braxton Hicks again?”

“Wait, what’s happening?” Rocky asks with his blindfold on.

“Shhh ...” I warn him, covering the phone. “Take your damn blindfold off.”

“What about the butt plug?”

“MOM,” Beau yells. “Are you fucking serious? Get to the hospital now, and don’t you dare bring that nasty piece of shit I just heard with you!”

Beau hangs up the phone abruptly, though I don’t blame him. I stare at the screen in shock. This is it. My baby is having a baby.

Well, not one baby, but two.

“We need to get to the hospital, hurry.”

There’s no time to do anything since contractions five minutes apart means the babies are coming fast. I grab my coat and quickly throw it on. I’m still wearing my boots, but they take forever to get off. Fuck it, I need to be there for my son.

“Babe, I’m stuck.”

I race back to the room. Rocky is trying to unzip the collar, but it’s stuck.

“Argh, what did you do?”

“I was trying to get it off.”

“Just leave it, put on a turtleneck sweater, no one will see.”

*“I don’t have a turtleneck sweater,”* he argues back.

“How about a cravat?”

Rocky groans with frustration. “Now you’re just mocking me.”

“A scarf,” I shout. “I don’t care, just hurry up!”

I tie my coat up so it covers my corset underneath. Though it’s cold outside, we can grab a cab to the hospital, which is only ten minutes away.

In the cab, I try to breathe and cue my anxiety. Hospitals aren’t exactly my favorite place to visit, especially when it’s your son and daughter-in-law giving birth to twins.

“So listen,” Rocky leans in to whisper. “The silver butt plug is a little uncomfortable. I’d prefer it if you used the black one.”

I turn to face him, wondering how his brain can just do what it does. Not stress, not think, just chill the hell out.

“You’re not asking me that in the back of a cab?”

“I am.” He glances at the cab driver, who is oblivious to what’s going on. “I’d like you to take on my feedback.”

“Feedback noted,” I answer dryly.

When the cab pulls up, we pay and then rush into the hospital to avoid the cold. People are gazing at my boots inside, but I don’t care. They’re all strangers I’ll never see again.

Running in eight-inch heels is difficult, but I manage not to fall over as we weave in and out of the corridors until we’re at the maternity ward.

The nurse sitting behind the desk glances up at us. “May I help you?”

“We’re looking for Alexa Edwards, my daughter-in-law. I mean, Romano. Wait, what is her name?”

“Romano, babe.”

I shake my head, riddled with confusion. “Right.”

“They’ve been taken to the operating room.”

“Operating room?” I panic.

“Yes, one of the babies’ heart rate dropped, so they needed to do an emergency c-section.”

“Oh, God.” I gulp, touching Rocky’s arm. “Can we go in?”

“Sorry, partners only.”

“Nikki!” Charlie’s voice echoes down the hall as she rushes toward us. “Where are they?”

“The operating room. One of the babies’ heart rate dropped, so they needed to do an emergency c-section.”

Charlie covers her mouth, trying not to cry. “It’s okay, Alexa is strong. It will be okay. Beau is with her, right?”

I nod, only for Charlie’s eyes to trace down my coat until she’s staring at my boots.

“Really, you couldn’t get changed?”

“I ... I don’t know what you’re talking about. I wear these out on special occasions,” I lie.

Rocky snickers, only for Charlie to shake her head.

“Good luck explaining this to your sons.”

A small laugh escapes me as Rocky chuckles, too.

“Our sons are already broken in. Nothing can scar them. So, they don’t know about our sex dungeon, big deal,” Rocky boasts.

“Ahem,” a voice loudly sounds behind us. We turn around to see Will behind us. His lips pinched shut while grimacing. “Wanna make a bet?”

CHAPTER  
TEN

## ALEXA AND BEAU

### *Alexa*

**E**lijah talks incessantly over the video call about Santa Claus. Man, the kid can talk, using all these big words I've never heard him say before.

He's growing up way too fast. Where has the time gone?

With that lingering in my thoughts, I find myself getting highly emotional, biting my lip to stop myself from crying.

"Daddy said because we're closer to the North Pole here, Santa won't get lost, so I'm going to leave some milk and cookies out for him." His eyes widen while he places his hand on his lips to think. "Oh, and carrots for the reindeer. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph, of course!"

"I miss you. Are you having lots of fun?"

"Yes, Mama. Are the babies out yet?"

