

From  
VALENTINE'S  
To Vegas



# CALL MY *Bluff*



ARIANA ST. CLAIRE

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Version 02162024

Cover Image: Deposit Photos

Formatting/Inner Images/Wrap: Dragonfly Graphic Designs

Editor: M.A. Patrick

Copy/Line Edit: M.A. Patrick/Victoria Shelton

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*To anyone who has ever wanted someone to read to them, and then...take it  
even further.*

*And to the hearts that dream and never give up, even when the world tries to  
bring you down.*

*Shake it off. Haters gonna hate. The trash will take itself out.*

*Always.*

*Keep dreaming.*

# FOREWORD

Jett and Seguin's story has been a long in coming. Of course, Jett first appeared in Track Me Down and Turn Me Loose, and I knew his story was coming.

If you have subscribed to my newsletter, you may have been lucky enough to read their beginning. And now, here's the way things were always meant to be...

Subscribe [here](#) to read When We Were, soon to be available in the special edition paperback of Call My Bluff.

Are you ready to go all in? Read more of the From Valentine's to Vegas series, brought to you by these fifteen steamy and spicy authors!

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# PROLOGUE

## JETT



*Vegas*

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught sight of the only woman I truly had ever wanted.

The girl I walked away from to live the dream my dad and I worked for my whole life.

The distance between us was a chasm, and fuck if I wouldn't figure out a way to cross it. The dress hugged her body, every curve a temptation. A reminder she wasn't the same girl who shared my bed senior year in college before the NFL Draft. The girl whose heart I broke because we had two vastly different dreams, on two paths that led away from where we were.

Six years later, I craved her, her lips, and fuck, all of the things that drove me wild about Seguin amplified as my memories flared to life. Remembered every single moment we shared.

Seguin's cries as she came apart underneath me. Her whimpers and the flush along her chest her orgasm took over. Best fucking memories of my life, even over making it to the Super Bowl. Or even winning the IndyCar Championship last season.

The way her eyes locked onto mine when she was on her knees. How she trusted me with her secrets and fantasies.

"Fuck, Firefly," I growled as she glared at me, fire in her gaze. Defiance in every step she took. Closer and closer until my palms twitched and my cock longed to be buried in her. "You still slay me, ba—"

"This doesn't mean anything." Seguin's icy interruption might've scared me away back in college, but the man I was now knew better. Underneath it, I caught a glimpse of the spark between us that had always been there. Fight

it as hard as she wanted, it was still there. Her hand wagged back and forth. “After the ceremony, and the I do’s are said? We aren’t anything. Ever again.”

Fuck, I wanted to kiss the lie away the moment she said it. Take her face in my hands and kiss away any doubts. There were a million, and I didn’t blame her one bit.

I deserved her anger. She could hate me, but hate was better than feeling nothing. Nothing meant she didn’t care, and we didn’t have a chance. Hate meant she cared.

Caring meant we had a chance.

Here, in Sin City, the stakes were higher. And I was going all in.

What happened in Vegas wasn’t staying in Vegas.

This time, Seguin’s mine. The fucking queen of my heart, the one regret I had in life.

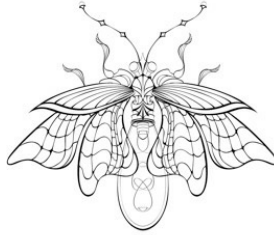
When who we were back then wouldn’t let me see beyond my dream of playing in the NFL.

But now? I can see my future.

Forever.

# CHAPTER 1

## SEGUIN



*O*ne month, or so, ago...

The lights dimmed in the plane as it reached cruising altitude, and my heart soared, knowing the next chapter of my life was starting even as one closed. But, if there was one thing I had become an expert at, it was starting over. I stared down at the spot where I wore a ring for three years, now just a faint band around my finger.

“Ladies and gentleman, we’ve reached our cruising altitude, and the captain has turned off the fasten seat belts light. Please keep your seatbelts fastened while seated for your safety,” the stewardess continued her speech, but all my mind kept drifting back, and to where and what I faced in the next few weeks.

The almost ten hour flight from Paris to Raleigh-Durham International Airport provided me with all the time and yet not enough to formulate a plan. Thank God Cammie, who I studied with in Paris and still talked to at least three times a week, had offered me a place to stay until I figured out if North Carolina would be home...or somewhere up north. I protested, but she had a way of wearing you down when she was determined.

When the call came for the position with the Carolina Fury a couple of months ago, directly from one of the new owners, I politely declined. Football and I didn’t mix. At all.

Too many emotions and memories I kept locked away in a box that only crept out every few months in the middle of the night.

Try telling your fiancé the reason you can’t sleep is another man who broke your heart.

I couldn’t. Bryce thought my insomnia a few nights a month was

triggered by stress or nightmares of my mother's death. Sometimes they were. Most times?

Jett Fucking Carter, and the knowledge my broken heart was also a part of the greatest things in my life. My heart was pretty fucking clear on where I stood in the light of day, the box where I shoved him and every damn memory locked up tight. But late at night?

A damn gremlin wheedled its way into that hidden corner and tried its best to pry the lid off. The flickers of night spent with him, reading romance novels, and confessing secret desires in the dark, seeped out. Invaded my dreams, my heart pounding with all the emotions I kept locked away.

There were times I could even smell the shower gel he used right after practice or a workout. His cologne I had to nuzzle his neck to smell, because he hated the guys in the locker room who doused themselves with it.

The lies slid easily from my lips. Guilt reminded me that while I convinced myself of one thing, while the sun crossed the sky, late at night wasn't so easily fooled.

Feelings were fickle. Hearts easily fooled. Even if I convinced myself that I didn't love the boy who departed and shattered my heart, my mind was aware that I would always feel that way. At least it also said he was a jerk who didn't deserve the kind of love that shatters you into pieces.

Because if he cared the way I did, he would have never walked away.



“EXCUSE ME, but we're going to be landing soon, and you'll need to return your seat to the-”

“Upright position.” I blinked my eyes and smiled sleepily at the stewardess, who nodded. “Thank you.”

She moved along the aisle, stopping to talk to other passengers before going from first class to coach. The stiffness in my neck was noticeably less than the last time I flew, and I found myself thanking Resnick Gentry for his insistence that he buy my ticket to North Carolina from Paris.

First class.

Hands fumbled for my purse as I tried in vain to make myself appear as though I hadn't been on a flight for almost ten hours. My heart melted as I clicked my mother's silver compact closed, and for the millionth time I

wished she were here. Yet, also grateful she no longer had to live her life the way she had. A loveless marriage and a husband who cheated every chance he got.

After the plane touched down and taxied to the gate, I made my way through the busy airport and prayed for a bed and a hot shower. No matter how comfortable, first class couldn't compare to an actual bed. Cammie's guest bedroom sounded better with every passing moment.

Exhausted and gripping the handle to my rolling oversized luggage, I stepped out into the cool North Carolina night. My eyes shut for a moment as I drew in a deep breath and fought back tears that burned behind my eyelids. When I steadied myself, I thanked God that my new employer was so thorough and smiled at the driver of the car sent by the Fury.

And cursed the irony that football had brought me back to the states when it had been the reason I left six years ago.

CAMMIE: Key is under the purple flower pot. Finishing up a session and staying late. Wine and Baked Lays waiting! Love you, S!

I smiled to myself as I settled into the backseat and typed back a quick response.

SEGUIN: Perfect pairing. Thanks, Cam, for everything. Love back!

Scenery sped by, a forewarning of how little time I had left before I had to face the music.

And the one person who broke my heart while giving me the greatest gift of dreams I never knew I had.

## CHAPTER 2



## JETT



*Two weeks later*  
“A boudoir shoot?”

My best friend, Gabe, stared back at me like I’d lost my mind. In a way, I had. But when someone calls in a favor, I always follow through, and Gia had asked me to fill in when hours before the auction the NHL player Kellan lined up had a conflict, since it was Valentine’s Day weekend.

The Gentry Foundation Gala last season raised a ton of money for their cause, and to be a part of the reason, even if no one probably cared, was an honor.

Gia helped me in more ways than one since making the transition from the NFL to the world of open wheel racing, and I owed her. Between Serena and Gia, the woman in my life stood up for me, time and time again.

Despite the karma I probably deserved.

I shrugged. “Could be fun.”

“Sounds like the plot in a romance novel,” Serena Jolie, my other best friend, teased with a gleam in her eye. I shot her a death stare behind Gabe’s back as he reached for a slice of pizza. She added with a wicked grin, “If you’re into that sort of thing.”

Which she damn well knew I was. In a way, at least.

“I’m just happy the two of you have your own place to defile now, instead of using and abusing my kitchen.” Fitz, their huge Great Dane, chuffed his agreement. “See? Even my boy Fitz agrees.”

“Fitz,” Serena said as the huge beast trotted over to her and sat at her feet for his rubs from his girl, “Knows when to respect people’s privacy. We waited until you were gone, at least.”

“And you made me pay for the cleaning service,” Gabe interjected. My best friend since college, we were both drafted to the same team and had been close ever since. We lived in the same house, but on different floors. Which meant I rarely had to bear witness to the stream of girls leaving his room all the time.

All that was in the past now, save for our friendship. Plus, if he ever hurt Serena, best friend or not, I’d kick his ass. Or try to. He had an extra season on the field over me. Front tire changers don’t have to dodge lineman or get tackled.

Though, I have fallen on my ass a few times. Much to the amusement of the rest of the guys. Did it go viral?

Maybe.

Did Gia Cardinale, head of PR for Anders Racing, repost that shit everywhere?

Fuck yes.

With my permission.

“It was the least you could do. Still can’t sit in that damn chair,” I gestured with the hand holding a water bottle at *the* chair. “Fitz, buddy, how’s therapy? Did they finally help you get over the trauma of seeing your favorite girl-”

“Stop! Please,” Serena begged. “Truce.”

Score. I gave her a look that said, don’t mess with me no matter how much I love you, bestie. She raised a brow as if to say, *game on, motherfucker*. I grinned. This is why I loved her, and fucking loved that my best friends got over their shit and saw how crazy they were for each other.

Gabe might’ve been a player in more ways than one, but Serena changed all that for the better.

“Tell me more about this shoot, big guy.” Serena stuffed another piece of Jet’s pizza in her mouth with a grin as she settled in next to Gabe on the couch.

Which I was also pretty sure they defiled, too, along with my kitchen, not too long ago. Sigh.

“Cammie, the photog, knows someone in Res Gentry’s foundation, and needed a guy for her donation to his auction for a shoot. She does these Stranger Sessions for women to empower them. Her hockey guy bowed out at the last minute, and she needed a replacement. Gia sold it as a former NFL star,” I snorted with a shake of my head. “Plus, it was a charity auction item

for Res Gentry's Gala last year, the one I told you about?"

Her sigh sounded wistful. She propped her chin on her upturned palm, then she straightened and glared at her boyfriend. "You have never taken me to a Gala, Catcher. Not a way to keep a girl."

He grabbed her hand and winked. "Oh, Princess, I'll catch you if you get away."

"I don't know, Mr. Knight. Retired football player, remember? Maybe you've lost your edge."

"Please, stop. The fucking foreplay is ruining my appetite," I groaned, only half joking. Cause Jet's Pizza.

"But," Gabe said, winking at her then pointing his half empty beer at me, "You said *boudoir*, buddy. Not just photoshoot."

Serena jabbed him in the side, then rolled her eyes. "He's not wearing the lingerie, Catcher. She is."

"How do you know that?" Gabe asked as I tossed a pillow from the other side of the couch at him. He caught it with a chuckle.

"Empowering, asshole. Not humiliating."

"Maybe she likes the idea of a guy wearing-"

"Oh my God, will you two stop?" Serena covered her face with both hands as she stood, disentangling herself from Gabe. "There is definitely something wrong with you."

Gabe grabbed her hand as she tried to get away. "And yet, you still love us."

She leaned down and said in a stage whisper, "I love pizza more." With a giggle, Serena darted out of reach as Gabe reached for her.

"You are so going to pay for that one, Princess," he growled.

I cleared my throat as they eyed each other. Jealousy and regret coursed through me, irrational as it may be. Serena had helped me come out of a dark place when I decided football and the dream my dad and I had taken enough time from me. And my body. I made smart investments for the five years I played, and though Bobby Anders paid his employees well, I didn't really need the job.

But I fucking loved it. I owed Serena a hell of a lot. Not enough to put up with them defiling more spots in my place.

Especially in front of me and poor Fitzpatrick.

Serena had the decency to look chagrined, but Gabe, the asshole, just smirked.

“I would tell the two of you to get a room, but you’ve probably done it all over my damn house. So, let’s just watch the race, and then you can head home and do whatever kinky ass shit you feel fits the mood, okay?” The kick off to racing season began every year when the various classes of sports cars, from prototypes to GT PRO and AM took to the track. Both Anders Racing drivers joined one of the prototype teams this year, and we watched the green flag drop every year.

This year, however, Gabe had the Savannah Rockets NFC Championship game tomorrow. And the team barely let him come home for the start, but given that this was his last year, they made an exception since Atlanta hosted this year.

