

A muscular man with a well-defined physique is shown from the waist up, holding a brown football with white stripes. He has a navel ring and is wearing a grey waistband and black pants. The background is a blurred green field with stadium lights.

THE NEW YORK
BOOK  ELEVEN
NIGHTHAWKS
- SERIES -

SPREAD OFFENSE

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Cover designed by Elle Christensen

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SPREAD OFFENSE

Gage Ledger didn't know Rory Abernathy beyond her online gamer tag, but he still couldn't get her off his mind. Although he'd never met her in real life, he had a feeling he'd finally met his match in the quirky and intelligent woman who he'd looked forward to talking with every day over the summer.

Rory hadn't expected to come face-to-face with her favorite professional football player on the first day of her internship for the New York Nighthawks. Or to discover he was the gamer she'd fallen for. As her two worlds collide, she just has to hope the coincidence doesn't cause problems for her at work.

PROLOGUE

GAGE

I grinned as the miniature Gage Ledger on my gaming system ran into the end zone.

“Fuck yeah!” I shouted, throwing my hands into the air like a ref calling a touchdown.

“Calm down, slugger. That only puts you six points ahead,” a dry female voice said into my ear.

I chuckled as I sat down and adjusted my headset. “First of all, nerd, slugger is baseball. And second, don’t be bitter because I drafted Gage before you could get your grubby little hands on him.”

AllAboutTheStats gasped overdramatically. “Luck of the coin toss, geek. If this were real life, Gage would definitely have signed with me.”

I held back a belly laugh at her statement. She had no idea she was playing a football video game with the real Gage Ledger, starting running back for the New York Nighthawks. However, even if I could tell her my real identity, I was having too much fun being just another gamer with this chick.

My boss, Lennox Madison, had decided that he wanted to create a new multiplayer football game. One that incorporated requests his team had been gathering from all the fan sites and social media sites for other popular NFL games.

AllAboutTheStats was one of the gamers who’d been offered a chance to beta the game before Lennox’s designers

made the final changes. Everyone on my team had been given a copy of the game as well because it helped to have feedback from actual players. But we had to agree not to reveal our real identities.

“You just might be right, stats chick,” I teased.

After playing head-to-head with her in *Beaumont Football*—named after our head coach, who was a legend in the sport—for the past several weeks, I’d come to crave our time together. She was a complete nerd, which I respected since underneath the big, tough football player, I was one too. She was sharp as hell and really talented. One of the major changes Lennox’s team made was allowing the gamers to play offense or defense. I knew football as well as I knew myself, but to be fair, my instincts tended to lean toward offense—hazard of the job. AllAboutTheStats had given me a run for my moment...if we’d been betting any...when playing defense. Which was why, until a few minutes ago, we’d been tied.

“You know, SpreadOffense...”

She trailed off, but since we were both gearing up for the next play, I figured she’d just lost track of what she was saying.

Then she shocked the shit out of me when she quipped, “You might want to rethink your gaming handle.”

“Pardon?”

“It’s just that people might not take you too seriously.”

“What’s wrong with SpreadOffense?” I asked curiously. It had been my own little inside joke since I was a running back.

“It sounds kind of dirty.” Her voice was low and sultry. It always sounded that way, so it was to my utter disbelief that my body sat up and took notice. *What the fuck?*

I hadn’t met a woman in a very long time who had sparked enough interest in me to even ask them out for coffee. But after hearing this chick I’d never met say the word “dirty” in that sexy voice, all of a sudden, I was hard.

I opened my mouth to reply, but nothing came out.

“Sorry, was that inappropriate?” she blurted after the silence had turned awkward.

I tried again to reply, but this time, laughter erupted from my chest. This girl...she was fucking adorable, and a part of me wanted to ask if we could meet. But Lennox would probably bench me for the season if I broke the rules he'd laid down for testing out the game.

“I hadn't thought of it that way,” I lied when I finally caught my breath.

“But...you didn't do that on purpose?”

“No,” I muttered, another small chuckle slipping out.

“But you're a guy—I mean—you are a guy, right? Not some girl with a really masculine voice and the mouth of a trucker?”

I almost fell over laughing again, and when I heard her giggle across the line, I went rock hard, making my amusement fade. “Most definitely a guy, nerd,” I responded as flippantly as possible. Then I bit back a very filthy comment that popped into my head. I didn't want to make her uncomfortable, and I also didn't want her to pick up on my level of interest. Not when this relationship would never go beyond a virtual friendship. “I guess my mind just wasn't in the gutter the day I picked my handle.” I grinned. “That sounded dirtier than I meant it.”

“Hmm,” she said.

I smirked and changed the subject. “Ready for me to keep kicking your ass?”

“You won't get anywhere near my ass, geek.”

I had no idea what she looked like, but something told me that was a real fucking shame.

“DID YOU SEE THE NEW UPDATE?” I asked, smiling as I picked up my controller and began to sift through my draft options.

“Yes! OMG. I’m so excited to be able to customize my coaches. And switch between coaching positions during the draft!”

I knew she would be ecstatic about the changes. When she found out she could see everyone’s draft picks, I could literally hear her jumping for joy over the line.

They’d made one more change before rolling out the update, and I turned down the volume on my headset before pointing it out.

“You might want to take a closer look at the player profiles, nerd.”

She was quiet for a moment, then she practically screamed. “They added their college stats! Holy cow! This is going to change everything! I can’t believe it!”

After a little more cheering, she suddenly gasped, “That was my suggestion!”

“Was it?” I asked innocently. The feedback from the betas was supposed to be anonymous, but since I didn’t know who she really was, I hadn’t felt any guilt at making sure her suggestion ended up before the right eyes. It was a good call that would attract a lot of players who preferred a numbers-based strategy.

“I honestly wasn’t sure if my feedback was actually being considered. Dang, that is so cool.”

I grinned, her happiness filling me with warmth.

“Okay, geek, you are going down.”

“You wish, nerd,” I muttered before I could stop myself. I’d been very careful not to take things in a sexual direction since our conversation about my gaming handle. My girl—um, *she*—had become very important to me, and I didn’t want to risk our friendship. Even when the beta shit was done, and we were technically allowed to know each other’s real identity, I doubted I’d go there with her. She was too important, and I didn’t want to do anything to mess it up.

“EARTH TO GAGE.”

My head whipped up at the sound of a voice, and I found my friend and offensive coordinator, Cole O’Hara, standing in front of me.

I sat on a bench in front of my locker, still in nothing but a towel because I’d just come from the showers after a hard day during training camp.

Gia, one of the head designers for *Beaumont Football*, had sent me a text to let me know that access to the game had been officially closed since they’d finished the closed beta and were moving on to the final stages.

I’d known Gia for years, as a gamer and a friend because she was married to a college friend of mine. She’d worked on some very successful, prominent games, so when Lennox announced his new venture, I’d suggested he recruit her.

She was the only person who knew about my friendship with AllAboutTheStats, so when she messaged me about game access, she also asked if I wanted her to reach out to my gaming buddy and pass along my contact info.

My first instinct was to tell her hell yeah. But then the doubts plaguing me for months took over, and I’d sat down, lost in thought. I wasn’t delusional. I knew I was being a coward by avoiding meeting AllAboutTheStats. If I didn’t know better, I’d think I’d grown a vagina with the way I was acting.

“Something on your mind?” Cole asked.

When we were on the field, in practice, or at business-related team functions, he was Coach O’Hara. But outside the “office,” he was my friend, Cole. And I respected him too much to cross that line. We all did.

I shook my head. “Nothing important.” The words tasted bitter, but I wasn’t ready to talk to anyone about my nerd.

“If you say so,” he replied with a dubious expression. When I didn’t engage, he sighed. “You did great today. Don’t let whatever is clouding your mind affect you on the field. I’m around if you need to talk about it.”

“Thanks.” I meant it genuinely. And maybe I’d take him up on it. Eventually.

“Yo, Brady!” Ames, one of our offensive linemen, called out to our second-string (the heir apparent to Prentice Wright, our legendary quarterback) quarterback as he walked into the room. “My wife called. She said Talia is in labor and to get your ass to the hospital.”

“Son of a bitch!” Brady shouted as he sprinted to the locker next to mine and yanked it open. He grabbed his wallet, phone, and keys and ran for the door.

Cole stepped in front of him and grabbed his arm. “She’ll still be there after you change into something other than a towel, Brady,” he said, looking pointedly at the quarterback’s lack of attire.

“Fucking hell,” he muttered, then spun around and dressed in record time before he was gone.

Ames laughed and shook his head. “At least he put on his shoes. When Dakota had Xavier, I showed up at the hospital in bare feet, all torn up from running across the gravel parking lot. And I still played in the game a couple of days later. But it hurt like a motherfucker.”

I winced, and he shrugged. “It’s what we do for the game and the women we love. You’ll understand someday.”

Prentice snorted from three lockers down and glanced at me with an amused expression. “Gage would have to be willing to be in a relationship first. Or at least interested in a date.”

Maybe I would if I wasn’t such a pussy.

1

RORY

My phone rang as I stared into my closet, trying to decide what to wear. Glancing down at the screen, I saw my eldest brother's name. I had to be at the stadium in less than an hour, so I was tempted not to answer, but I knew how relentless Russell could be. He'd just keep calling until I finally answered.

"Hey, biggest bro. What's up?" I asked, switching to speaker mode and setting my phone on the dresser to my right.

"Just wanted to wish you luck on the first game of your internship even though you'll be working for the Nighthawks instead of a real team like the Nitros."

Russell was into baseball, so he'd been giving me a hard time about not working for the local pro team ever since I landed my internship.

"Or the Navigators," Ridley chimed in. "Since hockey is the superior sport."

I was surprised to hear my other brother's voice. "You're on the call too, big bro?"

"Yeah, Russell conferenced me in 'cause he knew that I wanted to talk to you," Ridley explained. "Even though you'll be crunching numbers for a football team, it's still a pretty big deal."

I was used to them teasing me about pretty much everything, so I didn't take any of it personally. And I loved it when I had the perfect comeback. "And it comes with

awesome perks, like being able to beta the new *Beaumont Football* game before it officially launches.”

“Yeah, I can’t argue with you there,” Russell muttered. “Being in the beta for a new game is damn cool.”

Although I hadn’t officially started until the beginning of the preseason, I’d landed the internship with the New York Nighthawks before the end of last semester. When my boss reached out to ask if I’d be interested in being part of the closed beta for a new football game their owner was launching soon, I thanked my lucky stars that I’d mentioned to him that I was a gamer during my interview.

I was usually more into doing RPG and sim stuff, but I figured playing *Beaumont Football* would help me become more familiar with football as a sport, which would come in handy when I helped analyze their statistics. I’d been right about that...but I’d never expected to meet a guy who’d captured my interest in a way no other man had done. One who I had no idea what he looked like. Or even what his real name was since we’d only been allowed to go by our gamer tags while playing.

“It almost makes me wish I was as good at math as you, little sis.” Ridley’s grumbling pulled me out of my thoughts of the guy I’d never get the chance to talk to again because I had no way to contact him anymore.

I shook my head, rolling my eyes even though they couldn’t see me. “Maybe if you’d actually applied yourself, you might’ve gotten better than a C in your college stats class.”

“Nah, that sounds like a horrible idea.” Ridley laughed. “Sorry, but you’re the only nerd in the family who spends more time studying than partying while you’re a college student.”

“She damn well better be,” Russell growled. “The last thing we need is for our little sister to be on her own at a party in a city as big as New York.”

I let out a huff of irritation. “I’m twenty-one. Old enough to handle a party if I wanted to go to one.”

“Thank fuck she’s happier playing video games for entertainment than hitting up the bars,” Ridley grouched.

“Don’t remind me that’s a possibility.” Russell heaved a deep sigh. “You’re gonna give me hives or something.”

“Maybe we could get back to the reason you guys called me?” I yanked a pair of khaki pants out of my closet before reaching for a Nighthawks jersey our parents had sent me when I told them about the internship. Luckily, casual dress was perfect for being in the press box during the first preseason game since I wasn’t a fan of dressing up. “I need to leave in about ten minutes, and I still have to finish getting ready.”