I shake my head with a smile. "Not yet, so when I see you in two days, you'll get to talk to them in my belly again."

Elijah becomes distracted by something. What do you expect from a three-year-old with the attention span of a ... well, three-year-old?

He dumps the phone, only for April to pick it up.

"Oh, you look miserable," she says with a half-smile. "Only a month to go."

“A month is a lifetime,” I complain. “I can barely walk. The pain in my back is awful, and I’ve caught a cold. Like seriously, why would the universe give me a cold while I’m eight months pregnant, huh?”

April laughs. “With twins.”

“Oh yeah. Who could forget I look like an elephant carrying two babies.”

“You look beautiful.”

“You said I looked miserable!”

“Yeah, but miserably beautiful,” she teases, then chuckles. “So, we’ll see you the day after next? I’m excited to visit Manhattan during the holidays.”

“How is it in Aspen? My mom and dad took us a few times as kids. I’ve always wanted to visit during Christmas, though.”

“It’s ... amazing. Feels perfect.” April’s lips curve upward, and it’s obvious just how content she is.

“And Hunter? Has he managed to step away and enjoy, too? He would work Christmas Eve if you let him.”

“He’s gone to the market.”

I burst out laughing. “The market? Hunter has gone to the market?”

April nods with a proud grin. “Yes, he’s cooking dinner tonight since I can burn boiling water.”

“Don’t exaggerate. You make the best Mexican food I’ve ever had, and you’re not even Mexican.” My mouth salivates at the thought of eating April’s Chilaquiles. “Okay, I need to send Beau out for food.”

“We’ll call you tomorrow, okay?”

“Thanks, and April?”

“Yeah?”

“Merry Christmas.”

April blows a kiss into the screen. “Back at you, Mama.”

With the call ending, a tear falls down my cheek. It's so hard being away from Elijah and sharing custody of him, but there is no choice in the matter. At least I know he's having fun, and I'll see him in two days.

Beau walks into the bedroom, carrying a tray of food, all of which looks healthy when I want something greasy.

"You need to eat."

I nod, too tired to even argue. As I shift my body to sit up, Beau places the tray beside me. But the position I'm in hurts my back.

"I can't," I say in a weak voice. "My back is really hurting."

Beau removes the tray from the bed and then hovers over me. "Lie on your side, and I'll massage your back."

So, here's the thing. Beau is as attentive and amazing as one can be or want in this situation. However, he panics anytime I complain of any pain, worried the babies are coming. He's *attempted* to send me to the hospital several times, but I explained to him they were just Braxton Hicks.

With Beau massaging my lower back, I manage to fall asleep, but not for long. Stupid bladder. He helps me get out of bed because the pain in my back has worsened. Using the bathroom feels like a marathon effort.

After taking forever to pee, I waddle back to the bedroom with my hand holding my back, frowning from the pain. I stop mid-step, squeezing my eyes shut to count my breaths, but then a gush of water covers my legs.

Oh, shit.

"I think I'm in labor," I manage to say without freaking out.

"Alexa, I get it," Beau says while on his phone. "I'm overreacting. I promise to stop being so worried. If it happens, it happens."

"Um, well, it's happening. My water just broke."

“Wait, what?” Beau tosses his phone on the bed, glancing down between my legs. “Oh, your water just broke. Okay, your water just broke. Oh my god, your water just broke?”

I nod, panicked myself.

This is it.

“Okay, my list. Wait, should I call the hospital? No, wait, let me get the hospital bag,” he rushes in circles. “I should call Charlie and my mom.”

I breathe through what now feels like a contraction. “How about shoes first?”

“Yes, shoes!”

Beau helps me put on a pair of sneakers, then slides his own on. With my bag in his hand, he stops where I’m standing and gently places a kiss on my lips.

“I’m going to be daddy tonight,” he whispers with a grin.

My hands grab his face, bringing him in for another kiss.

“I love you,” I murmur. “Now, let’s get these babies the hell out of my uterus.”

### *Beau*

The whole night feels like a blur.

One minute, I’m playing a game on my phone, and then the next, we’re rushing to the hospital because I’m going to be a dad.

I called Charlie, who gave me instructions on what to do, then I called my parents. Listen, I don’t know what the fuck my parents were doing since Mom and Dad didn’t answer their phone. Finally, when Mom called me back, I was subjected to whatever dark and twisted shit the two of them were doing.