Serena snatched the bottle out of his hand. “One beer, Catcher. Big game tomorrow, remember? And I’m not sure pizza is wise, either. I should probably take that piece off your ha-”

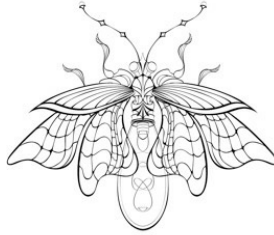
“I swear, Princess, when I hoist that trophy, you’re going to owe me-”

She cut him off with a kiss and snatched the square out of his hands.

Fuck, I needed to get laid. And get them out of my house before they made me need a new couch.

## CHAPTER 3

## SEGUIN



*O*ne week later...

“You did what?” I covered my face with my hands, mortified. *No*, I thought. *She wouldn’t*.

Cammie shrugged over her bowl of cereal. “An anonymous donor bought my auction item for a Valentine’s Day Stranger Session with a hockey player at the Gentry Foundation Gala last year, and asked me to find someone who would benefit from the empowerment I offered.” My groan did not deter her laughter, nor did it quell the emotions swirling in my stomach right now.

“Midnight cereal is not the appropriate time to tell me this, Cam!”

An eye roll and spoonful of our favorite cereal, Fruit Loops, later, my soon to be *former* best friend sighed. Bowl now on the low table in front of the couch covered with oversized photo books and my laptop, she crossed her legs beneath her and said gently, “Seguin, you are going through some pretty big transitions right now.” She ticked them off her fingers as she continued, “Ending your engagement, moving back home after being in Europe for almost seven years, changing careers, and not having-”

My hand flew up before she could finish. “I know all that, Cam. But this?”

“When was the last time you did something for you?”

And there it was.

Because it had been years. I threw myself into work and studying when I studied in Paris. Then Bryce had swept me off my feet at a time when finding myself had been the last thing I wanted. Cammie had been there in the beginning, when there were stars in my eyes. When I needed someone to tell me everything was going to be alright.

Suddenly, I had someone else who took precedence.

I released the breath I'd been holding as my thoughts raced. "Fine. But don't expect me to fall head over heels. Been there. Done that. Have the damn t-shirt." I ate the rest of my cereal in silence while Cammie eyed me, snuggled up under a blanket.

"Want to tell me why you really came back, Seg?"

My spoon paused mid air, and I recognize from the expression on her face I'm caught. Like, caught the way a kitten knows they've been playing with something they're not supposed to, but starts rubbing against your leg to hide the fact they've done anything wrong.

Unable to bear Cam's scrutiny anymore, I blurted out, "The rest of my damn trust doesn't get released until I either turn thirty or get fucking married. And I didn't know my dad somehow changed the fucking details of my trust before my mom passed without her knowing until a few months ago." I sat down the now empty bowl and tossed the spoon in. It landed with a satisfying sound.

"But, you broke off the engagement."

My hands flew into the air of their own volition, and I said loudly, "I realized I wasn't in love with Bryce. I couldn't do that to him. Living with someone who doesn't love them back. He deserves more than that, and I couldn't give him the love he deserves, and it's all *his* fucking fault. Because no one else will ever fucking compare even though I hate him and I dream about him every damn night and can't sleep and he gave the—" I broke off and burst into tears and threw myself onto the pillow next to me on the couch.

Arms wrapped around me as I ugly cried, which I hadn't done since that day almost seven years ago. When my heart shattered into a million pieces and the world became an entirely different place.

After a few minutes, the tears stopped. I picked my head up to Cammie, handing me a tissue, her smile sympathetic and all-knowing. "When was the last time you had a good cry?"

I sniffled. "Seven years ago. No, six years and three months ago."

"And that's why you're doing this. Because you need to remember that girl that climbed to the very top of the Eiffel Tower with me when I had a damn panic attack from the height. The girl who stood at the top and swore no one would ever make her cry over them ever again. It's time to keep that promise, Seg." Cammie nudged me with her shoulder, and grinned. "Plus, I hear the guy is a really hot former NFL player." Hands filled with our bowls,

she headed into the kitchen. “Get ready, babe, cause this Valentine’s Day is going to be all about you.”



THE DRIVE to the Carolina Fury main office gave me plenty of time to do the things I’d always wanted to do but never had the time. Listen to an audiobook, a podcast, or just enjoy the silence.

Of course I wasn’t.

My mind kept replaying the three events that caused the biggest heartaches in my life.

The day my mother passed.

The morning I woke up only to find out the man I thought I loved wasn’t who I thought he was after he broke my heart.

And the morning my attorney informed me that there was a clause that became active once my trust hit the midway point, and then, and only then, would I be informed of its existence.

I lived comfortably off of it, not squandering it away like I’m sure my brother would’ve. But still, there were living expenses and things I’d invested in, while worth every damn penny, still cost more than if I’d only been living off what I made working as a photographer and event coordinator for the gallery I’d been hired at after I graduated.

Plus, I may have donated money to various charities on top of paying for my education, which took a big chunk out of it. It was worth every penny.

*“What do you mean, I need to get married? What kind of antiquated bullshit clause is that?”*

*Frederick, my mother’s, and sometimes my father’s attorney, sighed through the phone. “One that I didn’t discover about until a few days ago, Seguin. One that, I have no doubt, had put in when your mother updated her will. But, there is another option. The remainder of your trust will be released when you turn thirty.”*

*Head pounding, I asked, phone gripped so tightly in my fist my hand began to shake. “How do we get it thrown out?”*

*Again with the sigh. “Fighting this will take more than what little you still have access to, Seguin. And it’s been almost nine years. Proving any wrongdoing will be difficult, even with the funds to do so. You’d be better off*



*waiting two more years. It will take just as long, and cost you less. Even if you had the funds to pursue it. Perhaps if you didn't send the next check to the Rosewood-*"

*I closed my eyes and fought back tears. Rosewood helped women be able to leave situations that they normally wouldn't be able to leave. Like the way I escaped the society of the rich and bored. Like the way I no longer had to bend to my father's wishes. Because of the trust my mother setup before she passed.*

*I hadn't spent the money on overly frivolous things. Living expenses, and a few other necessities, and an indulgence here and there. "That's not happening, Frederick," I said softly, my voice breaking.*

*"I know, Seguin. But your mother wouldn't want you both to-*"

*"I'll figure something out."*

*Like find a husband. I rubbed my temple as I set my phone down. That's when it hit me. I had to tell them both. One that I didn't love him enough to marry him. And another, that I hated him enough to.*

*Then it hit me. I had the perfect solution to my problem.*

*Marry the man who broke my heart, the man who owed me. I just had to figure out how to find him again.*

*Years ago, when my mother was on her deathbed and confessed that she had left me her fortune from her side of the family in a trust she set up for me, she made me promise that I wouldn't stay trapped in the world that had made her miserable. Her only joy? Us. My brother and I. She didn't want me to be used as a pawn in my father's scheme to gain more wealth and power.*

*So she gave me the means to be whatever I wanted. To pay for college, a life far from the iron grip he tried to enforce. Even now. Fuck my life.*

*My brother bent to his will, so much so that we hadn't spoken in years.*

*But, true to his nature, my father found a way to try to control me years later. Probably to marry me off to someone who would elevate his social standing.*

*Fuck that. I wouldn't allow him to dictate one moment of my life ever again.*

*Which was why, when the call came from Resnick Gentry's lawyer, Miranda, concerning an incredibly well paying position three months ago, I said yes. Bills were coming due for things I refused to cut out, and while Bryce was more than willing to help, I couldn't take advantage of the man who had become my best friend more than I'd already had.*

The Gentry Foundation, originally founded by Resnick Gentry's mother, was partnering with her oldest son's newest venture.

The Carolina Fury.

Fucking football.

The sport that I refused to watch, and luckily, living in France for the past seven years, didn't even have a reason to.

A team of investors, headed by majority holder Resnick Gentry, bought the team. The new owners were in the process of a major restructure of the organization.

Which included partnering with the Gentry foundation to spearhead its charitable partnerships.

And they wanted someone to head it up who had experience working with investors. My time at the gallery and philanthropic work over the last few years, while great for my karma, had basically helped my father exert the control over me he always craved. The anonymous donations had drained more of my trust than I thought.

At least it padded my resume, and gave me the opportunity to figure out a way to keep helping Rosewood. It operated both in France and in the States. Kendra, the gallery owner I worked at for the last few years, lived in North Carolina before she married her husband, and they set up Rosewood to honor her sister.

She didn't realize it was me who sent my check every month, but I always knew when it arrived, by the way Kendra smiled when she came into the gallery.

Fuck, I didn't want to think about it. Because the minute I did, everything would change.

The job with the Fury as a liaison for the foundation was only part of the reason I made the move. More importantly, the position would help me adjust my living situation.

The other? Being in North Carolina, where I found out Jet lived thanks to his retirement on social media a few years ago. Find the man who broke my heart, get him to marry me, and tell him the biggest secret I kept for almost seven years.

# CHAPTER 4

## JETT



“You’re going where? And you want me to do what?”

Serena propped her hip against the toolbox sitting beside the chassis of Luc’s racecar as I worked on the rear of the car. Each and every item on the checklist had to be done before the tire test next weekend, so I stopped by to run everything with Ryan, the engineer and strategist for Anders Racing.

“Gabe refuses to pick another best man, and Ellie might not be able to fly in her condition, so I kinda need you to stand in for me, too. Kellan is coming.”

“Only Gabe would win the damn Super Bowl, then elope two weeks later,” I grumbled good-naturedly with a grin. “Why not have Kellan stand in?”

“Because,” she grinned, “Kellan is giving me away. And paying for dinner after, including all the liquor and dessert. Lena might come, but she doesn’t want to leave Peyton. Daddy does not want his baby girl in Sin City,” she chuckled.

“Ah,” I said, realization dawning on me. “Collecting favors?”

“Yep,” she said gleefully. “He owes me for the whole football debacle.”

Not only did Serena hate football for personal reasons, but she had sworn off football players as well as the game after an asshole football player, and her boyfriend at the time, almost cost her a dream career. When Kellan was stranded on a vacation with his best friend and daughter a few months ago, Serena flew to Savannah in his place.

And I’m pretty sure she doesn’t hate the game or a certain player any longer.

I gave the rear one more look over and nodded at a few of the guys entering data and comparing notes in prep for the following weekend. “So, Gabe goes and wins the big game, retires, gets engaged, changes careers, and is getting married?” After adding a few notes onto my iPad, I smirked. “Has Fitz given his consent?”

“My boy is not the jealous type, silly man. Of course he did. We have a prenup that says I get Fitz in the event of divorce or other such catastrophic events.”

“Catastrophic?”

Brows raised. “Like making me go out on a football field ever again, or stealing my midnight slice of pizza. Divorce isn’t really an option, because we both know he’d lose you, too, in the settlement.” I barked out a laugh, because she was right. Kinda. Only because it would drive Gabe crazy with jealousy, even if I had no interest in Serena beyond being grateful she had been there for me a few years back. “So yes, in two weeks, but not by Elvis. Vegas, yes. Elvis, no. Before you try to say another thing, I already checked with Alex and Gia. No excuses.” She crossed her arms and leaned her hip against the corner of the low wall separating the two cars. “Besides, you haven’t done anything but work. All work and no play makes Jett a boring boy.”

“Hey,” I scoffed, “I play.”

Her snort echoed through the open space. “Hot yoga and one night out with the guys you work with isn’t exactly fun, Jett.” Eyes narrowing, she added, “When’s the last time you got laid? Just think, you could go and find some bachelorette party and have a little fun!”

“Only you would think about something like that,” I grumbled, avoiding her question.

“I’ll even buy a box of condoms as part of your bridal party gift. Safety first, always.”

“Rena.”

Eyes wide, she hit me with a not so innocent stare. Voice low, she murmured, “J, take it from one former heart broken person to another. Trust me, being alone won’t protect your heart. If anything, it makes it worse.”

“Ser-” I stopped, because going there was not happening.

“First,” I said, shutting the tool box, and checking the rest of the drawers were in order and ready to travel, “there’s no way in hell I’d miss seeing my two best friends getting married. And second, even if I *did* have to work, I’d

find a way to be there. Vegas, here we come. And what happens in Vegas isn't staying there, huh?"

"Not this time. Make sure you pack one of your romance books for the flight," she teased.

If she only realized the entire truth. How much I used to play, and why I didn't anymore.

"Always."



FUCKING VALENTINE'S DAY. Of course, the damn shoot would have been on Valentine's just a few days after my best friend won the Super Bowl and decided eloping to Vegas was just as fun as going to Disney World. But nope, no riding all the Mountains.

No meet and greet with the Mouse.

Or my favorite princess.

It was the hair. Who wouldn't love to get all tangled in that?

Yep, call me a perv all you want. But Punz was my girl.

Vegas with my two best friends should have sounded like fun. Gabe and Serena getting together hit me harder when he proposed, confetti falling down and thousands of fans cheering.

That damn trophy should've been everything, but it wasn't. Not anymore.

The woman who made his life complete and yep, the one he'd done things I had to get new furniture because of, meant more to him than anything.