“Okay, I guess we better stop giving you a hard time and let you head out.”

“Yeah,” Ridley agreed. “We wouldn’t want you to be late...even if it’s just football.”

“Gee thanks.” I laughed softly. “Love you guys, too.”

After they said goodbye, I finished getting ready and headed out of my teeny-tiny micro apartment in East Village. The subway ride out to Long Island went smoothly, and I arrived at the stadium with about ten minutes to spare. Which was more than enough time since I already had my employee pass and didn’t have any issues getting through security.

I’d already met my boss and the full-time statistician on staff for the team, so there weren’t any awkward introductions before we headed up to the press box. My job during the game was to record player data as it occurred. It was nerve-wracking being near some of the coaching staff, sports broadcasters, and journalists, but at least the task at hand was familiar after the project I did for my Foundations of Sports Analytics class last semester.

I’d taken it on a whim because I needed to fill a hole in my schedule, and the course I’d really wanted had been full. In the end, it had been such a lucky turn of events for me because

being in that class had changed the course of my career plans. And my idea to do data visualization for the university baseball team for my final paper was the only reason I'd landed my internship with the Nighthawks.

Although the two sports were completely different—my school didn't even have a football team, so that wasn't an option—the method I applied to my project could be easily adapted to football. My professor had apparently mentioned it to someone with the team, and before I knew what was happening, I'd been offered the internship. The opportunity had been too good to pass up, especially since the demand for advanced football analytics had grown in recent years.

By the time the first half was over, my head was already spinning with ideas for how to analyze the data we had collected so far. I'd gotten some ideas while playing *Beaumont Football* during the beta—especially when I was up against SpreadOffense—but seeing the professional players on the field from the press box was a completely different experience. Something about experiencing the game from this perspective was exhilarating.

I had a feeling my brothers would be teasing me about my new favorite sport for the rest of my life. They could keep baseball and hockey for themselves because I would call dibs on football.

The only downside so far was that I'd barely been able to log any stats for my favorite player—Gage Ledger.

The first I'd heard of him was when I researched which players I wanted to draft in *Beaumont Football*. I'd been intrigued by his running stats, which were impressive. Then SpreadOffense snapped him up before I could, and for some reason, that made me focus on Gage even more as I started to pull historical numbers before I started my internship. It was disappointing that I hadn't been able to see him play much in person yet.

As the teams started to leave the field, I turned to my boss and asked, “Why haven't the starting players been on the field except for a few plays?”

One of the coaches was walking past me and answered before my boss could. “There’s a couple of reasons for that. Preseason success doesn’t automatically translate into a good regular season, so the pressure isn’t as high right now. Which means there isn’t a solid reason to risk injury for our starters. It also allows us to take the time to judge our fringe players while we solidify our roster for the season.”

Thinking about the numbers I’d compiled on the players who rarely got any playing time last season or were new to the team, I nodded. “Gotcha, that definitely makes sense.”

The coach extended his hand with a smile. “I’m Cole O’Hara, by the way. Offensive coordinator for the Nighthawks.”

I slid my palm against his and grinned, my cheeks filling with heat as I blurted, “Yeah, I know. Your play calling is a big reason the Nighthawks were the top-scoring team last year. You definitely did your part to earn that championship ring.”

“Thanks,” he murmured with a deep chuckle.

My boss clapped me on the back. “This is Rory Abernathy, my intern for the season. She’s a junior at NYU, double majoring in math and computer science. She did some interesting data visualization for the NYU baseball team that I’m hoping will offer you additional insight when she runs some models of the offense for us this season.”

“That sounds fucking fantastic to me.” He jerked his head toward the door. “I look forward to hearing more about it later. I gotta get down to the locker room so I can talk to a few of my guys during halftime.”

“Who the hell is that?”

I dragged my attention away from watching the second and third liners play during our first preseason game. Thirty-one wasn't exactly ancient in the sport, but those little twentysomething fuckers were making me feel old.

Micah, one of our linebackers, was looking up, and I followed his gaze but wasn't sure what he was referring to.

“Who?”

“In the press box.”

I glanced up and frowned, seeing only the typical gang of reporters and Coach O'Hara.

“Wait for it,” Micah muttered.

A second later, one of the reporters walked away, revealing someone new. We were far enough away that I couldn't see any small details, but there was no missing her spectacular curves. My dick had definitely noticed, too, because he was suddenly hard as a rock. The only other things I could make out were wild, light brown curls and glasses. Attraction sizzled in my veins, but then guilt trickled in as I thought about my little gaming nerd.

Maybe this was my answer. If I was attracted to someone else, it would only complicate things to meet my anonymous friend in person.

But that felt wrong too.

“Damn,” one of the rookies murmured, and I scowled when I noticed he was also staring up at the box.

“Focus on the game, jackasses,” I growled. “You don’t have time to be mooning over some random woman.”

“Yeah, but—”

I whacked the back of the rookie’s helmet to shut him up. Their interest in the curvy bombshell was causing a burning in my gut. *Not jealousy*, I told myself. *I want their attention on the game, dammit.*

I heard my little gamer in my head. “Hmm.” She’d always done that when she thought I was lying.

“Ledger!” Coach Beaumont yelled. “Take the field!”

Grateful for the distraction, I put on my helmet and jogged out to join the huddle.

“GREAT GAME,” someone said as they walked past me in the hallway outside the locker room.

“Thanks,” I mumbled, keeping my head down to discourage anyone who considered trying to stop me to have a conversation. My mind was being pulled in twenty different directions, particularly the tug of war about whether to go to the press box and try to find the bombshell I’d spotted earlier.

I’d been having that particular argument with myself ever since we ran off the field. The mood was jubilant since we’d just won, but I just felt drained and in a funk. All this emotional bullshit was making me feel like a teenage girl. And that just put me in an even worse mood. All I wanted to do was go home and...

Fuck. Normally, I would get online and lose myself in a game, but that didn’t seem like an option that would bring me any peace tonight.

I pulled my phone from my pocket and texted Gia, asking for my little nerd’s contact info. Then I deleted it and shoved my cell back into my pants.

Seriously, Ledger. Get a fucking grip on yourself.

I was almost to the exit when I heard my name called and sighed, recognizing the voice. I turned around, and *holy shit...* Cole was striding down the hall with a gorgeous woman by his side. The same one I'd practically drooled over earlier.

Except now I could see every detail, and my body one thousand percent approved.

Her hair was even wilder than it had seemed, the corkscrew curls bouncing in every direction as she walked. Her face was round, but she had high cheekbones that made her kissable, rosebud mouth stand out. She wore cute, red-rimmed glasses that did nothing to dim the intensity of her hazel eyes.

My gaze dropped to her T-shirt, and my tongue went dry, taking in her generous tits pressing against the fabric as if her Nighthawks jersey could barely contain them. The only problem was that she wasn't wearing my number. Not that I could blame her when we'd never met.

Her waist was a little thick—the perfect size for my big hands to span it—but her round hips gave her a mouthwatering hour-glass figure. I could almost feel their softness in my hands as I clenched them while I drove into her from behind.

Shit. Shit. Shit. My dick practically punched its way through my pants, so I shifted my duffel to hang in front of me.

Her leggings gave me a great view of her legs, and I had to press my mouth shut to stop myself from asking her to turn around because I wanted to see how amazing her ass looked in those pants.

When her black and red sneakers stopped in front of me, my eyes wandered back to her chest. I forced a smile and said, "Nice jersey," hoping they wouldn't notice I'd been ogling her rack.

When I raised my gaze to her face, she stared at me with a shocked expression.

“Gage, I want you to meet our new intern,” Cole said, gesturing to the obviously stunned woman. “Rory Abernathy. Rory, this is Gage Ledger, one of our running backs. I thought you two would get along since I know you’re both into gaming.”

The mention of gaming sent another trickle of guilt through my veins, especially considering I was still hard as fuck and imagining how it would feel to hold on to all those curls while her legs were wrapped around me and my cock was buried deep inside her.

“Nice to meet you,” I mumbled, shaking my head to dispel the filthy thoughts.

“Um...I...”

The world tilted for a half second, then righted itself. The murky shit in my brain cleared out immediately, leaving complete clarity in its place. I knew that voice. No wonder she looked dumbfounded. She must have recognized mine, too.

“SpreadOffense?” she asked hesitantly.

A wide grin split my face, and I winked at her. “AllAboutTheStats.”

This gorgeous, insanely fuckable woman with the sultry voice and adorable style was my little gaming nerd. And she was mine.

“Looking good, nerd,” I teased with a smirk.

Cole grunted. “Gage, don’t be an ass. Just because she games and—”

“It’s alright, Cole,” she assured him with a pat on the arm, making me frown because I didn’t want her hands on anyone except me. “He can’t help being a geek.”

Cole’s expression turned confused, and he scratched his head. Then it seemed to dawn on him. “You two know each other.”

“Yes,” I said.

At the same time, she muttered, “Sort of.”

“Okay well...I have an appointment.” Cole glanced back and forth between us a few times, then focused on Rory. “You have a way home?” I understood his concern since she was small, and it was late at night. But she wasn’t his responsibility. She was mine.

“I’ll make sure she gets home safely,” I commented swiftly.

Rory smiled at me, and her cheeks turned adorably pink.

Cole nodded and went out the exit, leaving us alone since the hallway had become deserted at some point.

“I should smash your gaming console over your head,” she announced, taking me aback.

“Say what?”

Her face was flushed as she frowned up at me. “You let me go on and on about the amazing Gage Ledger. I must have sounded like a lovesick fool compared to all the sophisticated women who probably throw themselves at you constantly.”

“Hey,” I said softly, taking her hand in mine and tugging her closer until we were nearly toe-to-toe. “It wasn’t like that. First of all, I wasn’t allowed to tell you who I was, and second...”

She raised an eyebrow and plopped her other hand on her hip as she tapped one toe.

I suppressed a smile, not wanting her to think I was laughing at her.

“Second?”

“I admit, I liked hearing you have a crush on me.”

Rory frowned and glanced at the floor, but I took her chin between my thumb and forefinger, raising her face so she had to look at me.

“Because it made me feel better about how much I liked you and...” I trailed off, not sure how far to take it right at that moment.

Then she blinked, and her mouth curved up a little, making me lose my train of thought for a second as I imagined kissing those sweet pink lips.

“And?”

I cleared my throat and met her eyes. *Fuck it.* “And all the dirty fantasies that your sexy voice conjured up in my mind.”

I couldn't believe that I was actually talking to Gage Ledger. And if I wasn't totally mistaken...he was flirting with me. In real life. Not just through our mics while we played *Beaumont Football* online.

I wasn't sure what blew my mind more—that I was having a conversation with the sexy, pro football player who'd snagged my attention before we met or that he was the same man whose personality I'd been drawn to as a gamer. It made sense that Lennox Madison would've asked some of his players to beta the game he was launching since they could give a unique perspective. But it just wasn't a possibility that I'd ever considered.

If I had, I probably would have held back when I talked about Gage...to Gage.

Then again, if I'd known it was him, odds were more than good that I just wouldn't have said much of anything. I would've been too tongue-tied since I rarely talked to hot guys. Just math nerds like me.

My cheeks filled with heat as I gawked up at the man I'd been thinking about all summer—both as the gamer I'd fallen for and the player I couldn't get out of my head. He was even more attractive than the pictures that had been posted of him online and in the media.

He seemed taller than the six feet his stats put him at, and the two hundred and ten pounds of muscle he carried on his tall frame were very much on display in the clothes he was

wearing. His T-shirt was stretched across his broad chest, with the short sleeves straining around his biceps, and his athletic pants were drawn tight against his thick thighs. My fingers itched to comb through his messy dark hair that was still damp from his post-game shower, and his green eyes were so intense as he looked down at me.

“Did...um...it really?” I mentally cringed at how I stumbled over my words. As ridiculously attractive as Gage was, he was still the same guy I had spent hours talking to while we played online together. “Because sexy is probably the last word I’d use to describe my voice.”