Fuck. My. Life.

All I want in life is normal parents.



There was no time for anything. We rushed to the hospital, and they admitted Alexa straight away. Inside the maternity ward, they got her set up in bed as contractions came hard and fast.

She grips my hand, sweat building on her forehead.

“*Give me drugs,*” she begs.

“Alexa,” the doctor begins with, then continues, “I just want to check the babies’ heartbeats.”

He does this thing, but his face doesn’t look pleased.

“One of the babies’ heartbeats is dangerously slow. I’d like to perform a c-section because you haven’t progressed with dilation.”

“C-section?” I ask, panicked.

“Yes, the nurse will get you in a gown and ready for the operating room.”

We’d only been here for what felt like five minutes, and already I’m being whisked away to an operating room to watch my wife be cut open.

The blur thickens, there is lots of noise, and nurses are everywhere preparing instruments and warmers for the babies. The operating room is sterile and freezing. Anesthesia is administered to Alexa’s back. Then she’s told to lie down as they test to make sure she has turned numb.

I see the feeling of relief washing over her. She’s no longer in pain.

“This feels like heaven.” She smiles, glancing at me. “No more pain.”

“Are we ready?” the doctor asks with a scalpel in his hand.

I position myself beside her, caressing her face while they cut her open. As a tattoo artist, you would think that sharp objects against the skin wouldn’t bother me, but this is completely different. I catch myself looking, freaking out, then looking again, in awe.

A cry echoes inside the room.

“We have a boy,” the doctor announces proudly. “Dad, ready to cut the umbilical cord?”

I’m passed the scissors, then cut the squishy cord. I don’t know how I feel about this. It’s odd. The baby is then brought over to Alexa so she can see.

*My son.*

I have a son.

He’s whisked away to the warmer to get cleaned up as the doctor yanks in the uterus and pulls out baby number two.

“We have a girl!”

Again, the cord is cut, but I feel like a pro this time.

Alexa begins to cry. Then, the little girl is brought to us.

*I have a daughter.*

My heart is bursting with pride. This is unbelievable. No words can explain just how this feels.

“You did it,” I whisper, kissing Alexa’s forehead. “I’m so proud of you, baby.”

Alexa moves her head to face me, a smile on her exhausted face.

“Congratulations, Daddy.”

And just like that, I’ve become a father to two babies with the woman I’ve always dreamed about starting a family with.

Alexa Romano.

My best friend.

CHAPTER  
**ELEVEN**

## CHARLOTTE

Outside the tall ceiling-to-floor windows, the snow begins to fall heavier.

A weighted sigh escapes me as I check my phone for the millionth time.

*Where is he?*

I try my best not to worry, but the roads are icy, and Lex could be anywhere. It's also unusual for him not to answer his phone.

"Pray for a Christmas miracle," I whisper to myself.

This home of ours feels empty. The oven is on with a turkey cooking, and all the sides are laid on the countertop, ready to be cooked. Will and Amelia, plus their kids, will be here any minute. Ava called a few hours ago from her apartment. They flew in from Miami this morning. She sounded different over the phone and told me they'd be a little late since the girls wanted to visit Rockefeller Center to ice skate first.

"Mom, we're here," I hear Addison's voice down the hall.

"In the kitchen," I yell back.

Addison and Masen appear in the kitchen. I miss my daughter, not seeing her as often as I had hoped for because she is always traveling. Though she was here earlier helping me stuff the turkey.

Masen kisses me on the cheek, but I sense something is off between them.

“Mom, do we have wine?”

“Of course.” I point to the liquor cabinet. “Help yourself.”

Addison pours herself a tall glass and almost drinks it in one go as Masen watches her.

“Charlie, will you excuse us for a moment? I need to talk to my wife.”

I smile. “Go ahead.”

As they disappear to the den, where, thankfully, I don’t hear any yelling, Beau’s name flashes on my screen.

“Beau, honey,” I say, answering the call. “Is everything okay?”

“Alexa’s in labor. Her water broke. We’re in the cab on the way to the hospital.”

“Oh gosh, I’ll leave right now.”

The call ends rushed, while I yell for Addison, only to find them in the den making up from whatever fight they were having.

“Ahem.” I clear my throat. “Alexa is in labor.”

Addison pulls away from Masen’s lips with wide eyes. “Oh my god, let’s go to the hospital.”