I heard what that little voice in my head said every time I thought about that moment.

Fucking jealous. Regret. Everything I could've had. Kept.

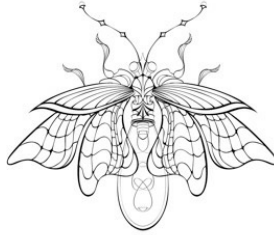
The nondescript building sat before me like a dare, taunting me.

A Stranger Session with someone I never met. And who didn't know anything about me? How I fucked up and walked away from the love of my life.

All for a game.

# CHAPTER 5

## SEGUIN



“Hey, buddy.” I pulled the phone from my ear as I shrugged on the oversized tee over my blue lace bra and scooped my hair into a messy bun before wedging my phone against my shoulder. “Having fun with Uncle Bryce?”

“Yep,” Oliver said, popping the ‘p’. “When are you coming back?”

My sigh weighed on my shoulders as if the whole world depended on the decisions I still needed to make. No matter how many times I told myself the choices I made were what needed to happen, a part of me hated being away from Oliver. At barely six years old, he understood the world better than most adults five times his age.

“Or,” his little voice hit my heart over the distance between us, “do I get to come there?”

My heart stuttered at the hope in his voice. “As soon as I get things settled with my new job, buddy, I’m coming to get you. But I still need to find a place with a yard big enough for a puppy.”

I could picture his solemn nod, the one that made my heart hurt because he looked so much like his father. Serious, but with a twinkle in his eyes that belied any real arduous feelings. Bribery, in the form of a puppy, which he’d wanted since he was two and Bryce brought the newest addition to her family into the gallery, had helped with the distance while I settled in.

Until I figured out a way to get Jett to marry me in name only. After he broke my heart, yet gave me the greatest gift seven years ago.

“And a fence.”

“And a fence,” I agreed. “Tell me everything.” Our weekly calls, on top of our daily check in, were the only thing keeping me focused.



The Fury and Gentry foundation integration, though smooth, still took a lot of time the last two weeks, and while I loved the work, I missed my little man. The hugs and snuggles. Movie nights with popcorn and M&M's. Mostly the hugs.

Oliver filled me in on all things school, Pokemon, and even a few crazy movies he's watched with Bryce. If you can call Detective Pikachu crazy, then I'm in.

Right before we hung up, he said, in his little voice, "I love you, mama. Happy Valentine's Day. I can't wait to hug you soon."

The crack in my heart widened, and I'm even more determined to get things sorted out. I need his tiny arms around me now more than ever.

I rolled my shoulders, already not feeling this whole Stranger Sessions thing, but knowing Cammie would never let me out of it.

"Heading over to the studio now," she called from the other room, her footsteps closing in on the door to the bedroom I'd barricaded myself in, hoping to avoid the whole thing. A brief thought of escaping out the window entered my mind, but Cammie would hunt me down.

Her tenacity and sense of knowing what people needed before they did knew no bounds.

With a loud huff, I yanked open the door and did my best to appear together.

"Fine, let's do this."

"Seg, trust me. These things can change your life. No matter how big or small."



AIR RUSHED out of my lungs. The simple mask and blue lingerie felt less like clothes, or more like the costume I'd donned, a role I played for the next hour.

Valentine's Day or not, I refused to wear red.

But when I stepped into the studio, the electricity in the air made my skin prickle. Tingles ran down my spine, and when the door on the other side of the studio opened, my heart raced.

Like it had run a marathon and the finish line was just in sight. I turned, and there he was.

Jett. Fucking. Carter.

Even wearing a damn mask over his eyes, I recognized his frame anywhere. Muscle memory and countless nights laying awake after dreaming about him emblazoned him forever in my soul. The dark hair, shorter now, no longer pulled into the man bun I mercilessly teased him about. Shoulders broad, filled out. Still tall, dark, and delicious. But in a way that was less and yet more at the same time.

The years and endless what ifs and whys. The struggles and tears.

Scars, visible and beneath the surface. Love, hate, indifference.

Recognition flashed in his eyes, but Cammie talked us through how we were going to proceed with the shoot.

Anything that happened was my call. Clothes staying on, coming off. Physical touch. The bed, couch. The mirror. White, flowing curtains billowed, a stark contrast against the brick wall as they floated and fell.

Jett stood, eyes tracking even the slightest movement. Fingers flexing, breath coming faster. Heart pounding as he neared me, slowly, as if he feared I would run.

I wanted to. But I also wanted to yell at him. Beat his chest with my fist. I refused to let the tears that threatened to fall.

Fuck this.

I would show him that this person before him hadn't been broken by his actions. The girl from college was gone. She left when he broke her heart, and found out only a few months later, alone in a foreign country, about the life growing inside.

A piece of him. A reminder. And the reason for my smiles, happiness, and I would never let him take that away. I raised my chin defiantly. The shock turned to anger turned to something in me that wanted to show him exactly who I was now.

I slid the simple black dress off my shoulders, spine straight. When his pupils dilated as his gaze raked down my body, satisfaction made me even bolder. I reached up and freed my hair from the pins that held it up. I stalked toward him, grabbed his tie and led him to the bed. With both hands, I pushed him down. His hands fell behind him, catching himself before he fell flat on his back.

I forgot Cammie was there, and became a woman in control of her situation. The mask allowed me to show him, without words, exactly who was in control here.

And it would never be him. Again.

An hour later, I walked away from where I crawled, nestled, and stretched my body along his.

Trying to forget the firefly tattoo across his heart.

In my purse, I kept the letter I wrote only a week before. Ready to send once I found out where Jett lived.

But now, I returned to the studio where Jett still stood, and handed it to him without a word, wearing only the blue lingerie.

And no mask.

# CHAPTER 6

## JETT



*F*uck. Me.

I raked a trembling hand through my hair as I stared at my reflection in the mirror.

Seguin. The girl I walked away from. The dream I gave up for the dream I had my entire life. The biggest fucking regret of my life.

Clad only in the skimpiest piece of lingerie, tempting and teasing and reminding me of the fantasies I held onto late at night. Of the memories of everything we had been.

What we could have been.

But she wasn't the girl I left behind anymore.

No, she was the woman I always knew she would become, if given the chance. Fiery, independent and sexy as hell.

And the mother of my child.

*“Walking away was the most cowardly thing you could have ever done, Jett. I’ve had to live with the consequences, and it was the best thing to ever happen to me. Our son, he’s my world. He showed me how to live again, to breathe and not feel like I was suffocating with every single moment. To laugh, and love, and cry tears of joy instead of hurting all the time. We never needed you, or anyone else. But you owe me now.”* She shoved an envelope into my hands and walked away, her ass and curves and sway of her hips distracting after spending the last hour pretending we didn't know one another. Strangers performing in front of the camera, while every damn nerve in my body instinctively rebelled. Fists flexing, my cock yelling to take her because she was ours. But even she couldn't pretend the hatred in her eyes wasn't real.

*That she didn't hate me for walking away and leaving her. Pregnant with our son.*

*A son I never knew I had.*

*She stopped just before disappearing through the door. Her laugh was humorless and cut straight to my chest. "Looks like my father still controls my life. But you're going to help me, and walk away. There's no place for you in our lives. You don't deserve to know him other than the fact that he's amazing and everything you're not, Jett."*

Several minutes later, still sitting in my truck outside the studio, the envelope she handed me burned my fingertips. I tore it open, and scanned the pages, one after another.

Marriage. Trust fund. Requirements. 30. Release.

Her father still tried to control her, even after all this time. He found a way to try to suck her back in. There was no way in hell I was going to let that happen.

Not to my girl. My Firefly. Or our son.

A scribbled note, sprawled in her handwriting, as if she hated even writing the words, made something inside roar with feelings I'd been hiding all these years.

*Do the right thing. Marry me, in name only, and give your son the chance to dream and be the kind of man we can be proud of. But that's all. In name only. We didn't need you all this time, and we still don't. That's how you can make what you did to us right, Jett.*

*S.*

Seguin had always been mine, and fuck if I wasn't going to take care of her or my son. I'd just have to convince her that it was real. That we were real. And she was always mine.

Then and now.

JETT: Pack your bags. We leave in two days. I'll have Serena send you the details.

What happened in Vegas wasn't staying in Vegas. At least not for anyone repeating those fateful words.

I fucking do.



*THREE YEARS AGO...*

*“This is it. This is the last play we could ever have together as a team. Let’s fucking make it count.”*

*Crowd noise always factored into how the energy on the field translates into performance, but today? Next level.*

*It was like everyone in the stadium understood they were seeing something that might never happen again. The guys and I glanced around at each other. Seconds left on the clock, and seconds left in my football career. We needed to get close enough so that Ryker could get into his kicking range just to tie the game.*

*We owned the game if it went to OT. No one in the league had a better record in OT. And no one wanted this more.*

*A week earlier, I called Kellan and told him I was done. That the season, whether it was one more game, or God willing, two, was my last.*

*All because of her. The one girl who always had my fucking heart, from the first moment I saw her in the stands, cheering for a sport she later told me she knew nothing about. My Firefly. When I thought I saw her in the stands a week ago, my heart went straight back to that first glimpse. All the nights, reading and showing her exactly how much I loved when we did exactly what was in her romance books. The blush on her cheeks, the way her body responded. How she so willingly gave, took, and loved me. I was a fucking fool. And as much as I loved the game, it wasn’t where my heart was anymore. In fact, it was the reason I gave up on the one thing I should have held onto so tightly that she never doubted my love for her.*

*This huddle, with the guys, might be my last. And I was okay with that. But fuck if I wouldn’t give it everything I had. “We fucking got this. It’s our house. And it’s been an amazing trip.”*

*Ten minutes later, I sat, confetti falling and sticking to every surface. Families celebrated, and I sat here, wishing she was by my side.*

*The memory flooded my senses like it was yesterday. The outcome of the*

game barely mattered anymore, or the one after, because Seguin wasn't a part of it. Even in the midst of a celebration, I knew something essential was missing from it all.

Her.

The woman currently glaring at me like she wanted nothing more than to ground my face into the lush carpet of the suite was waiting for Serena to emerge from the bedroom as she settled Fritz in for the night before we headed out to see the venue for the big day.

But Seguin, resplendent in a dress hugging the curves she'd gained in the years since we'd been apart, stole my damn breath. And every single inhale, every exhale belonged to her. Always had.

She stalked towards me, her eyes lit with all the things she probably wanted to yell and hit me for. The wrongs. The times I should've fucking been there for her.

For our son.

Part of me was pissed as hell she kept him from me.

But, I was the one who walked away, and left her no choice. I was the asshole who regretted it, now more than ever. And if I was honest, every single second since I made the choice.

Make no mistake, I knew I fucked up. Seguin knew it. And if it took the rest of my life, I'd worship her on my knees, begging for her forgiveness.

"Fuck, Firefly," I growled as she glared at me, fire in her eyes. Defiance in every step she took. Closer and closer until my palms twitched and my cock longed to be buried in her. "You still slay me, ba—"

"This doesn't mean anything." Seguin's icy interruption might've scared me away back in college, but the man I was now knew better. Underneath it, I caught a glimpse of the spark between us that had always been there. Fight it as hard as she wanted, it was still there. Her hand pointed back and forth. "After the ceremony, and the I do's are said? We aren't anything. Ever again."

I quirked a brow in silent challenge. When her tongue darted out, my eyes darted to it. Fuck, she was intoxicating. Gorgeous in ways she hadn't been years ago. The confidence she just began owning back then was out in full fucking force, and my dick liked everything he saw.

"This," she hissed, pointing between us, "doesn't change a damn thing, Jett."

It didn't help that I let it slip to Gabe two nights ago that I was bringing



someone along, and now Serena was eyeing us both as she closed the door behind her. “So, Seguin, maybe you could help me figure out exactly where to cash in one of the many favors my boss owes me. I was thinking a mini shopping trip before dinner, since a girl should have something new before her wedding.”

The door clicked as Gabe and Kellan entered. Serena lit up when she saw him. And hell if I wasn't experiencing that damn pang of happy jealousy watching the two of them. My two closest friends, and here I was pissed that they had their happily ever after in front of them while the woman I loved looked like she wanted to dig my heart out with a dull butter knife and stuff it down my throat while looking devastatingly sexy in her stilettos.

“I knew this was going to cost me,” Kellan grumbled as Gabe chuckled and threw up his hands. “If anything, the island vacation that made me worried I'd be a castaway brought you together.”

Serena breezed by as she took Seguin's arm, “Still hated football, humidity, and players.”

“And now you're marrying one,” he countered.

“Former player,” she shot over her shoulder.

“And Super Bowl Champion,” Gabe interjected, eyes on her ass as she snatched up her clutch while next to her, Seguin shot me the kind of looks that killed instantly. Serena seemed amused by the exchange more than anything, and I hell if I wanted to let her alone with Seguin for more than a few minutes.

“And when I said yes, you were no longer a football player,” she said with a saccharine smile. A delicate shrug. “Plus, who says no with confetti falling down and thousands of fans cheering? Even I'm not that heartless.”