“You gotta give yourself more credit, nerd.” His heated gaze sent a shiver of awareness down my spine. “I haven’t been able to get it out of my head since the first time I heard you. Didn’t matter that I had no clue what your real name was, how far away you lived, or what you looked like.”

My body was filled with relief over the fact that I wasn’t the only one feeling the pull between us. But he still hadn’t addressed the other part of what I’d said earlier, and I wasn’t going to give in to my attraction to him without more information. “Even though you have gorgeous women throwing themselves at you on a regular basis?”

He flashed me a devastating grin. “Doesn’t mean I ever catch any of them.”

I quirked a brow and tilted my head to the side. “Maybe that’s because carrying the ball is what you’re used to doing as a running back, not catching it.”

“Fair point, but I never even try, baby,” he reassured me, his smile widening. “But I’ll make an exception if you ever decide that you want to toss yourself my way. Then you can be sure that my catching skills will rival Clay Hensen’s.”

I laughed softly, shaking my head. “That’s a heck of a boast, considering how many receiving yards and touchdowns he got last season. Not to mention his average yards per catch over his pro career.”

“I gotta admit, your ability to rattle off football stats like that is almost sexier than your voice.”

Contrary to the proof standing right in front of me, it was almost impossible to believe that Gage was flirting with me. “This isn’t at all how I thought our conversation would go if I ever met you in person. And by ‘you,’ I mean SpreadOffense. Not you, you. Since I never expected to meet any of the players while I interned for the team.”

“So what you’re saying is...you thought about me?”

“Of course I did,” I admitted softly as I tilted my head down to stare at my feet.

He pressed a finger under my chin, waiting to respond until our gazes met again. “I’m damn glad to hear it because I couldn’t get you out of my head. It would’ve sucked to know you didn’t feel the same.”

Butterflies swirled in my belly, and I had to swallow the sudden lump in my throat to say, “You don’t have to worry about that.”

Gage grinned at me again before interlacing our fingers. “How about you tell me all about your internship while I drive you home? And why you thought you weren’t going to meet my teammates if you’re working for the Nighthawks this season.”

Although I got a feminine thrill out of hearing how much he’d been thinking about me, I was relieved by the change in topic. Things had gotten intense so quickly between us, and I didn’t have any experience to tell me how to act in this situation. Not that many women would since our meet cute was pretty darn unique.

“Think about my gamer handle for a minute, and then maybe you’ll be able to guess what I’m doing for the team,” I teased as he led me toward a black Lincoln Navigator.

“Damn, I should’ve known.” He opened the passenger door for me, shaking his head with a deep chuckle. “You really are AllAboutTheStats, huh?”

“Yup.” I sighed with relief that I managed to climb into his big vehicle without embarrassing myself. Turning my head to beam a smile at him, I added, “So watch out. When we get into the regular season, if you’re not playing up to your abilities, I’ll be one of the first to know.”

“Then I guess I’d better play my ass off so I don’t fail to impress you.”

I barely recovered from him winking at me by the time he rounded the car and got into the driver’s seat. As he started the engine and pulled out of the parking lot, I rattled off my address so he could plug it into his map app.

Thinking about how my brothers would react, I laughed.

“What’s got you giggling over there?” Gage asked. “I’m hoping it’s not a sign that you’ve crunched the numbers and don’t think I’ll have a good season.”

“Nothing like that,” I assured him, shifting in my seat to face him. “It’s just that if my brothers ever found out that I told a guy who I barely knew where I lived, they’d lose their minds.”

“It’s good that we’ve known each other for months because they’d have every right to be worried otherwise.” A muscle jumped in his jaw as he clenched the wheel. “And it’s something you won’t be doing again since I have your address now.”

“Oh boy,” I muttered. “Why do I have the feeling that you’re going to be just as ridiculously overprotective as my brothers?”

He shrugged. “Probably because I am.”

“I’m perfectly capable of taking care of myself.” Crossing my arms over my chest, I jutted my chin out.

“I’m sure you are,” he conceded. “But I wouldn’t be the kind of man your brothers would ever approve of if I didn’t worry about my woman’s safety. Especially when she was as young as you are and living in a big city by herself.”

My stomach did a little flip flop at hearing him call me his woman.

We hadn't exchanged a whole lot of personal details while we'd played *Beaumont Football*, but I had mentioned to him that I missed our usual playing time once when my brothers came to town to take me out for my twenty-first birthday. And his date of birth was widely known since he was a professional football player. "I guess since our age gap is even bigger than mine and Russell's, I can't even argue about you calling me young."

"Russell is one of your brothers?" he asked.

"Yeah, he's six years older than me, and Ridley is smack-dab between us." I wagged my finger at him. "So I don't need another big brother in my life."

The heated look he sent my way had goose bumps popping up along my arms. "Don't worry, nerd. The last thing I see you as is my little sister."

The interior of his SUV suddenly felt hot as the sun, so I leaned forward to adjust the temperature on the air conditioner. Ignoring his deep chuckle and the male satisfaction in his green orbs, I told him more about my brothers.

The drive to my apartment took a lot longer than using the subway, but I enjoyed every minute of it. Being with Gage and talking to him in person instead of through a gaming headset was the highlight of my day, which was saying a lot since being up in the press box during the game had been fantastic.

Then we pulled up in front of my apartment building, and things got even better.

The neighborhood Rory lived in was very popular among NYU students, so it certainly wasn't as dangerous as other parts of the city. However, I still didn't like that she lived there alone. There were a lot of asshole college boys who thought they were God's gift to women and didn't believe in the word no.

"I'm surprised you were able to convince your brothers to let you live alone in the city," I mused as I found an empty spot half a block from her building.

"Let?" she huffed. "I'm a grown woman."

I reached over the console and grabbed her hand, then brought it to my lips. "I'm very much aware of that, baby."

Her cheeks turned adorably pink, and I wanted so much to kiss her but worried that it might be too fast for her. Instead, I brushed my mouth over the back of her hand again, before releasing it and exiting the car. I rounded the hood and opened the passenger side, then grabbed her waist and lifted her out onto the sidewalk. I was a big guy, so I naturally drove a large vehicle, which made it a little more difficult for Rory to get in and out. Not that I would change anything because it gave me an excuse to touch her.

"Thank you," she whispered with a sweet smile.

"You're welcome," I murmured, losing myself in her gorgeous hazel eyes for a few moments.

She cleared her throat and took a step back, but she didn't pull her hands away when I laced our fingers together or protest when I moved her so that I walked next to the street. "To answer your question. I actually wasn't able to convince my brothers and my dad. My mom, Russell's wife, and Ridley's fiancée had to get involved. My building has an excellent security system, I carry pepper spray, and I have an orange and black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu."

"Damn...that's..." I was going to say impressive, but what came out was "sexy as hell."

Rory giggled and glanced up at me. "Um...thanks?"

I laughed and pulled her a little closer to my side. "I don't know how you haven't realized how fucking awesome and gorgeous you are, nerd. But trust me, you are the whole package."

Her skin flooded with crimson, but her hazel pools sparkled with happiness. "You're not so bad yourself, geek."

"As long as you think so, that's all that matters."

Rory ducked her head, but not before I saw the pleased grin on her pretty face.

"Well, um, this is my building," she said, her tone reluctant as she gestured to a red brick structure.

I felt the same dread, not ready to say goodbye. With a tug on her hand, I brought her up against my front and placed my other hand on her curvy hip. "I know it's a little late but... would you have dinner with me?"

A bright smile stretched across her mouth, and she nodded. "I'd love to."

"I'm not sure where..." It was hard to go anywhere in New York City without being recognized, but college kids were often the most obnoxious fans.

Rory's hand squeezed mine, and she cocked her head toward her building. "Why don't we go up to my place and order in?"

"Perfect."

“I’m not in the mood to see any sorority chicks throwing their shirts and or underwear at you,” she teased with an incredibly adorable, lopsided smile.

I chuckled but mentally cringed because it had happened before.

Keeping things light, I remarked, “There’s an opening for a very dirty comment here, but I’m trying not to come on too strong.”

Rory burst into laughter as she ascended the four steps up to the front door. “You know, I could always tell when your brain went there while we were gaming.”

My eyebrows rose when she glanced back at me after punching a code into the keypad. “You could?”

She nodded and giggled. “You have a tell.”

“I do not,” I gasped dramatically as I followed her inside and started up the narrow staircase. “I wipe the floor with my poker buddies.”

“Maybe it’s just with me, then.” She smirked over her shoulder. “You got quiet, and then you would yell something at one of your players, usually in the realm of getting their head in the game.”

“Seriously?” I scratched my head, trying to recall a time when I’d done that.

“Yup. I always wanted to ask you what you were going to say, but I chickened out.”

We stopped on the third floor, and she unlocked the first door on the right.

After we walked inside, she turned around and grinned, though her cheeks flooded with crimson. “Now that you aren’t a stranger, I’m going to ask. What was that dirty thought floating around in your head downstairs?”

Every minute I spent with Rory, I was more and more convinced that she was perfect for me. She was sexy as fuck, funny, incredibly smart, and it seemed as though she was a fan

of the filthier side of my brain. Thank fuck because that side wanted to do all kinds of sordid things to her.

“I’m not going to lie and say that I want you throwing your shirt and or underwear at me.”

Rory’s smile began to dim, so I grabbed her hips and yanked her into my body, lowering my head so we were almost nose to nose.

“I’d rather you were naked.”

A grin split her face, and she laughed, but it quickly faded when I pressed my lips to hers.

I didn’t take it any further because I was afraid I wouldn’t be able to stop. But before releasing her, I flicked my tongue out to trace her bottom lip, just to satisfy my curiosity about how she tasted. “Sweet and citrus,” I mumbled as I raised my head.

“Huh?”

I hadn’t realized I said that out loud, so I changed the subject. “I’m hungry. What are you in the mood for?”

“Um, well, it’s the village, so there is pretty much anything you want.”

What I really wanted, I couldn’t have. Yet.

She turned around and walked into what could best be described as a closet, with a loft twin bed that had a desk underneath, a loveseat, dresser with a TV and kick-ass game consoles on it, and a tiny kitchenette that had a mini fridge and maybe two feet of counter space. I assumed the two doors went to the bathroom and an actual closet.

The place couldn’t have been more than two-hundred square feet. It was insane. However, looking around, it was obvious that she’d tried to make the space her own. The pictures on the walls, colorful bedspread and couch pillows, fresh flowers, and all the little touches made it homey. So I swallowed my comment about how she could possibly live there and instead said, “You did a great job on this place.”

She beamed at me and shrugged. “I know it’s about as big as a giant’s thumbnail, but I don’t need much.”

Need? Maybe not. But she deserved a whole fuck of a lot more. I’d talk her into moving in with me soon, anyway.

We eventually settled on Thai food, and while we waited for it to be delivered, we sat on the couch and discussed stats on the game. It probably made me seem like a complete... well, geek...but hearing her talk about football with such an in-depth understanding was its own special brand of foreplay.

We paused when the food arrived, and I retrieved it from the delivery man while she found plates, silverware, and a couple of beers from the fridge.

After dishing our meals up and returning to the loveseat, I gestured to a stack of books on her desk. “Gearing up for classes?”

She nodded as she swallowed a bite of chicken. “Yeah. They start in two weeks, so I figured I’d get a head start on prep. Especially with the game being out of town this weekend.”

I perked up at her comment and asked, “You’re going to the game? Will you always travel with the team?” The thought of being with her at every game caused warmth to spread through my chest.

“I don’t know how often I’ll be able to with my school schedule, but I’m going to try to go to as many as I can. But this weekend is extra special because the game is in my hometown.”

“Seriously? That’s awesome.” The wheels in my head started spinning. It was early for meeting the family, but I knew Rory was my future. Missing the opportunity to get her parents and brothers on board with our relationship—especially in person—would be foolish.

However, I decided not to bring it up just yet and instead encouraged her to tell me more about herself and growing up. By the time we were done with the food, we’d learned a lot about each other, and my attraction to her continued to grow.