“Listen, I’ll go first. Can you wait fifteen minutes for the turkey to finish? I don’t want all that food to go to waste.”

“Of course, Charlie. We can find something to do in fifteen minutes.” Masen smirks as Addison slaps his arm.

I point my finger at them with a knowing grin. “This is how babies are made.”

Addison laughs. “We know, Mom.”

I make it to the hospital in record time, at least, I think I do until I see Rocky and Nikki in the foyer of the maternity ward.

Look, I stopped asking questions a long time ago.

Nor did I want to bring up Rocky *never* wears a scarf. As I observe him, the scarf doesn’t even appear to be his. It’s

Nikki's pashmina scarf I got her a few Christmases ago.

My eyes gravitate to Nikki's boots. This is what happens when you leave them to their own devices. Devices being their sex dungeon, or whatever they call it.

"Really, you couldn't get changed?"

"I ... I don't know what you're talking about. I wear these out on special occasions," she flat-out lies.

Rocky snickers as I shake my head.

"Good luck explaining this to your sons," I tease.

"Our sons are already broken in. Nothing can scar them. So, they don't know about our sex dungeon, big deal," Rocky boasts.

Will is behind them, deeply disturbed. They get into an argument, which I step away from when I see Millie and the boys.

"Is everything okay, Mom?"

"Alexa is in the operating room. Your dad is nowhere to be found," I say, worried.

Millie brings me in for a hug. "He'll be here, Mom."

Ava's girls run down the corridor as she follows with Austin. The two of them walk apart, but I dread to ask what's going on. When she sees me, she half smiles, and Austin busies himself at the nurse's station, no doubt asking for updates.

"Everything okay, honey?"

Ava shakes her head, her lips trembling. "No, Mom, but can we talk later?"

"Always, honey."

The kids are excited, running around much to the nurse's enjoyment. I'm surprised they are in great spirits, given it's Christmas Eve and they're working.

Addison and Masen show up, followed by everyone else who was having dinner at Jessa and Andy's place. The waiting

room is full, but the chatter and anticipation is etched on everyone's faces.

Eric shows up, too, wearing burgundy of all colors.

"I thought you refused to wear burgundy?"

Pursing his lips, Eric huffs. "Can we all cut me some slack? Burgundy is so in right now. As are turtlenecks."

"Who are you, and what have you done with my best friend?" I tease, then laugh.

"What can I say, Charlie? I'm a changed man. Might even consider Sailor getting bangs."

"Okay, you just took that too far."

As I glance around, and we all wait nervously for the new arrivals to come into this world, the hole inside my heart has grown a little bit bigger. Lex should be here. It's not the same.

Then, we hear the tap of leather-soled shoes against the floor. I turn around, and there he is.

His emerald eyes dance as they feast upon me.

*He's here.*

I run straight to him, needing to know he is really here, and as soon as our bodies touch, everything in the world feels perfect again.

"I'm home," he murmurs, kissing my lips. "I promised, Charlotte, I wouldn't miss Christmas with you and our family."

I stare into his eyes, losing myself as my heart beats at a normal pace again because my husband is right by my side.

"A Christmas miracle," I whisper. "Merry Christmas, baby."

He rubs his thumb against my bottom lip, tracing it with his eyes, and then lets out a relieved sigh.

"Merry Christmas, Mrs. Edwards."

CHAPTER  
**TWELVE**



## LEX

“Charlotte Olivia Mason, I promise to cherish you and love you unconditionally for the rest of our lives. I vow every breath I take and every beat of my heart belongs to you and only you.”

*I slide the ring on her finger, once again kissing it before it's her turn to speak.*

*“Alexander Matthew Edwards, I take you to be my constant friend and my loving partner. I promise to be faithful and devote myself to you, only you, and our marriage. I give you my hand, my heart, and the air I breathe for as long as we both shall live.”*

The vows replay in my head as Charlotte is buried into my chest with my arms wrapped around her. It feels like a lifetime ago, but it also feels like yesterday.

I'm home.

I made it.

*What an ordeal.* A turbulent flight into Maryland was followed by renting the last hire car available. Some old piece of junk that didn't accept my charger, so my phone died when I needed it the most. Absolute nightmare.

The roads were icy, with police directing traffic, so I drove slower than usual on the interstate. I was lucky to be allowed to drive into the city, given the streets were covered in snow and they were about to close them down.