If I wasn't going over the countless ways I'd make Seguin change her mind about the whole marriage stays in Vegas thing, I'd be a part of egging Gabe on. From the way the three of them continued their banter, Kellan had a firm grip on that part. Plus, my dick was more interested in the way Seguin was watching me with her icy blue eyes. Without a doubt, my Firefly loved seeing me dressed up as much as I loved the sight of her in that damn dress.

The banter kept going, but fuck if I heard a word as we followed Serena and Seguin out of the suite. The hallway, dimly lit as it was, lit her frame, the silhouette of those curves tempting and seducing me. And the way her fucking hips swayed.

I was dead and gone.

“My best friend, Ellie, has twins, and even though she’s a master juggler, the little heathens brought home germs. Which was why she had to cancel at the last moment. So, I’m ecstatic that you could come. Being the only girl with these three is not the good time you’d think it’d be. Sadly, I like my why choose in romance novels, but not real life. But I’ll read the hell out of one. Right, Jett?”

I glared back, silently putting together a list of all the ways I planned on torturing the two of them. Gabe might be silent right now, but I could practically feel his silent laughter behind me, from the way Serena was smirking as she hit the elevator button.

Serena quirked a brow. “What? No answer?”

I ground my teeth as I said tightly, “About the book, or the why choose?”

Eyes wide with false innocence, she said. “The book, of course.” She turned her head to Seguin, whose icy exterior finally showed a crack. “Jett loves romance novels. I keep thinking it’s because he’s a hopeless romantic, but I think there may just be a plot twist no one saw coming. Which I also love. Do you read romance, Seguin?”

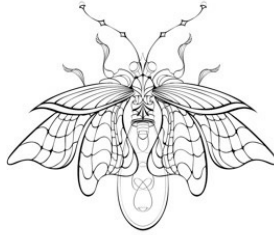
Seguin, eyes filled with what I could only call the kind of fire that makes you think of burning in hell, cocked her head as she stared me down. “I did, until I realized the fairytales and happily ever afters were for dreamers, and not doers.”

The ping and elevator doors stopped any more discussion as everyone filed in. “Going down?” An older gentleman in a suit that looked far more expensive than even Kellan’s, asked.

“Oh, I’m sure we all are. In one way or another.” Serena smirked.

# CHAPTER 7

## SEGUIN



“*Y*ou’re *what?*”

I cringed on the inside as Serena hissed the words behind me. Ahead Gabe and Kellan, who I actually met a few Fury players, including Sebastian Lockwood and Ty Simmons, and my team with the foundation to go over next month’s Touch It Down event. Which included a player auction, silent raffle, and a concert featuring Rhylan Morgan and Jagger Sullivan. It was the biggest event the Fury had ever held, and all the players were expected to participate in some way. The groans and good natured ribbing at the meeting almost made my past with the sport fade away.

My spine stiffened, and I glanced over my shoulder.

Holy hell. Eyes burning with desire, it was like muscle memory taking over. The nights of laying in bed, reading scenes and acting out scenes, naked and otherwise, flashed in my overstimulated brain. Sex had never been a problem between the two of us.

Obviously.

Jett murmured, presumably low enough so that no one else would hear unless they were walking next to us as we made our way through the casino floor. The dinging and low murmurs of players and tourists enjoying all the things Vegas had to offer. “You’re not the only one getting married, Rena. I owe Seguin for a mistake I made, and I’m making good on a promise.”

I quickly looked away as his heated gaze lit fire to places in my body long dormant before I saw him face to face again. Head held high, I walked as if he had little to no effect on me, when in truth, the heat pooling in my belly from that look lit every nerve on fire.

“Some promise,” she whispered back. Then she gasped. “Holy shit, Jett.

That's *her*, isn't it? Seguin's your mystery *love*, the reason you read romance novels!"

From the silence behind me, I gathered Jett was giving Serena a withering look, but the woman who seemed to be one of his closest friends only chuckled.

"Can't fool me, lover boy. Tie the knot. I like her. I think she's going to make you work for it."

"You've known her for a few hours."

"I'm a fabulous judge of character." She paused. "And if you messed up, the groveling needs to be epic, Jett. Epic."

I smirked. Yep, I'd say the liking was mutual. But no amount of groveling would ever make up for the past.

Dinner passed by in a blur. Despite my best efforts, my body decided my brain and heart were not in agreement. Jett had always been sexy in college, but now, seven years later, I realized the man he had become was far more dangerous to my resolve than the cocky college football player I once knew.

And if he thought that move of removing his damn suit jacket, then rolling up his sleeves was affecting me, he was right. Asshole knew I was a sucker for arm porn. The veins, muscles flexing? A weakness he remembered. Fucker.

But the most devastating thing I kept noticing were the little quirks I had forgotten. The tilt of his head. The way one side of his mouth lifted first when he smiled. His sense of humor.

All so like his son.

No, fuck that. *My* son.

"So, Seguin, how are things with the Fury and the Foundation?"

I blinked my eyes, only to see everyone seated at the table staring at me expectedly. Kellan smiled, and though I never met the man, he was a small part of my past. Jett's agent when he was in the draft that tore us apart. My smile was pleasant, if not entirely sincere. A throwback to growing up in society, where ladies were always expected to mind their manners. "Well, thank you. It should be a mutually beneficial relationship between the Carolina Fury and the Gentry Foundation. The entire organization seemed to really be behind any outreach or implementation of programs. Including the upcoming Gala this season."

He grinned over a bite of the five star meal he was footing the bill for. After a few moments, he swallowed, and added, "I hear good things are on

the horizon, things the previous owners might not have been willing to entertain.”

This time, my smile was genuine. Fury might be football, but the new owners and management team had been receptive to my ideas to integrate both sports and arts in their efforts. “Mr. Gentry has been incredibly open to letting me run with the ideas I’ve had. I’m hoping that the next community outreach we do will be at the center the Fury is building.”

The Center had been in the works since the new owners took over last season. The previous owners had started but never followed through on construction. But instead of being just another place for kids to play football, the Fury were now converting the partially built facility into an all-encompassing key component to the Gentry Foundation.

A place where kids could play football, or any other sports they wanted, and discover the arts. Many of the players were passionate about the project since they, too, understood the importance of every child finding their passions just as they had.

“When is the Center’s opening?” Serena asked as the waiter brought over a tray of desserts and began placing them in front of everyone.

“A month and a half, if things stay on track and there aren’t any issues.” When Resnick Gentry initially contacted me about the position, I recalled how the Fury had begun construction on the building, intending to use it for the previous management’s youth football camp until the team’s sale. I had pitched him the idea, and he immediately warmed to it. In fact, it was the reason I agreed to work for the Fury in the end, instead of looking for another position with a gallery.

At least now, I could help young artists have a space to create, or introduce kids to things they never even knew about. On both sides of the coin. Sports or the arts. Classes, theater camps, sports clinics. The possibilities were endless.

“Do you still have family in Paris?” Gabe, Jett’s other best friend and Serena’s fiancé, asked.

I froze, fork in mid-air, the gorgeous raspberry almond creation seemed to be saying, *you knew this was coming. Can’t hide things forever.* I nodded. “My son is staying until the end of his semester with a family friend. But, then he’ll come over.”

Jett’s eyes bore into my head as I looked away, delicately shoving the fork full of sweet heaven into my mouth. Hoping having a mouth full of

dessert would derail any further discussion.

But fate was not about to be so kind.

“It must be hard to be away from him,” Serena said, her voice sad. “I can’t imagine how it must feel not to see your child every day.”

Jett coughed and stood abruptly. “Excuse me. Be right back. “

The hurt and anger in his eyes was like a knife to my heart, despite our past.

Shit. Was I doing the right thing, keeping our son from him? Marrying him, then telling him to walk away?

Could I do the same thing to him that he did to us seven years ago?

# CHAPTER 8



## JETT



*J* slipped my black tuxedo dinner jacket back on as I stood and backed away from the table before I said something I regretted. Or didn't regret.

The book I snagged from the top of Seguin's overnight bag burned a hole in the inner pocket. The minute I saw it, I had to know.

Did she still mark her favorite passages? The ones she made me read aloud to her, then we would role play deep into the night, or sometimes in the light of day?

My gait purposeful, I weaved through the artfully scattered tables in the restaurant Serena chose partly based on its famous chef, and partially based on the expensive bill Kellan, the owner of Fortress Spots Management and my not so former agent when I was in the NFL, owed her. Serena was tough as nails, and even with her heart of gold, made sure he recognized how much she hated going to Savannah last season. Even if things turned out pretty fucking great.

When I made it to the deserted lounge, I sat down and pulled out the book. I fucking loved that she still read physical books, or at least had this book. E-readers were convenient, but there was something sexy as hell about the way she highlighted and made notes in the margins that still got to me even today.

And yep, the fact that this was the same book I read just a few hours ago hadn't escaped my attention, either.

When I thumbed through it after making sure I was still alone, I couldn't help the smirk that spread across my face.

My Firefly still highlighted her favorite scenes.

This one, I remembered vividly. A tie, no panties, balcony railings, and restraints while her skirt was hiked up and all of her was on display for his pleasure.

Shit. It had been years since my dick was this hard.

An image of Seguin, the sexy as fuck dress pulled up, heels still on, tied to the railing of the balcony just outside the sliding glass door of my room was so vivid in my mind I swear I could smell her skin. Taste her. Lick her cunt until she begged me to fuck her. Sweat soaked bodies.

I wanted to show her just how fucking wrong I had been, licking her and fucking her with my tongue. I remembered all the spots she loved, how much pressure or how long she needed until she came on my tongue. I needed to discover if any of that had changed in seven years.

The flush in her cheeks told me she was a little tipsy from dinner as I neared the table moments later. I leaned over her shoulder and slid the book into her lap without anyone seeing. Her eyes, ice blue, widened then narrowed with anger. “How did you get that?” she hissed.

“The real question is, how did we both end up reading the same book, *Firefly*. And liking the same scene?”

Her mouth shut with an audible snap as I rounded the table and sat back down in my chair. I picked up the glass of bourbon I’d been nursing and drained the glass in one swallow. The entire time, Seguin tracked the movement. A sharp kick to my shin under the table from Serena afforded her a death glare.

*Epic*, she mouthed with an evil grin.



AFTER DINNER, we went over the next day’s plans, including the nuptials of both couples and a spa morning for the girls that Serena insisted on.

Gabe pulled me aside. “Are you seriously telling me that you’re marrying your college sweetheart, that you fucking broke up with when you were drafted? The one Xavier, crazy ass linebacker he was, almost kicked your ass so bad after you broke it off that he still won’t speak to you?” His eyes widened. “Shit. The kid. He’s *yours*, isn’t he?”

I couldn’t lie to my best friend, and had planned on telling them both at breakfast before Serena whisked Seguin off to be pampered.

Sighing, I nodded. “Yep. And her asshole father fucked with her trust fund. She has to get married to access it. I can’t leave her to struggle if I can fix things. She won’t take a damn dime from me, I tried. This way, her mother’s wishes are honored and she’s not shackled to some asshole.”

Gabe let out a long exhale and rolled his eyes as Serena linked her arm through his. “No, just the asshole who knocked her up, broke her heart, and never looked back.”

“Holy hell, that epic? You’d better add so much groveling that she’ll get so sick of hearing it she takes you back just to make you stop.” Serena teased, but she laid her hand on my arm. “If you need anything-”

“She’ll be spending her last single night running-”

I threw up my hands. “Oh God, tell me this isn’t what I have to deal with now, forever? I can’t with you two. I swear, if I hear you down the hall, I’m boycotting the wedding.”

“No, you won’t, because then you’d miss your own,” Serena smirked.

“We’re doing the drive thru.”

“Nope. Groveling. Epic. I talked the coordinator into adding your I do’s right after ours. Double weddings are tacky. And, I’m taking Seguin dress shopping. Or rather, the dresses are coming to the spa. If she’s joining the squad, I have to do my part to make sure she gets her epic. And don’t forget the groveling,” she teased as she pulled out of Gabe’s embrace with a wicked wink. “Find out what she likes now, Jett. You ready, Catcher?”

“Run. Princess,” Gabe growled as she took off towards the elevator as I fake vomited. “Fuck, that woman. I’m so glad you never dated, cause I’d probably have kicked your ass worse than Xav. But, your girl? Do right. And my girl’s right. Epic groveling. Now, I’ve got to go get my woman one last time before she changes her last name tomorrow.”

“Please tell me Fitz is at least staying in the spare room so he doesn’t get even more scarred for life.”

Gabe waved me off and headed after Serena, who was already wagging her fingers at him as the elevator doors closed.

Jesus, they were insatiable and so in love. But for once, the pang that hit me ever since I knew they were falling for each other wasn’t there.

Seguin brushed past me as she headed to the elevator, hips swaying, shoulders thrown back. The amazing girl I once held in my arms, now the sexiest woman I had ever seen in my life, and there was no doubt in my mind, that I still fucking loved her with all my heart.

And in the morning, she might not realize it, but it was the first day of the rest of our lives together.