It was tempting to pull her onto my lap and make out, but I didn't have faith in my ability to keep from going further. We were already moving fast. I didn't want to freak her out by going at warp speed.

"I'd better get going." I stood and reached for her hands, pulling her up beside me. "My chivalry only extends so far," I explained with a lopsided grin. "And I'm dying to kiss you. So how about you walk me out where there will be less temptation."

She looked as though she might argue, and I laughed as I led her out into the hallway.

"Don't, Rory. You're too special for us to jump into bed on our first date."

Rory's eyes softened, and her cheeks turned pink. "I guess you have a point. I suppose my first time—um...I mean our first time..." She trailed off, and her face flushed tomato red.

She was a virgin? Why did that make me want to beat my chest like a fucking caveman?

I inhaled slowly and tugged her fully into the hallway before wrapping her up in my arms. "I'm glad you told me, baby."

Rory looked up at me through her lashes, and a small smile kicked up the corners of her mouth. "You really don't mind? I thought that was supposed to freak guys out."

"Nothing could make me not want to be with you, Rory. And being your first...I'm honored." I wanted to tell her that I would also be her last, but again, I held back so she didn't realize just how fast I'd become obsessed with her.

"Now, I'm even more determined to make sure our first time is special." I bent my head and gently brushed my lips over hers. When she raised on her tiptoes to press her mouth against mine, my good intentions disappeared.

My hands traveled down to palm her ass, and I probed her mouth with my tongue. When she opened, I swept inside and groaned at the sweet taste. Her tongue timidly tangled with mine, and my cock swelled until it was painfully hard.

It was a damn good thing I'd waited until we were far from her couch and the soft rug on the floor in front of it. I angled my head to deepen the kiss and rocked the bulge in pants into the apex of her thighs. She let out a little whimper, and I knew I was approaching the point of no return.

With a frustrated groan, I tore my lips from hers and pressed our foreheads together. We stayed like that for a minute, both panting and trying to catch our breath.

"Best kiss I've ever had," I murmured as I slowly slid her to the ground.

"Me, too." Then she blushed and bit her lip before admitting, "But I have nothing to compare it to."

"Stop," I growled. "Or I will lose what little willpower I have left."

Her eyes sparkled as she beamed at me, and I couldn't resist another quick kiss.

"Dinner this week?" I rasped.

Rory frowned and sighed. "It's an insane week. I have to work on the game stats and get ready for my classes and the trip home." Then she shrugged and took a step back. "But I'll find the time."

"Don't overstress yourself, baby. I'll still be here when things calm down." I cupped her cheeks and stared intently at her when I stated, "I'm not going anywhere."

I had lucked out with my class schedule and didn't need to be on campus on Monday mornings or at all on Fridays, which made attending Nighthawk away games a whole lot easier for me. Even better, with the first one being in my hometown, I got to see my family way sooner than Thanksgiving break.

I was practically bouncing with excitement as the game clock ticked down the last few seconds.

"Everything all set for your visit with your parents?"

I glanced up to beam a smile at my boss. "Yes, I'm headed to their house as soon as I get out of here. I didn't want my dad to have to deal with all of the stadium traffic."

"Good call," he murmured with a nod.

"Thanks again for being so cool about me flying back on my own." I'd been worried that I wouldn't be able to see my family for more than maybe an hour tops until I asked him if it was okay for me not to take the team plane back to New York.

Percy waived off my gratitude. "It wasn't a big deal."

"Okay then, thanks for getting the team to cover my ticket," I replied, my smile widening. "They totally didn't have to do that when it was my choice to push back my departure."

"You're a student attending college in one of the most expensive cities in the world, and Lennox Madison is a billionaire. He can more than afford it." He shook his head with a snort. "Plus, we got you for a steal, considering the kind

of analysis you can do when you're only earning intern wages.”

“I guess I can't argue when you put it like that.”

Although my classes wouldn't start for another week, I'd expected to be super busy downloading programming packages, reading through syllabi, and getting my textbooks. But since I only had to familiarize myself with one new program, it hadn't taken as long as I expected to get prepped for my next semester, which left me with some free time in my schedule.

Unfortunately, it was when Gage was busy with stuff for the team. So I spent the past several days running data visualization on the offensive line. Starting with the running backs, of course. Not that my boss understood why I'd narrowed in on that particular position. Although judging how Cole looked at me when we showed him the models, I felt he suspected something was going on between Gage and me.

I appreciated that he didn't share his thoughts with my boss. During my interview, Percy had mentioned how complicated Rhodes Channing's relationship was with his wife since she was the owner's niece. I figured it was safe to assume he wouldn't approve of someone in the front office—especially who reported to him—dating a player.

Percy jerked his chin toward the door. “If you leave now, you won't have to wait quite as long for a rideshare. Then you'll get a little extra time with your family.”

“Thanks.”

I headed out of the press box, but I didn't leave the stadium right away like he expected. First, I wanted to congratulate Gage on his win and see if I could at least say a quick goodbye before I left. Pulling my phone from my pocket, I tapped out a text to him.

ME:

Hey, my boss let me go a little early. Let me know when you're done in the locker room so I can see you before I head over to my parents.

Players weren't allowed to have electronic devices on the sideline during a game, so I figured I'd have to wait a bit to hear back from him. But he must've been one of the first guys back through the tunnel because my phone dinged with a notification from him only a few minutes later.

GAGE:

I'll meet you at the players' exit. Security will let you through. Don't leave without me.

My brows drew together as I wondered what exactly he meant by that.

ME:

Are you sure? That's a lot of bother for a quick visit.

GAGE:

You're never a bother.

If he thought that racing from the stadium over to my parents' house to meet them, chat for a few minutes, only to turn back around to head to the airport to catch the plane back with the team was what he wanted to do, I wasn't going to argue with him. Not even knowing that my brothers would give me a hard time over it. And him an even worse one.

Luckily, he wouldn't be there long enough for Russell and Ridley to cause too much trouble. Or at least that was what I told myself while I waited for Gage.

He must've rushed to get ready because he appeared in only about ten minutes, which was much faster than I expected. His hair was still damp, but that didn't stop me from teasing him. "Did you skip the shower? Should we take different cars to my parents' house so I don't have to deal with the post-game stench? Even though you only played for about a quarter in total?"

"Are you really gonna give me a hard time when you damn well know that's how much starters play at this point in the preseason?" he asked, shaking his head with a deep laugh.

Smiling at him, I nodded. "Yup."

"Then be prepared to see for yourself how badly I smell." Sliding his hand behind my back, he pulled me close. As I pressed my palms against his chest, he twined his other hand in my hair to tug my head back. Then he captured my mouth in a deep kiss that left me breathless when he finally lifted his head again. "Not too bad, eh?"

I blinked up at him. "Huh?"

"Yeah, that's what I thought." There was a gleam of male satisfaction in his eyes as he squeezed my waist before taking a step back. "You'll be fine riding in the car, cuddled up to me."

I lifted my nose in the air and sniffed. "I guess you don't smell too bad."

"My shower was quick but effective." He brushed a kiss against my temple as he led me past the security guard. "I was in a rush to get to you."

"I really appreciate you going out of your way to come with me to meet my family." I smiled up at him, squeezing his hand.

"It really isn't a big deal," he assured me. "I did it more for my own selfish reasons than anything else."

My brows drew together at his explanation. "How so?"

"It fucking sucked that our schedules didn't work out this week." He pulled out his phone to check on the progress of the

rideshare. “And as much as I appreciated Lennox in the past for getting not one but two private planes for the team, I wasn’t a fan of the fact that only the players and coaching staff fly together when it means you’re on the other plane. Bottom line is that I missed the fuck outta you, Rory.”

“I missed you, too.”

He winked at me as we walked across the parking lot to the spot where we would meet the car. “I was banking on it, nerd.”

“Only because I got so used to hearing your voice in my ear just about every day over the summer, geek.”

He swept his free hand down the front of his body with a cocky grin. “Not sure that nickname still works now that you’ve seen all this.”

“All this?” I echoed with a giggle, shaking my head.

The car pulled up, and he helped me inside the back before murmuring, “C’mon, you have to admit that I’m not what you expected from a gamer.”

I snorted. “Um, yeah...I never expected to be playing against a pro football player.”

“Let alone your favorite.”

“Mm-hmm, there’s that too.” I arched a brow. “But I don’t exactly fit the stereotype of a typical gamer either.”

“Thank fuck for that,” he rasped, sliding his arm around my shoulders.

When we were only a few minutes from my parents’ house, I asked, “Are you having the car wait so you can head straight to the airport from here?”

His head jerked back, and he shook his head. “No, I was planning to stay for dinner. As long as it’s not too much of an imposition on your mom.”

“My mom raised two sons who could easily eat her out of house and home when they were teenagers. So she always cooks more than enough to feed an army now,” I assured him.

“Trust me, you’ll be more than welcome. I just assumed that you wouldn’t have time for that. Aren’t you supposed to fly back with the team?”

“Nope, I explained to the Coach Beaumont that I needed to stay behind, so they’re not expecting me.” He shot me a smug grin. “So I had him talk to the front office staff to cancel your ticket, and I chartered a jet that’ll take us back whenever you’re ready to go.”

Holy crap, dating a professional football player who made grand gestures like this was going to take some getting used to. I didn’t know if I should be thrilled that he’d gone to such lengths to be able to have dinner with my family...or worried about the interrogation he was about to face from my dad and brothers.

I hadn't become one of the best running backs in the league by being unsure of myself and my abilities. And on the field, I was a force to be reckoned with.

So the fact that I was feeling a little bit nervous as we pulled up in front of Rory's childhood home shocked me. Still, I wasn't a coward, and I had enough confidence to trust that I could convince her family that I was what was best for Rory.

"Listen, my brothers are—"

"Relax, nerd," I interrupted with a wink. "I think I can win them over, but just remember"—I took one of her hands and tenderly kissed the back—"nothing they could say or do will scare me away."

Rory sighed. "I know you believe that, but I'm going to give you one last out. I won't think less of you if you want to drop me off and fly back with the team."

I rolled my eyes and opened the door. "How scary can they be when they're fans of baseball and hockey?" I joked as I climbed out of the car. I jogged around to the other side and assisted her out onto the sidewalk.

"Get that all out now, geek," she quipped with a condescending smirk.

The front door was thrown open before we even reached it, and a woman who looked like a slightly older version of Rory stood there with a giant smile.

“Rory!” she exclaimed as she opened her arms, and my girl ran into them.

“Hi, Mom!”

The woman’s eyes shifted to me, and her smile widened. “Well, now, who is this tall drink of water?”

I chuckled while Rory groaned and rolled her eyes.

“Mom, this is Gage Ledger. Gage, this is my mom, Helen Abernathy. She has boundary issues.”

Helen laughed and released Rory, then stretched her hand out.

“I’m happy to meet you.” I moved to shake her hand, but she tugged on it, and I let her pull me in for a hug. “We’re huggers around here.”

“I think Russell and Ridley might disagree,” Rory muttered, though her eyes had an amused twinkle.

“Is that my baby girl, I hear?” An older man, clearly her father, walked up next to his wife and wrapped his arms around Rory.

“Hi, Dad,” she said in a muffled voice since her face was squished against his chest. “Can’t...breathe...”

He chuckled and let her go, but then he tucked her under one arm. When he glanced in my direction, he narrowed his eyes. “Gage Ledger. Can’t say I ever expected to meet you, much less at my house. But as long as you unhand my wife, you’re welcome here.”

Helen snickered and dropped her arms. “Oh, pish, Brad. Can’t you see he only has eyes for Rory?”

“Is that so?” Brad asked, scrutinizing me the way a protective father does.

“Yes, sir. Rory is incredibly special, and I’m lucky she gave me a chance.”

“Damn, right,” he muttered. A spark of respect in his gaze put me a little more at ease. Two down, the toughest two to go.

“Come in, come in,” Helen tittered as she ushered us into the house. “Dinner is almost ready. Rory, the boys are manning the grill and will be in shortly, but Brandy and Phyllis are in the living room.”