When I got to our penthouse, no one was there which only fueled my worry. The table was made, but the fireplace was turned off. Lights were still on, making me all the more worried.

It was only when I charged my phone enough to turn it on that I saw the endless messages. It was mainly everyone checking in to make sure I was okay.

Then, I read everyone was at the hospital because Alexandra was in labor.

And one picture of two women scissoring next to a swimming pool.

Rocky, of course.

But I'm here. I made it despite everything against me. It made me count my blessings and think long and hard about what I want the future to look like. The number one question I get asked in life is: What does a billionaire want that money can't buy?

My answer surrounds me.

Unconditional love and family.

This is my future.

The clock has officially struck midnight, and walking down the corridor is Santa Claus. He rings his bell as nurses follow him while the young kids waiting around watch with wide eyes as he ho, ho, ho's his way through the wards with his big red sack.

He stops at each child and pulls out a gift. The little ones are scared, hiding behind their parents. The older ones know the real deal but pretend to believe for the sake of Christmas magic.

I watch each of my grandchildren, trying to remember it all. This is what my life has become, or shall I say, our lives.

None of this is without Charlotte by my side.

"Are you ready to meet your grandbabies?" Charlotte grins. "They're finally here."

I take a deep breath, reaching for her hand to kiss it softly.

“I’m ready.”

In the room, Beau sits beside Alexandra as she struggles to stay awake. A weak smile lingers on her lips, but she does look awfully pale. My worry only intensifies the longer I observe her.

The babies are in their cribs beside Alexandra, fast asleep.

“Dad,” Alexandra calls with a raspy voice. “You’re here.”

I rush to her side and kiss her forehead. “Beau, please call the doctor.”

“What’s wrong?” he asks in a high-pitched voice.

“I want her blood pressure checked. She looks weak and may have lost too much blood.”

“Wait, too much blood. What does that mean?”

“Postpartum hemorrhage is heavy bleeding after the birth. Given how weak and pale she is, I insist they check her blood pressure. If it’s too low, she may need an IV.”

Charlotte rushes out of the room, beating Beau, and returns with the doctor. He wraps the cuff around her arm, then presses the button as it inflates. I glance at the screen, and as predicted, it’s too low.

“We will start Alexandra on an IV drip, then monitor her to see if we proceed with a blood transfusion.”

The nurse beside him begins prepping the IV.

“Thank you, Dad.” Alexandra smiles. “Do you want to meet your grandbabies now?”

Charlotte wheels the cribs next to me. One crib is pink, and one is blue.

A boy and a girl.

Just like Alexandra and her brother, who never made it this far.

“They’re beautiful,” I choke, overwhelmed by the emotion. Losing our own baby was hard, and the memory

never leaves me. I watched Charlotte lay in the hospital bed as they removed our unborn son when his heartbeat just stopped. The miracle was saving his twin sister.

*Alexandra.*

“Do we have names?”

Beau smiles proudly as Alexandra shakes her head. “We’re undecided. Maybe we should let Elijah decide?”

Beside her, Beau chuckles. “He’ll probably name the girl Bluey or the boy Elmo. Wait, is Elmo a boy?”

We all laugh, but what is more hilarious is that none of us could answer.

“Well, take your time,” I tell them. “The best things come to those who wait.”

Charlotte knocks into my side playfully. “Say’s the most impatient man ever.”

She has a point, but that is the old me.

The new me wants to be a better man for my family.

I don’t have a crystal ball, despite the billions sitting in our bank accounts, nor can I predict the future in any way, shape, or form, but I do know this: Life is a journey we all must take. While Beau and Alexandra are experiencing new beginnings, others outside are on different paths.

Sometimes, we’re not led on the easiest path, but if this Christmas has taught me anything, we’re never too old to believe in a Christmas miracle.

And something tells me it will all work out.

The universe knows not to fuck with Lex Edwards.

**The End.**

**Maybe.**

**We’ll see ...**

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Kat T. Masen** is a USA Today Bestselling Author from Sydney, Australia. Her passion is writing angsty love triangles involving forbidden men like besties older brother.

She is also the founder of the Books Ever After store, Books By The Bridge Author Events, and spends way too much time on Tik Tok creating videos for her #1 Amazon bestseller Chasing Love.

Oh ... and she's a total boy mom.

1 husband, 4 boys, and a needy pug.