KELLAN TRIED to talk me into having a drink with him, but I begged off. Before I opened the door to my room, I swore I heard a noise from Seguin's room, right next to mine. But, I waited, and after hearing nothing for a few moments, I went inside. The door snicked closed behind me, a final reminder of how I shut the door on her seven years ago.

I slung my jacket onto the chair beside small table and clicked on the small lamp atop it. Shadows danced on the walls like a replay of all the mistakes I'd made. The lights from the Vegas skyline illuminated the room. Next to the sliding door was a small bar. I poured two fingers of bourbon and drained it before refilling it. I loosened the red tie I wore to dinner and unbuttoned the top button of the white button down just as I heard a succinct knock on the door.

Thinking it was Kellan trying to convince me to join him, I reached for the doorknob, shaking my head. Kellan and I had been close ever since college, but Serena arranged for my new career at Anders Racing. I considered him one of my closest friends. Plus, he kinda owed me for Gabe signing with him, or so I reminded him every once in a while.

In a way, I guess that also made me responsible for Serena coming to town, their impending marriage vows, and Kellan dishing out for both dinners and god knows whatever else Serena managed to get out of him.

"Horne, get some sleep. You're a grandpa now, for fuck's sake," I drawled, jerking open the door.

Only to find Seguin on the other side, arm poised to knock again, book clenched in the other hand.

Guess I wasn't moving fast enough for her. By the way her chest rose and fell, I'd say she wished for more than just a quick conversation. I stepped back, allowing her space to enter my room if that's what she wanted. A whiff of her perfume drifted in the air as she passed me, reminiscent of the scent she once wore. But this was edgier. Seductive. Combined with how she looked in that damn dress, the other head in the situation was eagerly awaiting whatever next steps we were about to take.

She paced the room as I shut the door and put the safety lock in place. The thud echoed in the dimly lit room as she paused, then went straight for the bottle of bourbon, poured a generous amount, and slammed the contents in one fail swallow.

I opened my mouth to speak, but she stopped me with a withering glare. The hand clutching the book I stole earlier pointed at me as she set the glass down. “Nope, no opinions. I’ll drink whatever and however much I like, Jett.” Her eyes burned with fire as she turned her back, poured another glass and downed it just as quickly. “You have no right to offer me any kind of opinion on what I do, what I did, or what I’m about to do.”

“Okay,” I said slowly, afraid to spook her and she’d hurl the empty glass at me. It was the least I deserved.

“And don’t think because I still do this,” she lifted the book in the air, thrusting it in my direction, “that it means anything about the way I feel about you.”

“Got it, Firefly.”

She rolled her eyes, but I saw the flush in her cheeks, and how her pupils dilated. “And don’t Firefly me, either. You lost the right to call me that when you walked away.” The glass was filled once more, but before she could lift it to her lips, I stopped her, my grip gentle. I pried it from her hands and downed the contents myself before she drank more on top of what she had earlier at dinner.

When she licked her lips, gaze darting my mouth, my cock went from fourth down and goal, to the fucking one yard line.

Fuck the field goal attempt.

I was going for the damn touchdown. Consequences or not.

“Firefly,” I said gently, voice low as she leaned into me. Still defiant and filled with anger. But anger was the other side of love. Because if she hated me that much, it meant she still loved me, too. Only, she hadn’t forgiven me, not yet, and probably blamed herself in some way, too.

“This means nothing,” she hissed, her words an echo of what she said to me only hours before.

I nodded, lowering my mouth to hers, slowly.

“And I swear, if you say one thing-”

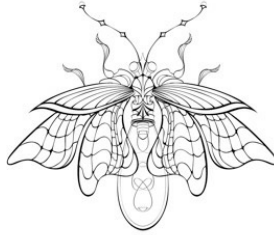
I smirked just before I claimed her mouth. “I saw. Chapter 7, page 113. It’s been on my mind all damn night, Firefly.”

Her eyes widened. “Oh, fuck,” she murmured right as I took back what I

lost seven years ago.

# CHAPTER 9

## SEGUIN



*H*e tasted like bourbon, cinnamon, and all the things I forgot over the past seven years. My heart pounded in my chest, heat pooled between my legs. The anger still boiled beneath the surface, but need and want and desire were stronger. Hell, all that pent up anger fueled the fact I wanted nothing more than to do exactly what was in that damn chapter.

Cross the Line by Delena Bennett.

A tie. Dress hiked up above my hips, panties scandalously discarded. Restrained and bound to the railing of the balcony. My eyes darted to the sliding glass door, the higher railing a deterrent, meticulously maintained. I wondered for a brief moment how the hell he had managed to get a room with a balcony when it seemed all of Vegas seemed to be afraid people would be haphazard with their safety.

He followed my gaze. A finger traced along my jaw. “Firefly, if we do this, there’s no going back for me.”

I lifted my chin. God. I wanted this, wanted him. But once this night was over, and the papers were signed and sent off to my mother’s attorney, I was done.

I promised myself I would never hurt like I had when he left me. My eyes lit with determination, I shook my head. “One night, and that’s it. This will never be more. We were always good at this.”

The moment his lips crashed into mine, taking and teasing, I lost all resolve. My words said one thing, my body demanded another. The traitorous way it responded instinctively to his touch, his taste fueled my anger and desire. My hands gripped at his shirt, loosening the red silk tie in contrast with the white of his shirt. He grabbed at the tie, sliding it from underneath



his collar as I unbuttoned each tiny obstacle until he grew impatient and yanked. Buttons flew, bouncing off the carpet but neither of us noticed.

Or cared.

Hands snaked beneath my dress, impatient yet careful at the same time. He pulled at the tiny strap keeping the tiny scrap of fabric in place. Then, with an impatient growl against my lips, he yanked, tearing it as they fell to the floor. The world disappeared from beneath my feet as he scooped me up into his arms, the what of his body intoxicating and comforting in the way only someone you once trusted could ever be.

But underneath it all, was a man I barely recognized anymore. Seven years stretched between us, but our bodies, and perhaps our hearts, no longer cared. He held me with one arm and opened the sliding door with the other hand. Stepping out into the surprisingly cool night, my heated skin broke out in tiny pebbles. Not from the chill but from the knowledge of what was to come.

My feet, still in the damn stilettos I loved and refused to give up, touched the floor of the terrace as he spun me around and pressed his body against me, his chest to my back.

His erection, just as fucking glorious and demanding as I recalled, eagerly jutting into my body from behind. I ground my hips against him. The moans wanton as they fell from my lips.

“Fuck, Firefly. I’ve dreamt of you, just like this, so many damn times. But, God, having you here, like this? Better than any damn fantasy I’ve jerked off to,” he growled in my ear.

I bit my lip, dropping my head against his shoulder as the hand holding the red tie snaked around my front. Hand encircling my neck in his firm grip as he molded me and bent me to his will, tilting my face and devouring me again. His taste was the same yet different, his demands more insistent yet gentle at the same time.

He broke off, and I gasped for air, not realizing how much oxygen my lungs needed to keep this going how I wanted.

The way I needed. My body both forgot how to breathe and demanded more air. “Hands on the rail, Firefly.”

I obeyed, heat and moisture soaking my inner thighs. The cool metal beneath my trembling palms did nothing to quell the heat building in me. It only stoked the embers he ignited in me as he used the tie to hold each wrist in place, entwining the fabric until I was restrained and unable to pull away.

Cool air hit my ass as he hiked up my dress with a harsh breath.

“Shit,” he cursed.

“What?” I asked, barely coherent.

“Fucking condoms.”

I closed my eyes, and said, my voice barely a whisper. “I’m on birth control. And I haven’t been with anyone in six months. Or more.”

“Fuck. I hate the thought of you with anyone else, Firefly. But it’s been over two years for me. And I might not last if I get in that pussy bare.”

“Please, Jett. I can’t...” My voice drifted off, then I let out a startled yelp that quickly turned into a moan as his thick cock filled me, pushing and taking so easily because my body wanted him. Remembered him. The way he felt inside me. Took and fucked and made me scream his name. Thrusting into my wet sex, I was his, unable to move or resist, even if I had wanted. My back arched, the orgasm building, tension and ecstasy growing with every feral thrust. Slapping and taking, our bodies falling into each other.

Harder and harder, until the world around me exploded, and I felt him shudder and roar his release, spilling his seed inside me. Jerking and trembling as we both rode the waves of our orgasms, coming together like time hadn’t kept us apart.

Finally, his breath tickled on my neck, hot and harsh. The wetness along my thighs as he slowly slid out of me. His cum marked me, inside and out, as his.

Now I just had to remember why *this* didn’t mean a thing.

Lie to myself and pretend I could walk away tomorrow after saying I do to the only man I had ever loved.



*SNICK.*

I slunk down the hallway after making sure Jett didn’t wake up when I snuck out, mere steps to my room, thankful I had the presence to grab the key card last night when I stormed to Jett’s room after saying goodnight to Oliver, even though he was just heading off to school.

When I set my phone down, that damn book glared at me from where I tossed it onto the couch. The tension that had been building since that damn Stranger Session finally exploded into a burning inferno. All those times

we'd read my books aloud, or share our favorite steamy scenes only to act them out later screamed inside my head. My damn lady parts and inner slut were screaming, too, after so long without him.

I'd long since resigned myself to the fact that the sex life we'd had in college was not the norm. Lied to myself that it didn't matter if those memories far outshone any experience I'd had since. Motherhood and my career made my priorities shift.

But now? After last night?

And not just the balcony, either. Three times.

Jett gave me the three best orgasms I'd had in seven fucking years.

Seven. Years.

Not that I'd been entirely celibate. Our engagement though over now, was as healthy as any relationship I'd heard of. Even if the sex was nice, I'd always had my secret drawer of toys. Most of which Cammie had sent over to me periodically. Sometimes as a joke, sometimes because her clients had recommended them and she shared the love.

I glanced at the time on my phone. Fuck. Serena was going to be here in three hours. To whisk me off to the spa.

For our weddings.

At least hers was real.

Ours?

I shut my eyes, willing myself to remember why I was doing this, to remember the past, and not let my heart or the little voice whispering sweet nothings to change my mind. I never wanted a loveless marriage, like the one my parents had, but I knew deep down in my heart there was no one else I would ever marry.

We might not ever have the kind of fairytale marriage most girls dreamed of, but at least a part of me that still believed in what we once had found her prince.

It was an illusion, but once in a while, the lie slipped past my walls and found its way into my heart.

Two-hour nap, shower, and a quick bite. Yep, definitely had time. I hugged my arms around my torso, and though the thought of washing off his scent, amongst other things, a shower was the first thing on my list.

Then, I would shut my eyes, pretend last night, and hell, this morning, never happened.

The sigh that left me was an admission that I understood the truth, and

nothing would ever be the same. Like it or not, Jett needed to meet his son. It was the moment I dreaded since the marriage clause forced my hand. As much as I'd painted him as the villain, the devastated look in his eyes and the way he respected my decision up until now. He hadn't asked about our son, not once. But I knew Jett.

And it wouldn't be long until he did. If only I knew the right thing. For both of them.



“GROUND RULES. Jett is one of my best friends. But, girl code takes precedence. Especially on your wedding day.”

The serene atmosphere of the spa inside our hotel was even more luxurious than the one Bryce sent me away for the weekend on the coast for my birthday last year. Music and lighting attuned to be as calming as possible, yet my heart fluttered in my chest at the mention of the upcoming nuptials. I might try to convince myself that this was purely a business transaction so I could access the rest of my trust fund, and not have Bryce need for anything while supporting the things I loved, but...

Saying ‘I do’ in a ceremony wasn't the same as signing papers in a judge's office. Pen and paper was an entirely different thing than repeating vows out loud in front of witnesses.

Lena, Kellan's newly found daughter, let out a moan from the pedicure chair. “Don't tell Anthony I make the same noises when a stranger rubs my feet as when he does,” she murmured, eyes closed. “If I fall asleep, don't wake me up until it's time to get dressed. Peyton did not want to sleep last night. I swear, Serena, if I wasn't enjoying watching Kellan squirm over and over every time he took out his credit card, I might just sleep in the room all day. The pillows are heavenly.”

Serena let out an evil chuckle. “Take them home, courtesy of your dad.”

Lena giggled, her aqua eyes flashing with humor. “Poor guy. I swear. Informed me when Anthony and I get married that he has a wish list. Staying close to home at the top. Anthony has been having way too much fun with it all.”

The two women were open and welcoming. As the door to the private room we were getting pampered in opened, I tried to sink lower into the chair

where I sat, wrapped with some sort of wonderfully smelling face mask and my feet in the most amazing foot bath/massage combination. Fingers freshly manicured a red so deep it was almost black.

Because, not one, not two, but *three* racks of what I had to assume were wedding dresses filled the racks, hanging and begging for a happily ever after.

Serena fit the bill to a 't', but Jett and I?

We were a disaster of epic proportions, heartache, and too many miles between us to wish for a swoon worthy romantic ending.

Hell, we even missed out on our happy for now.

But, Serena insisted on a dress and not the cocktail dress I chose to wear to their ceremony, then changing into something more casual for our now canceled drive thru quick nuptials.