Rory led me into a large room just off the entryway, where two women sat on a couch talking.

“Rory!” A tall brunette smiled widely as she jumped up and embraced my girl.

The other woman had red hair and was only slightly taller than Rory. They hugged as well, then Rory introduced the dark-haired female as Phyllis, her sister-in-law, and the redhead as Brandy, her brother’s fiancée.

Before we could say more than hello, two tall, burly guys came rushing in and each swept Rory into a bear hug.

“Have you come to your senses and moved home?” one of them asked.

“Russell, stop harassing her.” Phyllis sighed, linking her arm through his. “Just look at her! She’s obviously thriving in New York. She’s positively glowing.”

“That might have something to do with the sexy football player who is clearly besotted with her,” Brandy giggled, winking at Rory.

“Did you just call another man sexy?” Ridley—I assumed—grunted, glowering at his fiancée.

“The what?” Russell snapped.

Five pairs of eyes were suddenly trained on me.

“Hi. You must be Russell and Ridley. I’m Gage.” I put my hand out, and Ridley, who was standing closet to me, shook it, squeezing a little harder than necessary. If he thought that was supposed to intimidate me, he’d obviously never been up against a three-hundred- and thirty-three-pound offensive tackle. I pressed my lips together to keep from smirking, figuring it wouldn’t help my case.

Russell prowled over to shake my hand, giving it the same treatment. “Football, huh?”

“Running back,” I informed him with a grin.

“Kind of a pansy sport, isn’t it?”

Rory gasped, but I didn’t let her step in for me.

I cocked my head to the side and asked, “How do you figure?”

“For one thing, you play, what? Like seventeen games a season?”

I nodded. “Or twenty-one if you play the Super Bowl.” A grin spread across my face. “And win it, like my team did.”

Russell scoffed. “Baseball teams play one hundred and twenty-nine games a season, if you include the World Series.”

“True,” I conceded. “But baseball isn’t a contact sport.”

“Hockey is,” Ridley interjected. “And those guys can end up playing one hundred and ten games if they go all the way.”

“I’ll give you that.” They both looked a little smug until I added, “But if you look at just about any list of dangerous team sports, hockey is always after American football and rugby.”

“Hockey players break more bones,” Ridley insisted.

“Baseball—”

“Okay, boys,” Brandy piped up. “Put away your dicks, and let’s have a civilized meal.”

Ridley grinned at her and murmured, “You love my dick.”

“Ewwwwwwww!” Rory shouted, covering her ears.

I couldn’t help laughing with everyone else. Her family dynamic was so normal, and it made me feel right at home.

“Come on, nerd,” I teased, tucking her under my arm.

“What did you—”

Phyllis clapped Russell upside the head and muttered, “It’s obviously a term of endearment, babe. I would think you’d prefer that to something like sexy or love bunny”—Russell

glared at her, and she held her hands up in a gesture of surrender—“just saying...”

Rory sighed. “Are you sure about that whole sticking around thing, geek?”

I winked at her and smiled when she blushed. “I’m holding on to you with everything I’ve got.”

Dinner was relaxed, full of banter, laughter, and amazing food. I appreciated that Rory’s dad or mom stepped in when their sons seemed like they might start in on me again. Not that I couldn’t handle it, but it obviously bothered Rory, and I wasn’t willing to put up with that.

After the meal, I stood and picked up a few dishes, then took them to the kitchen. On my way back to the dining room, I was yanked into the hallway, where I found myself alone with Russell and Ridley. They stared at me with their feet braced apart and their arms crossed over their chests. I was willing to bet they had scared away plenty of Rory’s potential dates. Something I very much appreciated.

“If you’re going to try to threaten me away or talk me out of pursuing Rory, you might as well save your breath,” I stated before they could speak. I figured it was better to lay that out ahead of time.

“Believe it or not, Ledger, despite being a thickheaded football player,” Russell started. “I can see how much you care for my sister.”

“Nothing is more important to me than Rory.”

They searched my features in silence for a minute. Then Russell asked, “More important than your career?”

“Absolutely.” I didn’t even hesitate.

“You love her,” Ridley surmised.

I nodded. I’d acknowledged it to myself, but there was no way I was going to say it out loud to anyone before Rory.

Ridley dipped his chin and scowled at me. “I believe you. Just know that if you hurt her, you’ll be watching your team

win from a hospital bed once we break every fucking bone in your body.”

“I’d expect nothing less.”

We stared at each other for a few more seconds, then as if coming to a silent agreement, we turned to re-enter the kitchen. Just before I stepped over the threshold, a hand grabbed my arm and stopped me. I glanced around to find Russell standing close, his eyes narrowed, and his jaw clenched.

“One last thing, Ledger. If you knock up my sister before she has a ring on her finger, I don’t care how much you love her. I will beat the shit out of you.”

I slowly turned around, and due to our proximity, I was pretty much right up in his face. “I respect you, Russell. As well as Ridley and Brad. I have no problem with you protecting Rory against harm, especially if it was caused by me.”

My tone was made of steel, and my eyes bored into him when I said, “But when Rory and I choose to get married, start a family, or any other choice that couples make based on what’s best for them, that is none of your business. Do I make myself clear?”

Russell’s expression was blank, then he broke out into a smile and clapped me on the back. “You just might come somewhere in the stratosphere of deserving her one day.”

“I doubt it, but I’ll never stop trying.”

Flying in a chartered jet was different from the private planes the team used for away games. I wasn't certain about how small it was, but Gage didn't seem worried. And it was awesome to be able to travel back to New York with him.

"Are you nervous, nerd?" he asked, his hand sliding down to my thigh and squeezing gently.

"We're in public," I hissed, pushing his hand away.

"That's a stretch." He laughed and shook his head. "We're on a private plane. Just the two of us."

"Plus the pilots. And the flight attendants. Especially the pretty blonde who I swear winked at you."

The grin broadened on his handsome face. "Is that jealousy I hear?"

"What? No. Maybe." I sighed, leaning back into the plush seat, way better than any plane seat I'd ever been in. Even the one I'd flown here on.

His palm slid down the front of my leggings, his fingers brushing over my clothed mound. "You know you're mine, right?"

I let out a small breath, focusing on his fingers as they crept away from the spot that ached for his touch.

He unbuckled his seat belt with one hand and slid from the seat until he kneeled in front of me with a wicked smile.

"What are you doing?" I managed to gulp.

“Showing you how much you’re mine,” he growled, pulling down my leggings until they were at my ankles.

“Gage,” I gasped, looking behind me for one of the flight attendants to come rushing forward and reprimand us.

He laughed, the sound vibrating against my thighs. When I looked back down, he peppered kisses along my sensitive skin.

“It might only be chartered, but this is a private plane for now, baby. They’re not coming unless I call for them. Which I’m sure as fuck not gonna do when I have you spread out for me.”

“Gage, what are you—” Before I could finish my sentence, his mouth was on my mound, pushing aside the thin swatch of fabric from my thong with his tongue.

“Gage,” I whispered, my hands gripped around the armrests on either side of me.

“Yeah, that’s it, baby,” he murmured into my folds. “Keep quiet so I’m the only one who hears you. Don’t want to share even the sound of your pretty voice as you pant my name.”

The way his heated stare met mine as he slid a finger through my wetness had me forgetting what I was worried about. I moaned, leaning farther into the seat. He murmured his appreciation into my folds, his mouth suctioning onto my clit as he inched his finger inside me.

He wasn’t even in that far, but the sensation of being filled by his thick digit already had me close to the edge. I gasped for air, my hands flying from the armrest to his dark hair, fisting it between my fingers.

He moaned into my core, slowly adding another finger as he sucked harder on my clit.

My whole body vibrated as my orgasm ripped through me. I rocked hard against his face, riding out my climax as he licked up every last drop.

“Gage, that was...” I tried to catch my breath as I gasped for words, struggling to come up with the right words to

explain what I'd just experienced. For the very first time.
“Wow.”

“I'm not done with you yet,” he replied, wiping my essence from his chin.

Before I could react, my seat belt was undone, and he pulled me toward him, tasting my own saltiness on his tongue as he kissed me deeply.

This was what I had been missing all these years. No one was as passionate as Gage about football, gaming...or me.

My leggings had fallen to the floor as I wrapped my legs around his waist, pushing myself as close as I could get to him. Obviously, it wasn't enough as he growled into my mouth, pulling me back until he was seated on the couch across from us with me straddling his lap.

I pouted, breaking our kiss. “You know this isn't fair that I'm half naked and you're still fully clothed.”

He smiled, using his free hand to whip off his shirt, so I finally got to see the tanned expanse of his muscled body. But something else caught my eye, gleaming in the sunlight streaming in from the plane windows.

“Is that real?” I asked, running my fingers down his pecs and nudging the silver hoop through his left nipple.

“Tug on it and see.”

I moved my hand closer, but he grabbed it, shaking his head. “With your mouth.”

“But what if I hurt you?” I whispered.

He kissed the back of my hand. “You could never hurt me.”

His words warmed my heart —and my already aching mound —as I pushed closer, running my tongue around the silver hoop before swirling it around his hardened nipple.

“Fuck, Rory, you have an amazing mouth,” he murmured, his hand going to the back of my head and running his fingers through my corkscrew curls.

I smiled against his skin, gently biting his nipple before sucking harder. But I must have done something wrong because he pulled my head back, his eyes on fire as he gazed up at me.

“I’m...I’m sorry,” I stammered, mortified over messing up the steamy moment between us.

He shook his head and stroked a finger down my cheek. “Don’t be sorry, baby. That felt too damn good, and the first time I’m going to come with you, I want to be in your tight little pussy. Not in my jeans from you just sucking my nipple.”

“Oh.” A shiver raced up my spine at the sensual promise in his heated tone. “Then...um...I guess we should stop?”

“We probably should.” His finger slid down my neck and along my collarbone, sending goose bumps in its wake. “Your first time should be somewhere special.”

I bit my bottom lip with a laugh. “Joining the mile-high club while losing my virginity sounds pretty darn special to me.”

“You think so?” He tugged my finger away and leaned forward to nip at my lip. “It’s not just the orgasm talking? The last thing I want is for you to regret anything about us.”

“That’s never going to happen.”

My reassurance was all he needed to snap into motion, shifting my hips high enough so he could pull his jeans and boxer briefs down, freeing his hard length. I looked down at the massiveness of his shaft, precome already leaking from the tip. “Except maybe trying to make that fit.”

“Where’s my fierce little nerd, who probably knows the exact science behind how my cock is gonna be a perfect fit for your tight pussy?”

His teasing snapped me out of my stupor, and I aimed a grin at him. “I probably should avoid doing that, or else I really will spoil the moment.”

“You can count on me always being up for sex with you.” He wrapped his hand around his shaft and stroked it.

“Literally, with how much you turn me on.”

I grasped his shoulders as I whispered, “Show me.”

“Want this to go as smoothly as possible for you, baby.” He gripped my hips and settled me on top of him so that the tip of his dick was notched at my entrance. “You can go as slow as you need in this position.”

I never expected to lose my virginity while riding a professional football player on a private plane, but the moment was so perfect, I didn’t hesitate to follow his lead. So I stared into his intense green eyes as he slowly lowered me down over his length. He groaned when he bumped up against the proof of my innocence, one hand still on my hip and the other going to my clit.

“If I’m going to fit inside you this first time with the least amount of pain, I’m gonna need you to come on my cock again. Get you nice and wet.”

I gasped as he circled his hips, moving his thumb in the same motion against my sensitive nub. This time, my orgasm was a slow buildup, starting low in my belly.

“Don’t fight it, baby. Let me see you fly apart for me as you ride my cock.”

I slowly bucked my hips, needing more. “So close.”

“Damn, you feel so good,” he moaned, his eyes closing as he rocked closer to me, his thumb picking up the pace on my clit.

My whole body erupted as I rode out my orgasm, only feeling a slight pinch of pain mixed with the mind-blowing pleasure as I slid down farther. I was completely seated in his lap, with his dick fully impaling me, and I felt every ridge against my tight walls.