Now, there was a dress, flowers, and even a ring. Witnesses, and a shared anniversary I never planned on celebrating with my soon to be husband. Her eyes lit up as she eyed the racks. Helen, the coordinator for the resort, breezed in, scrolling on her phone, and presumably adding another ceremony right after Gabe Knight, Super Bowl Champion, and Serena Jolie, tied the knot.

At least the venue would be ready, even if the bride and groom weren't.

Though I couldn't speak for Jett. The way his eyes tracked my every movement as he licked and sucked my pussy like a man possessed last night made me think he had other things in mind. God, the man had a tongue, mouth, and a pure sense of the kind of determination that wasn't annoying. Some men didn't get the nuances of the act, but not Jett. Last night (or was it this morning?), he made me come so hard, I nearly saw stars. My legs still hadn't fully recovered from my body exploding in fireworks and everything dangerously sexy about what had been us, again and again.

"I think something more," Helen studied me from the top of my towel wrapped hair, to my now not soaking but getting polished in the same deep red toes. "Sexy."

"Ooh, yes," Lena said, then moaned, adorable as she clapped her hands. "Listen, if I went that way, your hands alone would make me marry you. Though, I'd miss my man. And he is my baby daddy," she added, eyes sparkling. "And with peek-a-boo details."

Serena sat up. "Fuck. Yes."

Helen tapped her chin, then walked up to the first rack, rifled through it,

moved to the second. My heart pounded in my chest. “No, not this one. Too much like your mermaid, Serena.”

“Short and sexy. Because I guarantee there’s at least one walk of shame this weekend happening...or already happened.” Serena’s eyes widened as heat flamed on my cheeks. She slapped her leg, causing the poor girl painting her toes to jump, then giggle. “I knew it! You two did the nasty last night, didn’t you?”

Lena rolled her eyes. “Please, you know that the whole not seeing the bride the night before the wedding is BS, right?”

Serena nodded as the aesthetician came over and gently pushed my head back so she could start to remove the mask from my face. “Close your eyes,” she said with a smile, and I did, happily, because I couldn’t meet either of their eyes.

But, damn I heard their peals of laughter.

“Jett is kind of hot.” This from Lena. “And so is Ty Simmons. The Fury made me a fan when they signed him.”

“I can’t state my opinion on the subject accurately enough. Number one because if Gabe found out, his inner caveman would Hulk out, and two, he’s one of my besties. And Ty? Yum. Golden retriever kink activated. Though,” she paused, “when we first met, I thought maybe I could see where things went with Jett, until I realized his heart would always belong to someone else.” Her wink was hard to miss, even with my eyes closed due to Lena’s giggle.

I tried to sit up, but was gently pushed back down as the cool and gentle hands finished their ministrations. “He told you about me?”

“Not exactly,” she answered, slowly, as if contemplating something momentous. “But, it all makes so much sense now. The random romance novels, and the way he was so damn perfect as a wingman, plus I never felt like I had to worry about that weird guy friend thing. I knew he was pining away for someone. Even last week, before he told us about the whole wedding/marriage thing, Gabe was incredibly tight lipped. He never even told me you two dated in college.”

I sighed. “Until he was drafted and ghosted me. That’s dead and gone now.”

“Pshaw,” Lena said. “True love never dies.”

“Ugh, you and Damon fucking Salvatore.”

“Island, Serena. Get one before it’s too late.”

“Gabe would flip. Which,” she cackled, “might amuse me more than teasing him about Jett. Since he’s going to be a taken man, now and all, I definitely need another fun way to tease my Catcher. Maybe Klaus? Ooh, yes!!! Perfect!”

“This is it!” Helen interrupted the two vampire salivating women who I had a feeling were not going to let me fade quietly away once we returned to North Carolina.

The hands working on my skin gently patted me, and I blinked, the soft light just low enough that my eyes barely needed to adjust before I turned my head and saw it.

My dress.

It was everything I would never choose for myself. And everything I would have wished for at the same time.

Sheer in spots, with an overlay strategically placed here and there, beaded and lace details reminiscent of the finest European lingerie, and plenty of bare skin.

“Yes,” Serena breathed. “Guaranteed to induce epic level grovel.”

Lena sighed. “I’d even marry you in that dress.”

“There’s something genuinely wrong with you two.” I groaned, breathless, and not meaning a word I uttered.

They both nodded, and Serena added, “Which is why we are now your circle once we get back home. And Cammie. Because I think I need one of those Stranger Sessions.”

Lena said dryly, “You already know each other.”

Serena shrugged, and looked me in the eye with a smirk. “Role play, baby. Right, Seguin?”

I sighed, my eyes back on the dress like a moth to a flame. “There is something to it, I suppose.”

Laughter filled the room, and for the first time in eight years, I felt like I had a home again. Not the cold one I grew up in, even as my mother tried to make sure I didn’t stay trapped where she herself could never break free. But one filled with love, a real family, and the kind of support only love could give you.

The only question was, how long would it last if Jett and I didn’t? And did I want it to?

# CHAPTER 10



## JETT



“*F*uck,” Gabe breathed beside me as Kellan appeared at the entrance to the outdoor garden, thousands of twinkling lights somehow shining in the early evening light. Beside me, Anthony Rossetti, Lena’s fiancé and Kellan’s best friend (talk about a fucking romance trope come to life), stood, making eyes over my head to Lena, who was on the other side of Seguin.

Fucking Firefly. When she’d walked down the aisle way lined tiny flickering fairy lights. Glass spheres glowed, adorned with deep red roses and Seguin’s favorite, a deep red plumeria flower I’d told Helen, the wedding coordinator for the resort about only last night, made a scented pathway. Her damn lips matched the flowers, as did her nails and the toes.

Yep, I’d noticed. Because I’d taken in every damn inch of her when she walked in.

Her body was perfection, curves hugged in an ivory and lace dress that would have been scandalous for the socialite she had been running away from becoming when we met in college. But, now?

The miles of creamy skin, from her bare back to the swell of her breasts, to the glimpses here and there? The damn thing looked like a cross between the sexiest lingerie I’d ever imagined and a torture device made specifically to give me the hardest erection and pounding heart of my life.

Not even playing in the big game made me feel the way Seguin did in what was her wedding dress.

Marrying me. Seguin was going to be my wife in just a few moments. Once Gabe and Serena said I do, we would watch the two of them walk back down the aisle and stop halfway down.

Then, time for Mr. and Mrs. Jett Carter to say the words that would bind us together, in more ways than one. The mother of my child would be the woman I called my wife.

I did my best to stay in the moment as my two best friends exchanged their vows. Declared their everlasting love.

Fitz even whimpered his approval between them, his fancy black collar sporting a bow tie, and stared lovingly at his girl. Smart dog. He knew the score. And Gabe?

I'd never seen him look happier. Even the night the Rockets won the damn Super Bowl paled in comparison to how he looked reciting his vows. Fuck, he even added he promised to chase Serena in sickness and health, much to the chagrin of everyone in the room, but hey, wouldn't accept any less from the two of them after they pretty much ruined my kitchen for me.

All too soon, the happy couple kissed and flower petals, the same as the ones lining the path, fluttered gently from the sky. The ground was peppered with them as they walked halfway down, and turned back to us. Fuck, they looked so happy.

Seguin stepped in and placed her cool hand in mine. As the officiant busied himself with a quick word with his assistant, she leaned in, and murmured, low enough so that I only heard her soft words.

"This? It means nothing. Once the I do's are said, we walk away," Her eyes were lit with a fire I didn't think even she knew was there. Or maybe she did, and the words were just as much for herself as she thought they were for me.

My eyes raked down her body. The length of her jet black hair, longer now. Eyes that held so much wisdom and pain and strength.

Things hadn't been easy for her, and I hated knowing I was the cause of anything that hurt her. Regret sank deep in my gut. Followed by resolve. I finished my perusal, taking in the nonverbal cues her body gave off.

Curves that weren't there seven years ago, accented by the way her gorgeous breasts rose and fell with each breath, quicker with every passing second.

The faded stretch marks from where our son grew in her belly. I kissed every fucking one last night, like a silent prayer to her and how fucking amazing she was.

She can say whatever she wants. But I'll beg on my knees and worship her until she forgives me. Just like I did the night before and into the early

light of the morning.

The world passed by in a blur, until I heard her say, “I do,” as I slid the platinum diamond infinity band onto her right hand.

I leaned in, and just before I kissed her, whispered, with every bit of my being, “Oh, wife.”



“ALL IN,” Gabe said, smirking at his wife. As a part of the post ceremony celebration, Helen arranged a private table on the casino floor for the entire party to play poker. Lena tried to beg off right after dinner because she was worried Peyton was missing her. Or, really the other way around. But after Anthony ran back to their room to check on Peyton, and sent a video of the baby sleeping peacefully, and the nanny the wedding coordinator had arranged so the couple could attend the ceremony, she gave in and was laughing with her father, who she still called Kellan since they just recently found each other.

Seguin, however, looked like she wanted to run away one second, then like she was terrified to be alone with me the next.

Serena leaned forward, giving her husband a full view of her cleavage as she licked her lips. “Call.”

If the two of them didn’t leave soon, I swear they were going to go at it right there on the damn table.

Unfortunately, I was contemplating whisking Seguin off to some private alcove or fuck, my room, and show her just how I planned on apologizing while she writhed and made the noises that haunted my every night for seven years.

Every damn dirty thing I remembered from our past, every fantasy I replayed, and every damn thing I thought when she walked down that aisle. The dress she wore stole my breath, but her eyes, her smile? It stole my heart.

Fuck, who am I kidding? She owned it ever since the first time I laid eyes on her. NO wonder I felt like something had been missing all along.

My heart has been with my Firefly from the first moment she appeared in my life.

Seguin’s eyes shot to Gabe’s face, then Serena’s, and then, with a calculated sigh, mine. After a second, she said, “Call.”

It was a challenge if ever one had been thrown. Flag on the damn field. Especially when she leaned back and crossed her long legs, the heel of her shoe rubbing along the back of her calf. Every inch of exposed skin was a fucking welcome distraction. Or a warning.

The only question was, would she let me score, or was tonight going to be my last chance before she called a timeout.

For good.

Seguin tilted her head. “Not sure your hand is good enough, Mr. Carter?”

The smirk was for her alone, but Serena knew me well enough to understand that I rarely backed down. Even if I realized I was about to lose. MAYBE it was the part of me that played football for so long. Or maybe I loved the way people looked when they won, and the bluff meant they had even more stake in things.

I didn't always bluff.

No way in hell walking away from my wife was happening in any way, shape, or form.

Fuck. Me.

*My wife.*

But my hand? I had Gabe beat, and probably Serena. I'd played both of them too many times to not remember their tells.

Kellan, Anthony, and Lena folded early and were watching us like the popcorn was being served in a never-ending, refillable bucket.

I smirked as she licked her lips. “Call.”

Gabe laid down his cards, as did Serena. Both let out an overly exaggerated moan when Seguin did the same.

“Ready to see my hand, my wife?”

Her cheeks flushed, and my cock stood at attention as she nodded. When the cards hit the table, she grinned. With an adorably sexy squeal, she swept the pile of chips in front of her as the dealer gathered the cards.

“Guess mine was better,” she countered with a smile, chips stacked like a gateway to her heart before her. The only question was, would she let me in?

“Maybe I have cards I haven't shown yet, Firefly.”

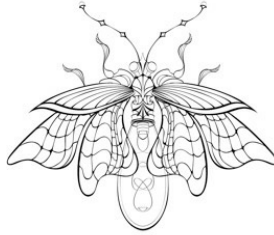
The world around us faded. The casino, the people, Serena, Gabe. Lena, Kellan, and Anthony.

No one else existed for me. Only Seguin.

*My wife.*

# CHAPTER 11

## SEGUIN



“*R*eady to see my hand, my wife?”

The minute Jett said that word, my heart skipped a beat, and hadn't resumed a normal rhythm since. The tingle along my spine settled into a molten lava pool of desire between my thighs. Electricity crackled in the air, sending arcs of lightning invisible to anyone else back and forth, like Tesla himself had decided we were his personal experiment.

And all it took were those two words.

*My wife.*

*Why the hell was that so hot?* Hearing Jett call me his *wife* ignited the fire that had been a smoldering ember for the past seven years. The black tux, loosened tie, coat slung on the back of his chair.

All through dinner, I caught his eyes on me. Felt his gaze like a lover's hand in all the places he touched like no one else. In seven years, Jett played in every fantasy I ever had, even as I hated him, cursed him. And missed him like hell. Hated myself for missing him and loving him still.

But playing poker against him brought out his competitive side. With every drink our personal wait staff brought over, my face heated. My body craved his touch again.

Every drink he took, his eyes lingered, leg brushed against mine under the table. Gaze burned the exposed skin the dress daringly revealed.

I loved every look, touch, and silent promise he sent.

If he didn't really touch me soon, kiss me like I desperately wished he would, fuck me until I screamed, I might explode right here on the casino floor.

Or tear his shirt off and get arrested for indecent exposure.

“I’m taking *my wife* up to our room and-”

Kellan interrupted Gabe before he got any further. “And I’m going to go to my room, alone, and pretend I don’t know what’s happening between *any* of you,” he pointed at Lena and Anthony, “Especially the two of you.”

Lena laughed. “Peyton will want mommy and daddy time and *grandpa* time,” she teased as Kellan groaned.

“And I need *daddy* time with you,” Anthony murmured as he put his jacket around Lena’s shoulders and Kellan rolled his eyes.

“Daughter, T. Still my daughter.” We all said our goodbyes, and Gabe scooped a giggling and slightly buzzed Serena into his arms.

“Kellan, come up and say good night to Peyton,” Lena said as the three of them walked through the casino floor, weaving through tables and people milling about.

And then there were two.

“Well, it’s been a long day, and-” Jett stepped into my body, hand on my lower back. Eyes darkening with desire, breath quickening. Heat from his body radiating and the familiar scent stirred my memory. I wanted to bury my nose in his neck like I used to. Fall asleep in his arms.

Feel safe. Then, the memory of the way he left me right after being drafted into the NFL hit me like ice cold water.

I stiffened and turned to leave before either of us did something we would regret.

“Firefly,” he murmured, hand on my arm, stopping me. “Don’t walk away. Not yet.”

I shut my eyes, palms flexing. I couldn’t give in, not now. Could I?

He stepped into my space, chest to my back, hands running up and down my arms. Breath hot and tickling my ear. “Let me show you how fucking sorry I am. For everything. Let me worship you, one more time. And after, if you still want me to walk away, I will. Even though you’re the love of my life. And my wife.”

All the breath rushed out of my lungs, and I let myself melt against him. My heart begged me to let him try, for one night. My lady parts begged for me to let him worship. My brain wondered if there were enough words of apology to erase seven years of sleepless nights.

Heart and desire won out in the end.

“One night. But if I decide this is it, I need you to respect my decision,

Jett. Please.” The last word came out so low, I wasn’t sure he heard it.

I felt his nod rather than saw it. “Oh, wife, I’ll respect you always. But you’ll never lose me. Never again,” he vowed. “My room. Now.”



MOONLIGHT SLANTED ACROSS THE FLOOR, a slight breeze gently lifting the sheer curtains drawn across the sliding glass door that stood half open. The night air cooled my heated skin as Jett laid me down on the bed. When he insisted on carrying me over the threshold of the hotel doorway.

He stared down at me. “This dress stole my damn breath, Firefly, from the first moment you stepped on that path to me. To becoming mine.”

I sat up on my elbows, watching as he undid the black silk tie the rest of the way. The hiss of the fabric as he pulled it off before he placed it on the bed beside me. Slowly, he lifted my right foot, gently and methodically unbuckling the strap of the stiletto shoe. A sly grin as he took it off, then moved to the other foot. “These shoes taunted me all night. I always loved the way heels made your ass look, wife.” Hands, calloused and big, slid up my thigh, hooking behind my knees, he slowly pulled me to the edge. Eyes never leaving my face, he kneeled before me.

“Jett-”

“Shh,” he whispered, finger on my lips. “I need to say something. A few somethings.”

I nodded, and he dropped his finger, tracing it down my body. Kneading and massaging my thighs, he continued, “What I did, I don’t have an excuse. I have reasons. They don’t mean I’m not sorry as fuck, Firefly. My dad and I loved football. And racing. But when he got sick, it messed with my head. I knew he was proud of me, but I felt like I had to live my dream since he couldn’t. And I didn’t know how to...live that dream and not crush yours. You had finally broken away from your father and his expectations. If you stayed with me, you’d either grow to resent me because my career would overshadow us, or you’d walk away and hate me, eventually. I walked away from you to save you from losing finding *your* dream. Doing whatever you wanted. Without anyone forcing their life and expectations on you.” He huffed out a breath. “It doesn’t make it right. But I need you to understand I did what I thought was right at the time for you. I didn’t want you giving up



on whatever dream found you.”

My eyes softened as he stared down at me. Head bent, leaving soft kisses along my inner thigh. I lifted my hips as he slid the ivory things down. Gaze locked on mine. Regret and desire mingled in his eyes.

Suddenly, I was the one filled with regret. Regret that I kept Oliver from him all this time. I opened my mouth to speak, but he stopped me again. “Tomorrow, Firefly. I want to know everything. But tonight, I want to fuck my wife. But this time, our scene. And I have seven years of reading to draw on since we were last together. Last night was just a preview.” He drew the tie through his hands, mesmerizing me with the precision of his movement. His eyes darted to the bed frame. “Hands above your head, Firefly. I plan on fucking that sweet pussy with my tongue until you come at least twice. Then, I’m going to tie you to the headboard and see what your ass looks like with my handprint on it.” He leaned over me and said against my lips. “After, I’m going to fuck you wife, and make you come again.”

Jett looked pointedly at each of my hands, and I obeyed his silent command. Moving them high above my head. A whimper escaped me as he looped the tie around my wrists and kept them in place with his hand for a moment.

“Don’t move.”

Then he slid down my body, hiking the dress over my hips. My pussy on display, he spread me apart using his thumbs along the slick folds, gathering the wetness. Sucked my wetness from his thumb with a growl.

“I’m addicted to the way you taste, Firefly. And now that you’re my wife?” He growled as he licked me, pausing only to nip at the sensitive bundle of nerves and making me arch my back in response. The way he licked and sucked, then added a finger, sliding inside me, curling and coaxing my body until my legs trembled, arms ached, but still didn’t stop. The pleasure built, until it washed over me, relentless as he was, and I came, thrashing my head. Voice hoarse and chanting his name, over and over, as if it would quell the fire running in my veins as pleasure consumed me.

Jett’s chuckle tickled my ear as he untied my wrists, gently bringing me to my knees. Deft fingers undid every button, slid the tiny zipper along one side down, and lifted the dress carefully over my head. “You’re wearing that every damn anniversary. So I can do this,” He kissed me, tongue and lips unabashedly wet and slick from his amazing oral skills, “all over every single time.”

His gaze darkened as he took in my naked form. The dress didn't really allow for a bra, or anything else beyond the thing he had already removed.

"Turn around. Hands on the bars," he demanded softly.

Legs still weak from just seconds ago, I carefully turned, crawling toward the head of the bed. Hands gripping the cool metal. Black silk one wrist, my ivory panties on the other.

"Such a good wife, Firefly. This ass is mine."

My head dropped, memories of the scene I read to him one night so many years ago in my mind. And how his hand felt marking me then.

I wanted It. Now.

He chuckled darkly. "I remember. Thought about it almost every night." He smoothed his palm over one side, then the other, dipping his fingers into my sex. "My wife is needy, isn't she?" he murmured.

The sting of his hand spanking me, once twice, then three times heated my skin. Moisture pooling and dripping along my inner thighs. His growl of approval made me want to arch my back, and beg for more.

"Two more, baby. Then I'm fucking you. My wife."

The sound of him marking my flesh once, twice, filled the room alongside my gasps. Without waiting for me to recover, he pushed my thighs wider. Hands gripped my hips right after I heard the telltale hiss of his zipper.

Then he entered me in one thrust, filling me, stretching and owning my pussy just like he always had. Like he owned my heart. He pulled out just enough to take me to the edge, then drove his cock into me, harder. An ownership that went both ways. Again, fucking me, my hands gripping the bars. The bed moved with every thrust.

One hand fisted in my hair, wrapping it around until his grip on me was so tight, I could only take what his body gave mine.

Again, I felt the cresting wave of my orgasm building as he took me further. My cries fell unbidden until finally, I fell. My inner wells clenched and trembled. He thrust in one last time with a groan then growled as he filled me. Bodies slapping and sweat soaked promises.

Ones I never wanted to break. Ever again.

## CHAPTER 12

## JETT



The morning sun snuck its way into the room before I opened my eyes. Rays of light basking her body a warm glow. Snuggled under my arm, warm and beautiful and snoring softly, my wife was even more beautiful now than she'd ever been,

This selfless, amazing woman.

My fucking wife.

I climbed out of bed, then took a moment just to stare at her, curled around my pillow. The same way she did when I'd sneak out early to go to practice senior year. Black silk strands fanned out, a few strands covering her face. Lips softly parted.

Naked, and my wife. Not the girl I loved back then.

But the woman I fucking adored now, and the mother of my child. The door shut with a gentle click, and I picked up the phone, ordered room service. A calm settled over me that had been missing, and I realized it was because I had Seguin. Not just in my bed, or wearing my ring on her finger. Hell yes, I loved calling her wife. Mine.

But the look in her eyes last night when I confessed all the things I had kept inside for so long healed a part of me I hadn't realized needed her forgiveness.

Quietly as I could, I snuck back into the bedroom and crawled back under the thin sheet around her waist. As soon as I did, she turned and snuggled into my chest with a satisfied sigh. Her hand snuck up to rest on my chest. I kissed the top of her hair.

"Morning Mr. Carter," she said sleepily.

"Morning Mrs. Carter."

We stared at each other until we both grinned.

Her eyes dropped to the firefly tattoo on my chest, just above my heart. “Is that...for me?”

I nodded., warmth at her reaction and blood rushing to my happy dick. She bit her lip, and I had to remind myself we had things to discuss before anymore of that. “I’d kiss you, but morning breath.”

She immediately pulled the pillow over her head. “Oh, God. Let me brush before I kill you with my morning breath.”

I tried to find her under the massively comfortable pillow that all hotels seemed to have that you could never find to actually buy, but she held on tight.

Her voice, still muffled by the fluffiness hiding her from me, was adorable and the thing dreams were made of.

“I’ll run to my room, and just freshen up-”

“Nope. Not letting you out of my sight, Firefly. No overthinking or regretting. Plus, I have breakfast coming and things to talk about. And I have all these books-”

She giggled and finally moved the offending yet comfortable object. Blue eyes, the stress and anger that had been in them since the Stranger Session gone. The girl I loved was there, beside the woman I loved.

“I don’t expect you to move in right away, or anything. We need to get to know who we are now, Firefly, but-”

She put her finger to my lips. “Then tell me now. Because I plan on not wasting one more second of our lives, or Oliver’s. Tell me everything.”

The knock at the door and the rumble that came from her belly interrupted anything I was about to say, but I held up a finger. “Breakfast? I remember how much you love coffee and breakfast sandwiches. That,” I hesitated, “hasn’t changed, has it?”

“Never.”

“And hash browns.”

Her smile was everything. “Same girl who loves all that, right here, husband.” She climbed out of bed and grabbed the robe I slung on a chair after we both showered sometime in the middle of the night. A contented sigh left her as she slipped it on. “Why is everything better at a hotel?”

“All the better to keep you in my bed forever,” I said, taking her in my arms and kissing her thoroughly until the insistent knock came again. My groan as I pulled away caused her to giggle.

She patted my chest. “Feed me, husband I believe I was promised groveling. This definitely counts, if I’m pleased with your choices.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Twenty minutes, two breakfast sandwiches and three hash browns later, Seguin sat across from me. Feet propped on my lap, a satisfied look on her face while she sipped her coffee.

I’d spent the time watching her eat, and filling her in on my life in the NFL. The success I’d found. The way the game had changed after just a few years with my dream team. How Gabe and I played for the same team for a while, and when I decided to hang up my cleats, how Serena and Kellan had shown me a way to fulfill my other passion.

Working for Bobby Anders, open wheel champion and legend, as the front tire changer and mechanic for his race team.

“And most of the guys are former athletes?”

“Yep, and they were either not getting enough field time or didn’t want to spend their careers on the practice squad. A few like me, and now Gabe, wanted something different even though we had a pretty amazing career. Serena’s cousin, Ryan and her Uncle, worked for Bobby Anders and she got me an interview. Bobby took a chance on me, plus Kellan’s sports agency, Fortress, reps a few of the drivers. Crazy thing is, I still get endorsement deals.” I shook my head, still in awe at how my life had turned out. “But even through it all, there wasn’t a moment I didn’t wish you were by my side.”

Her eyes softened, lips parted as I massaged her feet. First one then the other. A tear slipped from her eye, and I caught it before she wiped it away. “I’m so sorry, Jett.”

“For what?”

Silence stretched on, filling the air with regret.

“For keeping him from you, all these years.” Tears spilled down her cheeks.

Fuck. Seeing her cry fucking killed me. “Hey,” I murmured, getting up and gathering her in my arms. She buried her head in my shoulder. “It’s okay. I understand. Do I like it? Of course not, but Seguin, I was such a complete asshole, and my reason might’ve made sense to me at the time. As time went on, I knew I fucked up.” I placed my finger under her chin and forced her to look me in the eye. “I’m the one who is supposed to be groveling and asking for forgiveness, remember? So, tell me all about our son, Firefly.”

The next hour, I learned everything and not enough about the little boy

she'd raised all by herself. Kind of. About the man she'd tried to love, who had become more of a friend than a lover and more of an uncle than a father.

That confession made me growl like Gabe when he got all caveman, and suddenly I understood why he almost took my head off a few times when he first met Serena.

“Oliver knows about you, though. I never made him think his father didn't want him. I always told him that we just ended up going in different directions, even when I cursed you on the inside.” Her tear soaked grin melted my heart.