“Holy crap,” I gasped, my nails digging into his shoulders.

“You okay?” he moaned, gripping my hips while he held perfectly still.

My whole body was on fire—but in a good way—and every part of me felt alive. “I’m amazing.”

“Thank fuck, because I’m barely holding my control, baby,” he confessed, his hips bucking off the small couch.

With my body filled by him and his eyes glazed over, a thrill of feminine power swept through me. I was the one who gave him that look. Not the winking flight attendant or the millions of girls in the stands—none of whom he’d ever paid a lick of attention to when we were together. But me, the nerdy gamer currently riding him on a private plane. The virgin who had pushed this gorgeous man nearly past his limit.

“Then just let go. I’m right here with you, along for the ride. Literally,” I echoed his earlier word choice since it was so appropriate.

“Do you want me to come in this pussy? Claim it so everyone knows it’s mine?” he asked, but it wasn’t a question. It was a fiery command, insinuated with each upward thrust of his hips.

“Yes. Mark me. Make me yours,” I breathed, my thighs quaking as another orgasm threatened to erupt.

Gripping harder onto my thighs, he lifted his hips to meet mine over and over again until I saw fireworks behind my eyelids. I screamed out, not caring who heard me as my entire body shook with the ferocity of my orgasm, but Gage curled up to capture the sound with his kiss.

He tumbled into the abyss of pleasure soon after, moaning into my mouth as his body went slack underneath me. My legs were like jelly, and I couldn’t move, leaning my head against his neck as we both breathed together. It could have been minutes or hours before I was finally able to lean back and catch his gorgeous smile.

Eventually, his gaze trailed from my lips and down to the spot where our bodies were still connected. “Look at the mess you made.”

I gasped, looking down at his lap where his come and mine had spilled out of me and leaked onto his skin.

“I’m sorry. I…” I went to move, but he pulled me back so our lips were only an inch apart.

“Don’t apologize, baby. I love seeing us mixed together. Seeing how much I turn you on. What you do to me. It’s fucking beautiful.”

He sealed his words with another kiss that took what little breath I had away. And stole my ability to think about the possible repercussions of us not using a condom when I wasn’t on birth control. Not that Gage seemed the slightest bit concerned.

“You look beautiful, baby,” I murmured as I came up behind Rory and slipped my arms around her waist.

She stood in front of the mirror in my bathroom, finishing up her makeup. Her hair was up in a ponytail, leaving her neck exposed so I brushed my mouth over a particularly sensitive spot and grinned when she shivered.

Rory raised an eyebrow as she dropped a black tube into her toiletry bag. “I’m wearing a jersey and jeans, geek. Beautiful is not a word that describes me right now.”

I moved my hands to her hips and turned her around so I could stare directly into her gorgeous hazel eyes. “First of all, nerd, you are always beautiful. But when you’re wearing my number, it’s sexy as fuck.”

Twin spots of pink appeared on her cheeks, and I kissed each one before taking her mouth in a searing kiss. Only when we were both shaking with need and I was seconds away from saying “fuck it” to the game and taking my woman to bed did I pull back.

“I also like seeing you wearing it here, in my space.”

“You haven’t gotten sick of me?” Her tone was teasing, but there was a hint of vulnerability in it.

Ever since we returned from the away game and that unbelievable flight home, I’d talked her into staying with me. I loved being with her, and sometimes the evenings were the only time we had to see each other. And it would only get

worse once she started classes this week. I'd been playing it slow, dropping subtle hints, but it seemed like the right time to start being clearer about how I felt and what I wanted from her.

"I will never get sick of you, Rory. If I could keep you with me every minute of every day, I would."

"Really?" She beamed at me, and I wrapped her up in my embrace, plastering our bodies together.

"Really. Which is why you should move in with me."

Rory's jaw went slack, and she gaped up at me.

"We don't have a lot of time together now, and with classes starting, and my schedule with the team is going to get more hectic."

She sputtered for a moment, then croaked, "Move in? We've only known each other for a week."

I shrugged. "I miss you."

Her face softened, and she gazed up at me with wonder and doubt.

"Don't you like it when I wake you up in the morning?" I crooned. Her face turned pink, presumably thinking about how I'd woken her up every day with my mouth between her legs.

I loved that after all we'd done, she still blushed like a virgin. It was adorable.

"And the way I put you to sleep every night?"

One way or another, we ended up naked and tangled together after fucking or making love. Or both. Several times, I'd passed out still buried inside her. And a few too many times I'd forgotten to wear a condom. But neither of us had brought it up.

I shook my head, trying to clear away the memories since I was already swollen and hard as hell.

"I do love it."

"Then why the trepidation, baby?"

“It’s just so fast.”

“Fast for the rest of the world? Or for us?”

Rory cocked her head to the side and studied me thoughtfully. “You have a point,” she eventually conceded. “But let me think about it a little, okay?”

“Take as long as you want, nerd,” I told her with a grin. “As long as you accept the fact that I will continue to try to convince you to see things my way.” I winked, and she laughed, sending prickles of pleasure over every nerve ending. I touched my forehead to hers and sighed, “Damn, I want you.”

She made a similar sound and muttered, “I wish we had time too, but neither of us can be late. They won’t exactly hold the coin toss for us.”

Grumbling, I gave her a quick, hard kiss, then let her go so she could gather her things.

When we arrived at the stadium, I grabbed my duffel and her backpack, slinging them both over one shoulder. She slipped her hand in mine, and I laced our fingers together as we entered the building. When we reached the spot where we needed to head in different directions, I kept going toward the press box.

“Um, Gage? The locker room is that way.”

“But the press box is this way,” I bantered. When she looked confused, I chuckled. “I’m walking you to work, nerd.”

“Oh!” Her face flushed, and she beamed a pleased smile at me.

“Stop looking at me like that, or I’ll find the next empty room to fuck you in.”

Rory’s expression made it clear she didn’t hate the idea, but then she huffed and faced forward as we stepped into an elevator. “I can’t be late,” she muttered.

I laughed and wrapped an arm around her waist, snuggling her into my side. “Maybe we should come early next time...” I wiggled my eyebrows suggestively.

Rory giggled. “How are you so rugged and so cute at the same time, geek?”

I scowled. “Cute is not an adjective that describes me, nerd. Rugged, sexy as hell, manly, geek, I’ll even cop to dork from time to time. But cute is not in my repertoire.”

“If you say so.”

The elevator doors glided open before I could respond, and when we stepped off, I nearly ran into Percy, our director of football analytics and Rory’s boss.

“Sorry,” I apologized as I sidestepped so he didn’t crash into me. It would hurt him a fuck of a lot more than me. “How are you doing, Percy?”

“Um, fine.” His head swung back and forth between me and Rory a couple of times before his gaze dropped to our joined hands.

I was surprised when his mouth turned down in a frown, and the air around him turned a little frosty. After a few seconds, he turned to Rory, effectively dismissing me. “Glad you could make it, Rory. Shall we get to work?”

Rory’s face showed her confusion at his attitude, and she glanced up at me before looking back at him and replying, “Sure. I’ll be right there.”

Percy shot a glare in my direction, then stalked through the door to the press box.

“Is he always like that?” I asked, my voice laced with concern.

“No. He’s always been professional but friendly.” She paused and bit her lip before adding, “Although...in my interview, I got the impression that he doesn’t like when the office staff dates players.”

“What?”

Rory sighed. “Maybe I misunderstood. I’d better get in there. I’ll see you after the game, okay?” She went up on her tiptoes and pecked my lips before grabbing her backpack and waltzing into the press box.

As I made my way down to the locker room, I pondered our interaction with Percy. *Could dating me threaten her internship?*

“Save that murderous expression for out on the field, Ledger.”

Cole’s voice broke through my thoughts, and I looked to my left to see him leaning against the wall outside the locker room door. He was scanning the papers on his clipboard, but he dropped it to his side when I moved to stand next to him.

“What’s on your mind, Gage?”

“The girl you introduced me to a couple of weeks ago. Rory Abernathy?”

“What about her? Other than that I’m pretty sure you’re dating her.”

I glanced at him, expecting to see the same disapproval in his eyes that I’d seen in Percy’s. Instead, he was smiling smugly and seemed amused.

“How did you...?”

“When will you boys learn?” He tapped his temple. “I know everything.”

I laughed, but honestly, it really seemed like he did sometimes.

“Is it a problem?” I asked. “Rory and I being together?”

Cole frowned and pushed away from the wall to fully face me. “Why the hell would that be an issue?”

“Percy seemed unhappy with the situation. I’m worried. I don’t want to get Rory fired, but I can’t give her up.”

Cole’s frown intensified. “Don’t worry about that asshat. I’ll make sure Rory’s job is safe and that he doesn’t make things uncomfortable for her.”

Relief flooded my body, and I felt my muscles unclench a little. “Thanks.”

“As long as you crush it out there, no thanks is necessary.”

I nodded, and we entered the locker room together. He made a beeline for one of our offensive linemen while I went to get dressed for the game.

My thoughts kept drifting to Gage's suggestion that I move in with him during the game, which made it difficult to focus on my job. Percy kept giving me odd looks, which made me self-conscious and distracted me even more.

When the clock wound down on another Nighthawks victory, I heaved a deep sigh of relief. For the first time since I had started my internship, I was thrilled for the game to be over. Unfortunately, Percy still didn't seem happy with me when I got ready to leave.

"Classes start this week, but I should still be able to update my models with the statistics from today's game if you'd like me to do that," I offered.

He gave me a stiff nod. "If you manage to find the time, that would be helpful."

Cole shot him a look as he headed toward the door. "I'd appreciate getting a copy of Rory's work. It'll help me prepare for our first regular season game."

"I'll forward it to you," Percy agreed before hurrying out of the press box.

"Don't worry about him." Cole gestured for me to walk out before him. "Gage has your back, which means the rest of us do too."

"Thanks, I appreciate it," I murmured.

"Want me to lead you down to the post-game room?" he asked. "That's where most of the wives, girlfriends, and

families go to wait for the players after the game. I can let Gage know where to find you when I see him in the locker room.”

I flashed him an appreciative smile. “That would be great, thanks.”

I was a little nervous since I hadn’t met any of the wives and girlfriends yet, but I knew that Gage had mentioned to his friends that we were dating. This was confirmed by how I was greeted when I entered the room.

“Oh my gosh! You must be Rory.” A cute blonde with blue eyes and a rounded belly rushed over to greet me. “I’m so excited to meet you!”

I returned her smile. “Um...hey. Yeah, I’m Rory.”

“I’m Finley Channing,” she introduced herself. “My husband, Rhodes, and Gage are friends.”

“And she’s the owner’s niece,” another woman added with a grin as she joined us. She reminded me of a fairy-tale princess with her black hair, blue eyes, and pale skin. A very heavily pregnant one.

Finley rolled her eyes. “More importantly, we have something else in common because I’m an NYU alumna, and I heard you’re a student there.”

“I am,” I confirmed with a nod.

“Double majoring in computer science and math, right?” she asked.

My eyes widened. “Yup.”

“You’ll get used to Finley knowing all sorts of stuff. She’s very well informed.” The brunette extended her hand to me. “I’m Talia, by the way. Brady Summers is my husband.”

As the second-string quarterback, I’d seen him play a lot during the preseason. “He did great in today’s game. His pass completion percentage was the highest it’s been since he went pro.”

“Oh yeah, you two are going to get along great.” Talia gestured back and forth between Finley and me. “With those analytical minds of yours, I bet you could take over the world if you wanted.”

Finley shrugged with a grin. “Or just the Nighthawks someday.”

“I like the sound of that.” I rubbed my palms together. “Not only have I fallen in love with football statistics, but it would drive my brothers up the wall.”

All three of us giggled at my logic, and any lingering nervousness I’d felt coming into the post-game room disappeared. Time flew by as we got to know each other, and before I knew it, the guys had joined us.

After Gage introduced me to Brady and Rhodes, his teammates quickly guided their pregnant wives out of the room so they could head home. Then he turned to me and asked, “Ready to go?”

“Aw, c’mon, Ledger.” One of his teammates came over and slapped him on the back. “You gave Summers such a hard time for ducking out on us when he started dating, and now you’re gonna do the same thing?”

Gage slid his arm around my waist and grinned. “Yup.”

His teammate flashed me a smile. “I guess I can’t blame you.”

An honest-to-goodness growl rumbled up Gage’s chest. “Mine.”

“Damn, you’re just as bad as the rest of the guys who’ve gotten wifed up.” The guy held his hands up in a gesture of surrender, but his smile didn’t dim. “Hey, I’m Sylas, the fullback who protects your man’s ass on the field. Maybe you can do me a favor and convince him that I meant no harm? And that you’re up for joining some of us at The End Zone for a drink to celebrate our win and the end of the preseason?”

“Well, I guess when you put it like that.” I blinked up at Gage. “Maybe we should go? Just for one drink?”

“Whatever you want,” he agreed, brushing his thumb against the small of my back.

“I don’t know.” Another player joined us. He narrowed his eyes, but it didn’t hide the mischievous grin in them. “Axton is pretty chill when it comes to the team partying at his club after games, but I doubt he’ll let anyone underage in, even if they’re with us.”

“I’m twenty-one,” I huffed.

“Ignore Micah.” Gage gave me a squeeze. “He’s just amped up from that interception he ran in for a touchdown. It’s not often that the defense gets to score.”

“Whatever, man. I’m not gonna let you push my buttons when I had a great fucking game, and we’re headed out to celebrate.” Micah shook his head.

“You totally missed the perfect chance to give him a hard time about robbing the cradle,” Sylas muttered as they walked away.

Gage sighed as he guided me out of the room to where his SUV was parked in the players’ lot.

Although I had turned twenty-one over the summer, I still hadn’t gone clubbing. Russell, Ridley, Phyllis, and Brandy took me out to a bar for my first round of drinks back home, but I’d only had one celebratory shot and a cocktail before Russell declared that I’d reached my limit. I’d already had a slight buzz, but I couldn’t admit that because giving my brothers an inch meant they’d take a mile. So I’d ordered another drink and regretted the decision the following morning.

After that experience, hitting the clubs just didn’t seem as though it would be my thing. But going with Gage and his friends to celebrate the Nighthawks winning their last preseason game sounded like a lot of fun, so I was looking forward to our night out.

The only thing dimming my excitement was Percy’s attitude during the game. Something that Gage noticed during the drive to The End Zone.

Reaching out to interlace our fingers, he asked, “Did Syllas’s crack about me robbing the cradle bother you?”

I shook my head. “No, I’m not worried about what people think about the ten years between us. When you really think about it, it’s not even that big of an age gap.”

“Then what’s on your mind, baby?”

Heaving a deep sigh, I explained, “Percy was ice cold to me today...for the entire three and a half hours we were in the press box. It was weird. And very uncomfortable.”

“Shit, I’m sorry.” He reached over to give my hand a comforting squeeze. “Try not to worry too much about him. I already talked to Cole about there potentially being an issue with him after we bumped into him at the elevator. He said you don’t have anything to be concerned about.”

“Really?” I slumped in my seat as relief coursed through my system.

“Yeah, he’s gonna talk to him about whatever the hell his issue is with us dating. Cole will smooth things over,” he assured me.

“Thanks for being so observant and taking care of things so quickly.” I beamed a smile at him. “I definitely owe you one.”

“Hold that thought.” He winked at me as he turned into the club’s parking lot. “You can show your appreciation for me when we get home.”

“Thank goodness I said we were only coming for one drink.” I pressed my thighs together to ease the achy need in my core. “Now I wish we’d passed on the invite so we could just head straight back to your place.”

“Our place, if you’d just agree to move in with me,” he pointed out.

“It’s not even been half a day, and you said you’d give me as much time as I needed to decide,” I chided him with a mock glare.

“I also said I would do my best to convince you.”

He pulled into a spot but reversed right back out of it to exit the parking lot again. Twisting around to look out the back window, I asked, “Where are you going?”

“Back to my place so I can get a jump-start on that persuasion.”

The sensual promise in his deep voice was enough to convince me, but I still asked, “What about your friends? They’re expecting us.”

He shrugged. “If they ask, I can honestly say we only stayed for a little bit, and they must’ve missed us.”

“Way to put your geeky mind to work. Now hurry.”

We'd barely hit any red lights, but it still felt as though it took forever to get back home. Once inside the apartment, we left a trail of clothes behind us as we kissed and undressed all the way to the bedroom. We were naked by the time we reached the bed, and I dropped to my knees in front of Rory, put one of her legs over my shoulder, and licked her pussy from bottom to top.

"Gage!" Her legs shook, and I knew she would struggle to stay upright, so I gripped her hips and kept her steady on her foot.

I inhaled deeply, then lapped at her juices a few times before plunging my tongue into her channel. "Always so fucking wet for me," I mumbled before circling her clit with the tip of my tongue as I inserted one digit into her slippery hole. "Fuck," I grunted as she clenched my finger. "So damn tight. Sometimes I'm shocked that you manage to take all of me." I added a second finger and nipped at her thigh. "But this pussy was made for me, wasn't it, baby?"

"Uh-huh," she panted as she held my head, pushing me down to where she wanted me.

I chuckled and blew on the sensitive flesh, making her shudder with need. "I love how responsive you are."

I dove in and devoured her pussy with gusto but always backed off right before she hit her peak.

"Stop teasing me, Gage."

I grinned and flicked her clit with my tongue. “But it’s so much fun.”

Rory growled...literally growled. It was so fucking cute, I almost laughed.

“I think maybe I should use this to my advantage,” I mused as I lazily lapped at her center. “What would you give to be able to come right now?”

“Gage,” she panted, her fingers digging into my scalp. “I swear to all the football deities that if you don’t make me come—”

“That’s up to you, isn’t it, my little nerd?”

“Wh-what?”

“If you give me what I want, I’ll make you come as hard and as many times as you want tonight.”

I bit on her little bundle of nerves, and she cried out in frustrated pleasure.

“What do you want?” she groaned.

“I want you to move in with me, Rory.”

“But”—I started to put her leg down, and she wrapped it around my back—“no! Don’t stop!”

“Then give me what I want, baby,” I purred before scissoring my fingers inside her. I was playing dirty, and I didn’t fucking care. “Do you know how many times I’ve fucked you without a condom in the past week?”

“Oh crap!” she whimpered. “Gage, I’m not on birth control.”

I grinned up at her. “Is that supposed to make me want to wrap up? Because it doesn’t.”

“You...you want me to get pregnant?”

I shrugged. “It’s not as though I’ve been actively trying to knock you up. But if it happened, I would be over the moon.”

Her eyes turned soft, and she smiled sweetly. “I wouldn’t mind so much either,” she admitted softly.

“You should probably be living with the father of your baby.”

Her eyes narrowed, and she yanked the strands of my hair. “That wasn’t fair.”

“Never claimed to be fair, baby,” I murmured. “I’ll do anything it takes to make you mine, to have you with me all the time. Even if it means being a little underhanded and sneaky.”

“There you go, being all rugged and cute again,” she teased.

I snarled and grabbed her waist, throwing her onto the mattress as I shot to my feet. My long, thick cock pressed against her drenched center as I came down on top of her. “Not cute,” I grunted before I raised my hips, then punched forward, sheathing myself in one thrust.

Rory cried out, and I groaned in ecstasy. Nothing felt better than being buried inside my woman’s tight, hot pussy.

Her hands curled around my biceps, and she dug her fingers into my skin.

I pushed her legs wide and palmed her ass, raising her so the angle allowed me to push in even farther. “Fuck, yeah,” I moaned when her body clenched, strangling my dick. “Love being inside you, baby. Fuck!”

“Oh, yes! Gage! Yes! Yes!” Rory’s head thrashed from side to side, and her legs wrapped around my hips. I leaned over her and sucked one of her rosy nipples into my mouth. “Ohhhhh,” she moaned. “Gage...oh, yes!”

I released the nipple with a little pop and sucked on the other one as I slammed into her over and over.

My cock bumped against her cervix, and I suddenly realized just how badly I wanted to put my baby in her sexy belly. I’d always known I wanted a family, but it was just a far-off idea on the periphery of my mind. But when Rory had waltzed into my life, she brought my desire for a wife and kids screaming to the forefront.

However, before I completely lost my shit, I needed something else from her.

“Rory, baby,” I murmured. “I’m still not gonna let you come until you give me what I want.”

She double blinked at me, her eyes glazed with passion. But when I stilled my movements, the haze cleared, and she seemed to remember what I was talking about.

“You really want me to move in with you?”

“I want it all with you, Rory.”

“Okay, then. I’ll move in.”

I grinned and rotated my hips, loving the way it made her shudder and quake. “Your turn to get what you want,” I grunted.

“Oh, goody,” she gasped, making me chuckle.

Then laughter became moans and cries of rapture as I pounded into her so roughly that the bed slammed into the wall. I’d put her so on edge that it only took a few moments before she was ready to fly off the edge of paradise.

“Come, baby,” I demanded.

Rory dropped her head back and screamed my name as her climax hit.

“Oh, fuck, baby! Fuck, yes!” Her inner muscles spasmed and rippled around my cock, pushing me over the edge right behind her.

Her name left my lips on a roar as I thrust in one last time and exploded, filling her with hot come until it leaked out.

“Holy shit, nerd,” I rasped as I wrapped her in my arms and rolled onto my back. “I don’t know how, but it gets better every fucking time.”

“No pun intended?”

A bellow of laughter burst from my chest, and I hugged her as close as possible.

AS I STROLLED into my room—actually ours now—a few days later, a smile split my face at the mess all around me. Once Rory agreed to move in with me, I’d expected to have to convince her to let me hire movers the next day. And by convince, I really meant withholding orgasms until she saw things my way.

To my satisfaction, she’d said yes because she didn’t have classes on Mondays. Everything was packed up and delivered that night, and she’d been organizing and putting her shit away in the evenings.

I didn’t give a damn that her stuff was everywhere. I was just happy to see it here with mine.

Something flew up onto the bed, and I chuckled as I walked around to see Rory sitting on the floor, going through a pile of T-shirts. I picked up the one she’d tossed on the bed and held it up in front of me, then chuckled when I read it.

I don’t quit. I restart.

After setting it back down, I realized several other similar shirts were scattered around. One by one, I picked them up and read them until I was laughing so hard I had to sit down.

No, Mom. I can’t pause an online game.

A day without video games is...just kidding. I have no idea.

Gamer [Gey-mer] Noun. A person who kills noobs for fun. Synonyms: Online killer, bad guy.

I can’t adult now. I’m gaming.

I tossed the last shirt onto the bed and reached down and grabbed Rory, lifting her and dropping her on the mattress.

“You are such a nerd,” I growled as I climbed over her. “And it turns me the fuck on, baby.”

Two hours later, we were lying in our bed, naked and satiated.

“You are such a geek,” she mumbled.

“Oh?” I asked with a chuckle.

“Only a geek would have such talented fingers from playing video games so much.”

I was cut off from responding when her phone chirped.

“Could you hand me that, please?”

“Sure, baby.” I leaned back and reached out to pick up her cell and hand it to her.

She tapped the screen and opened her messages, then her brow puckered, and she muttered, “What in the world?”

I propped up on my elbow and looked down at her. “What’s wrong?”

“Percy wants me to come in tomorrow morning.”

“Don’t you have class?”

“Yeah. I gave him my schedule.” She typed in a response and sent it. “I asked if he could wait until noon. I have a break from eleven until three.”

Her phone beeped again, and she replied, then set her phone on the nightstand. “He said that was okay.” She flopped back down and stared up at the ceiling. “I wonder what this is about.”

“Don’t worry about it, baby. Everything will be fine,” I said confidently. I trusted Cole when he said he’d handle it. “What time do you have to be at school tomorrow?”