I deserved to be called every name in the book for how I left her alone, to not only carry our son but raise him up until now on her own.

“So, if you think I'm going to fly him thousands of miles away, settle into a new house, only to uproot him again so we can get to know each other, you're sadly mistaken, husband. My baby boy needs to be with his daddy. But, maybe we start with FaceTime first, and ease him into it? And we might need to talk about logistics. I promised him a puppy. So if, if we need a bigger house, I can-”

I cut her off before she uttered another word. “I have a yard, and two spare bedrooms. Though one is all my football stuff I never got around to unpacking. But if you don't like it, we buy another place. No questions asked.”

We stared at each other, and for once all the tension in my body that I forgot was there faded away.

“Oh. Mr. Carter. Haven't you realized wherever we are is home? From the first game I ever watched you play, to the moment you walked through that studio door.” She leaned in, her scent on my tongue. “And it always has been. Always will be. Now, tell me all about these books. We have catching up to do.”

I smirked. “Seven years of catching up. And I have so many highlights, Firefly. So many ways to make you scream my name.”

She sighed and wriggled in my lap. “No time like the present to get started.”

# EPILOGUE



## JETT



*Two months later...*

“Stop fidgeting,” Serena teased as Gabe came up beside her and wrapped her in his arms.

I glanced around the kitchen, from the Jet’s pizza box, to the chicken nuggets from McDonald’s Seguin told me were Oliver’s favorite, and a dozen other things I’d probably gone overboard on. “After you find out you have a seven-year-old human you never knew about, then you can tell me to stop fidgeting.”

“Try finding out about a twenty something kid, also dating our best friend,” Kellan muttered as he and Lena came in through the front door carrying a cake and balloons. “J, you sure you want us all here?”

I nodded as Fitz bumped my hand with his massive head. “FaceTime for two months means Oliver has heard all about you, and Seguin said he wants to meet his whole new family.” I shrugged as I looked at the people who had been there for me since my dad passed away all those years ago.

The people who watched me succeed, fail, and discover new adventures. The family I chose, who stuck by me when I needed them most.

Anthony came in, Peyton on his hip. “Seguin’s pulling in now, and there’s somebody bouncing around in the backseat.”

Serena came over and gave me a quick squeeze. “Go be epic, Jett. You got this.”

I sucked in a deep breath, picked up the puppy sitting by my feet next to Fitz, and went out to meet my son, face to face, and kiss my wife.

Who says what happens Vegas has to stay there?



THANK you for reading Call My Bluff! If you've enjoyed Jett and Seguin's story, consider leaving a review...and don't miss the rest of the From Valentine's to Vegas series!

Want to see how Gabe and Serena met? Read [Touch Me Down](#) now.

Turn the page to see how the Carolina Fury are changing the face of football in their city. One player at a time.

OVERTIME EDITION



*hard*  
**COUNT**

ARIANA ST. CLAIRE

# HARD COUNT

## SEBASTIAN



"Shittiest game you've ever played, Lockwood. And quite honestly, main office isn't exactly singing your praises."

Coach never blew smoke but fuck, he was right. And after nine years in the game, my arm wasn't like it used to be. Playing for Cleveland the past four seasons had been like being invited to dinner at your high school principal's house. At first, everyone likes you, until they realize you might be the troublemaker causing all the problems at school.

"The fact of the matter is, I can't have a quarterback leading my team who no one wants to fucking follow," he eyed me. "Or one who sleeps with his players' wives or girlfriends."

Fuck. "Not my fault she never told me her name," I held up my hands, "and Silva's wife showed up at my place in nothing more than a trench coat in the pouring rain." I called her a damn cab, but Silva showed up, after the bitch texted him, and laid me out flat before I could explain. Didn't help matters she'd slid into my DMs, and like an idiot, I'd played along not realizing who she was at first. When I tried to break it off, trench coat gate.

*Of course the rest of my line didn't believe my side of the story, and if your line doesn't protect you, you can't score.*

*Which means you can't win. And that translates to this fucking meeting.*

He sighed, and sat back into his chair. "Lockwood, I'm going to lay it out. I know your agent dropped you, HR doesn't want to touch this fucking thing with a damn ten foot pole, and if you were playing at the top of your game, I would do my damnedest to fight for you. But, you're not."

Allan Brandt informed me via text that he and his agency would no longer be representing me or my interests after this weekend.

*Basically, you're fucked, Bas.*

"The head office is activating the morals clause in your contract, effective immediately. And putting you on waivers."

My head shot up. Explained why Taft, the team legal head for Cleveland, entered the room just after Coach called me in a few minutes before. And why the tension in the air was so thick, you could cut it with a knife.

"No shit."

Taft cleared his throat, but Coach waved him off.

"Give us the room," he said with a shooing motion. Taft looked put off, but no one argued with Coach if they knew better. As Taft made his reluctant exit, Coach set his glasses on the desk and let out a breath as he leaned back in his chair. He shot a look at the door as it shut with a thud. "Lawyers don't get the nuances of the game. Or how chemistry and luck play into things."

Fuck me. I hung my head, not wanting to meet his eyes. My attitude was shit, and I knew it. He knew. Hell, the team knew it.

Especially Ty, the one guy on the team who made an attempt to stop my shitty attitude.

He eyed me a few times during practice, shaking his head, no doubt at my wasted talent.

No one wanted to protect a guy who acted like a world class dick.

And then something changed.

The only guy who stayed on for extra practice time with me. Of course, no one on the team except him knew I stayed, besides two of the trainers who left the door unlocked to the practice field twice a week for me after hours.

The first time Ty walked in on me to grab his lucky water bottle, he looked dumbstruck that I was still there, running snaps and throwing balls. Covered in sweat after a three and half hour practice, and a two hour workout on top of an hour run on the treadmill.

Typical day for me, though I never let on that I put in the extra time.

The intense physicality of it all kept the demons at bay. Chased away the regrets I had. Didn't help my attitude, but at least by the time I got home, I was too exhausted to think, let alone dream. Or if I did, I didn't remember shit.

After that first time, Ty 'left' with the rest of the squad, but came back fifteen minutes later. Each time, we'd run a few plays, simple runs. Neither of us said a word. Just two guys running the ball. Ty caught what I threw his way, sometimes a little out of his way to test our chemistry as the days went

on. A little play action, and then we hit a few moments without having to say a word.

Fucking chemistry on the practice field that didn't translate anywhere else. And then I'd get on my bike or in my truck and leave.

Too bad the rest of the guys thought I was an asshole.

I let them. I knew I had a shitty attitude along with the walls I built up.

I wasn't the prince in a fucking fairytale. People thought I was the villain. The fans here were diehard, but even they were tired of my attitude.

I went from being the most loved QB a few years ago, to the most hated.

"Lockwood, the simple fact is that most of the organization thinks your career is over. And the way you've been handling yourself this year hasn't helped your case. But, I know more about you than you think." He stood and walked over to the window that overlooked the parking lot.

Empty, save for a few cars, since most of the team had left for the day. Including Taft's fancy fucking Jag. And my Audi, because I didn't use my bike when it rained. Fucking weather should've clued me in that today was going to be a shit show.

"I know you do extra practice after everyone leaves two or three times a week, and think no one knows. Train like a mad man. You might not get along with the entire team right now, but I've heard about the hospital visits, Lockwood." Hands in his pockets, he turned to face me, eyes shrewd and seeing far fucking more than I was comfortable with. "And Ty had a lot to say when I pulled him in a few days ago."

*Fucking Ty.* I ground my teeth together, jaw clenched and fists tight. But I kept my mouth shut.

"When he came to my office the other day, I have to admit, I thought it was going to be about your attitude. You two have had a few moments on the field, but without the rest of your team backing you up, it means shit, Lockwood."

Nothing I hadn't told myself a million times before. But I couldn't bring myself to care. Even when the damn fans began to boo whenever I took the field. It just made the anger and indifference stronger beneath it all.

"Then Simmons actually pleaded your damn case, even though the rest of the line seemed to miss out on whatever he saw. I noticed the two of you connecting on a level on the field, and when he told me he had been staying a few nights a week to run plays? I knew my instincts weren't far off. Now, I don't know what the hell your issues are, but I also know I wouldn't be

where I am if someone hadn't offered me a path to make up for the shit I did when I was young and stupid."

I bristled at the comment, but deep down, I recognized what he was saying. To a point. "Doesn't matter if I'm getting cut, does it?"

"Lockwood, between Ty's bromance, no matter how strained your relationship is, and my instincts, you're not dead in the water." He sighed. "But, you're not staying in Cleveland, even with one game left in the season. I've called in a few favors. I'm not sure it'll come to anything. But for now, you're on waivers. And Simmons talked his agent into repping you if anyone calls."

Shit. I knew who Ty's agent was because he visited him a few times on game day, and shot me a look that made the other guys in the locker room back away.

Kellan Horne. From Fortress.

Well, fuck me. Talk about full circle.

I was so screwed.



Need more? Read all about #talldarkandasshole Sebastian Lockwood in [Hard Count](#).

Don't miss out on Ty's story! And, curious how the golden retriever tight end for the Carolina Fury has a thing for the girl he watches in dark? [Catch My Eye](#), coming March 26th.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade.

Call My Bluff is the fifteenth book I've published, and if it weren't for a few crazy happenstances, might never have come to be!

To the amazing, selfless, and patient as hell authors of the From Vegas to Valentine's series, thank you. Thank you for joining me on this journey, putting up with my typos. The crazy things we had on this journey were nothing short of EPIC, and I appreciate you. May we all stay healthy, happy, and writing the things that bring us joy!!

My team. Ladies. My heart. You truly don't know how much you mean to me. You've been nothing short of awesome. Helping me when I have days that seem longer and filled with more things that really shouldn't be happening all at once.

Good Girls. Dayum. Love, adore, and will always sing your praises, and tell you how much you mean to me. May we always remember why we love age gap, morally grey, sexy vampires. On every rewatch.

Jess. Words do not give how you help me enough justice. I am so proud to have you backing me up. And making me write all the damn football.

Ryan and Darley. I am honored to call you both friends, leave chaotic voice messages and know if I need a pep talk, you got me. I am so PROUD OF BOTH OF YOU AND WILL ALWAYS SHOUT IT TO THE ROOFTOPS.

Jas and Gabs. Love you. That's it. SO MUCH. You remind me every day why I love writing. And why I love you both.

Boys. You are the light of my life. As always, the hugs get me through the rough times. Every bridge, every song, and all the chocolates.

My always and forever. The moon and stars. If I didn't tell you before, thank you for listening to my border serial killer type plot/world building/couples. Thank you for supporting me, especially this past few months.

To anyone who has read my book boyfriends and fallen for them like I

have.

You've made my dreams possible. The little girl who wanted to write, who had stories in her head. She's typing this with me, with tears of joy.

ALSO BY ARIANA ST. CLAIRE

## REVVED UP

[When We Were](#) Prequel (newsletter exclusive)

[Track Me Down](#) Duet Part One

[Turn Me Loose](#) Duet Part Two

[Mistletoe Madness](#)

[Be My Secret Santa](#) (A Stranger Session Christmas/Res & Piper prequel)

Claim My Heart (A Revved Up Standalone) *Coming 2024*

## STRANGER SESSIONS

When We Were Prequel

Trust Fall

Free Fall

Under the Mistletoe (Owen & Reid's First Christmas)

# DAD'S BEST FRIEND/REVVED UP STANDALONE

Steal My Kiss

A Little Naughty Christmas Gift (A Christmas Bonus Scene)

## SEATTLE REVENGE

Spicy Puck (F\*\*\* on the Ice Rink)

Puck, Love, and Mistletoe

Puck Me Harder (Power Play) 5/2024

(Pucker Up Romance) 7/15/2024

# OVERTIME

Hard Count

Touch Me Down

Catch My Eye (You'll Be Mine) 3/26/2024



ALOHA HAWAII RELIEF SERIES/REVVED UP

Lei Me Down

Surf My Heart

## LOVE BEACH

Not So Blind Date with a Country Star (short story coming 1/2024)

[Summer with a Country Singer](#) 6/13/2024

Merry With A Fake Boyfriend 2024

Spring Break with a Coach

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Call My Bluff (Jett & Seguin)

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[Kiss Me, There's Mistletoe](#) (Naughty & Nice Collected Edition)

NAUGHTY CHRISTMAS IN JULY (MULTI-AUTHOR  
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BLIND DATE WITH A BOOK BOYFRIEND (MULTI-AUTHOR  
SERIES COMING SUMMER 2024)

July 2024

[Well Played: A Charity Contemporary Romance Anthology](#) (Oct. 16, 2024)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ariana can be found getting her Zen on while practicing hot yoga, going for a run, reading her favorite authors in the middle of the night, or having a bourbon on a Saturday while plotting the lives of her characters as they whisper and sometimes yell in her ear.

She lives her own Happily Ever After with her amazing husband, who shares her love of racing, comic books, and Firefly, along with her two spirited also amazing boys who love reading books under a blanket just as much as she does.

Subscribe to her newsletter [here](#) for all the news, updates, and exclusives!