Rory stretched, causing the sheet to slip down, baring her amazing tits. “Eight.”

“Excellent.” I flashed her a salacious grin and winked. “Plenty of time to fuck you to sleep.”

No matter how often Gage told me that my position as an intern was safe, regardless of Percy's issue with front office staff fraternizing with players, I was still a bundle of nerves as I walked into the stadium for the meeting with my boss. It probably would've been a little less stressful if I could have ridden with Gage to Long Island, but my class schedule had made that impossible since he needed to be there for practice while I was on campus.

Even though he was busy, he'd asked me to text him when I arrived. As I walked toward Percy's office, I pulled out my phone and typed a quick message.

ME:

I'm here. Will let you know how it goes.

I wasn't expecting him to be waiting next to his cell, so I wasn't surprised I didn't get a reply before I knocked on Percy's door.

"Come in," he called.

I took a deep breath through my nose and let it slowly out through my mouth, hoping to calm my nerves. It wasn't effective, but I couldn't stand there and dawdle any longer.

Steeling my spine, I opened the door and went inside. "You wanted to see me?"

“Yes, please sit down, Rory.”

I walked over to the chair he gestured toward and perched on the edge, stroking my fingers against the strap of my purse as I placed it on my lap. “Thanks for being flexible on what time we could meet.”

“You’re welcome.” After setting his pen down in front of him, Percy rested his forearms on his desk and interlaced his fingers together. “This is going to be a delicate conversation, covering a difficult topic.”

“Um, what did you want to talk about?”

His eyes narrowed, and he pressed his lips in a flat line. “When you arrived to work the game on Sunday, it appeared to me that you’ve developed a...closeness with one of the players—Gage Ledger.”

I nodded, clearing my throat. “Yes.”

“I believe that I was fairly clear on my thoughts about inappropriate relationships between—”

I was braced for his accusation, but he didn’t get to finish his sentence before Gage came stomping into the office—still wearing his practice uniform and pads—with Cole right behind him. My boss glared at me, but he glanced down at his desk when Gage moved to place his hand on my shoulder.

Cole stood at his side, crossing his arms against his chest. “Gage brought to my attention that there might be a lack of clarity on your part about what does and does not represent prohibited conduct by the members of the Nighthawks family. Players and front office staff, including interns like Rory.”

“I understand that there isn’t a written rule regarding fraternization with the players, but I have a certain latitude when it comes to how I manage my staff,” Percy argued. “And I also have a responsibility to look out for Rory. She’s a college student, much younger than Gage. I wouldn’t want—”

“I certainly hope you’re not gearing up to accuse Gage of taking advantage of your intern.”

Percy shot to his feet, the color draining from his face. “Mr. Lennox, I’m so sorry you were brought into this.”

The owner of the team leaned his shoulder against the doorjamb. His pose was casual, but he didn’t look happy with his director of football analytics. “From what I just heard, I’m grateful that Cole let me know about this meeting.”

“I...I was just trying to say that—”

Lennox held his hand up to stem the flow of Percy’s words. “I don’t want to hear your excuses. I came down here to make it very clear that Gage’s relationship with Rory isn’t a violation of the league’s personal conduct policy.”

Gage slid his hand along my shoulder to cup the back of my neck. “It wouldn’t change anything even if it was. I love playing football, but Rory comes first.”

My breath caught in my chest at Gage’s declaration, but Lennox didn’t seem to have the same problem.

“Not surprised to hear it. Glad to see your priorities are exactly where they belong.” He flashed Gage an approving smile before shifting his attention back to my boss, all good humor wiping from his expression. “This team—the one I own—doesn’t have a non-fraternization policy in the employee handbook for a reason. It wasn’t an oversight. I have no problem with two consenting adults having a relationship with each other. Nobody ever knows where they’re going to meet the love of their life. The last thing I’d want to do is prevent a couple from getting together when they were meant for each other.”

“And we definitely are.” I gaped up at Gage, stunned that he’d make such strong statements about our relationship to the team owner when we’d only been together for a few weeks. He shook his head when he saw my wide eyes and parted lips. Tugging me to my feet, he pulled me close. “Not sure why you look so shocked, baby. I moved you into our place on Monday, and you could be knocked up with my baby already.”

Cole whistled. “Damn, you move even faster off the field than you do on it.”

“Only when it comes to falling in love with my beautiful nerd.” Gage cupped my cheeks, staring down at me with the depth of his feelings shining from his green orbs.

“You’re definitely a Nighthawk.” Lennox clapped him on the back before leaving.

Gage shook his head with a laugh. “I think he’s prouder of me declaring my love for you than he was about the championship I helped win him last year.”

“Don’t worry about him, geek.” I wrapped my fingers around his wrists, pressing my cheek deeper into his palm. “You still haven’t technically used those three little words yet, and I want to hear them.”

“Neither have you, baby.”

Percy cleared his throat, looking uncomfortable with how much our meeting had spiraled out of his control. My cheeks filled with heat as I tugged Gage’s hands down. “Did you need me for anything else?”

“No.” Percy shook his head. “I’ll just...see you at this weekend’s games, I guess.”

“Where you won’t give her a hard time,” Gage growled.

My boss’s eyes widened. “Of course not.”

“And I’ll be there to make sure of it,” Cole warned.

“Now that that’s cleared up, I guess we’ll find somewhere a little more private to finish this conversation,” Gage suggested.

“You can use my office,” Cole offered, leading us down the hall and unlocking the door.

“Thanks, man,” Gage murmured. “I appreciate it.”

“It’s the least I could do. I should’ve taken care of this mess right after you filled me in on your concern, but I thought I had the rest of this week to follow up with Percy.” Cole shot me an apologetic smile and raked his fingers through his hair. “And I had my hands full with an unexpected situation.”

“Anything you need help with?” Gage asked, a wrinkle popping up in the middle of his brow as he studied his friend.

“Nah, I think I have it covered.” Cole shook his head. “At least, I hope so.”

He shoed us inside before leaving, and finally, Gage and I were alone. He didn’t waste any time wrapping his arms around me and dipping his head low to capture my lips in a deep kiss. When he finally lifted his head again, he rasped, “I love you so fucking much, Rory.”

My heart swelled at his declaration. “I love you, too.”

“You better, baby.” He brushed his lips over mine again. “Because I have no doubt that you were meant to be mine, and I can’t wait for us to spend the rest of our lives together.”

I loved how he had no problem talking about our future together, but I wouldn’t be the woman he loved if I didn’t take the opportunity to tease him about his non-proposal. Especially after I caved so quickly to his demand that I move in with him. “I’m not sure I can agree to that until I have a ring on my finger.”

“Then I guess it’s a good thing I already put a call into the jeweler Rhodes and Brady used when they popped the question to their women.” He flashed me a cocky smirk. “Cause we both know that the whole proposal thing is merely a formality. You’re gonna marry me, even if I have to withhold orgasms from you again to get you to say yes sooner rather than later.”

Only a couple of days later, I accepted his ring...before he finally let me have a mind-blowing orgasm.

EPILOGUE

GAGE

“Happy Valentine’s Day, nerd,” I whispered in Rory’s ear as I curled my arm around and held a brightly wrapped gift in front of her.

Rory giggled and grabbed the present, holding it to her chest as she spun around to face me. “Happy Valentine’s Day!”

“Open it,” I told her with a grin.

“Twist my arm,” she snarked with another giggle. After yanking off the bow, she opened the box, then dropped it once she’d pulled out the contents. It was a red T-shirt with a gaming joke to go with her collection.

Why I lose at gaming:

My team partners: 52%

The game: 27%

My mouse: 12%

My keyboard: 8%

My fault: 1%

Rory burst out laughing and threw her arms around me. “I love it.”

“I love you,” I murmured before taking her lips in a deep kiss.

“I love you, too, geek,” she breathed when we came up for air. “Want to know what I got you for Valentine’s Day?”

“I feel like the gallant thing to say is that all I need is you. But I never claimed to be chivalrous. And I’m rooting for some barely-there, lacy red lingerie.”

Rory laughed, her hazel eyes twinkling merrily. “Why don’t you waltz your cute butt into the living room and wait for me?”

“Oh, baby,” I growled, “you’re gonna end up with a red ass to match that lingerie.”

“Promises, promises,” she sing-songed as she sashayed off toward the bedroom.

I exhaled slowly, trying to calm down as I ambled into the living room. Candles spread throughout the space cast a soft glow that enhanced the moonlight coming in from the glass walls that looked out over Central Park.

My lips curved into a smile when I spotted the Thai food on the coffee table, along with two beers.

“I thought I’d recreate our first date, but I got a new jersey.”

I turned at the sound of my fiancée’s sultry voice, and if I’d been a cartoon, my eyes would have bugged out of my head and my tongue would have been lolling out of my mouth.

“Fucking hell,” I breathed as I took in the vision before me.

Rory wore a New York Nighthawks jersey, but it was skintight, dipped low in the front, and stopped just below her tits. My eyes continued traveling down the expanse of her body, over her slightly protruding belly and down to her barely-there, lacy red panties.

“What do you think?” She fluffed her springy curls that I loved to clench in my fists while I fucked her. Her pouty lips pursed, and she ran her hands down her torso to splay over her baby bump.

“Tongue-tied,” I croaked.

She blushed, making my already hard dick swell, stretching the skin to the point of pain. “Are you ready for the rest of your present?” Her smile was smug as she glided her hands up to the hem of her jersey.

“I’m not sure my heart can take any more,” I rasped.

“Okay,” she shrugged, then started to turn, and I lunged, making it across the room in the blink of an eye.

Laughter bubbled up from her chest when I caught her and swept her up into my arms and stalked over to the couch. I dropped down and settled her on my lap, straddling me. “Show me,” I demanded.

“You know how you’re always reminding me who I belong to?”

“Damn straight.”

Rory grinned. “Well, just in case someone misses the giant rock on my finger and the tummy bump, I wanted to make sure everyone knows I’m yours.”

She held out her arm and twisted it to show me the underside.

Inked on her skin was a football with the number thirty-nine inside it. My number. And just under the ball was my—soon to be hers—last name in a pretty script.

“I know I always tell you how hot you look wearing my number.” I swallowed hard and bent my head to kiss her tattoo. “Nothing compares to how fucking spectacular you look with it branded on your silky skin.”

“I love you, geek,” she murmured as she looped her arms around my neck.

“Love you, too, nerd.” I gripped the hem of her jersey and growled, “Now let’s see what you’ve got hidden under your shirt.”

I whipped it off her head, and my mouth went dry.

Red. Lacy. Barely there.

“I HAVE SOMETHING ELSE FOR YOU,” I murmured as I traced circles on Rory’s back with my fingertips.

She raised her head and propped her chin on my chest. “The five orgasms weren’t enough?”

I smirked and lowered my voice so it was deep and raspy. “I’ll make it six, if you’re a good girl.”

Rory shivered, and I contemplated waiting until I’d fucked her a few more times before giving her my other present. But I’d been holding it for a week, and the waiting was killing me.

Reluctantly, I shifted her off my body and climbed out of bed. Then I went to the foyer, where I’d dropped my duffel when I arrived home, and picked it up off the ground. She was sitting in bed, holding the sheet before her when I returned. After setting the bag on an overstuffed chair, I rummaged through until I found a little black box and a legal-size envelope. Holding them tightly in my hand, I climbed back onto the bed and sat beside her. “If you don’t like it, we can look for a new one together,” I told her as I placed both items in her waiting hands.

She gave me a curious look but set down the envelope and opened the little box. Inside was a key. “What does this unlock?”

“Our future, I hope,” I replied with a tender smile. “Open the other one.”

She picked up the envelope and folded the flap over so she could turn it upside down and dump out the contents.

A stapled stack of papers fell onto the bed, and she cocked her head to the side as she picked it up and read the first page.

“A real estate listing?” She kept reading, then flipped the page to reveal a bill of sale. “You bought me a house?” she gasped.

“You always talk about the home you grew up in, and I know you want to raise our family in a place with plenty of room for kids, a yard, and a few pets.”

“Gage,” she mumbled. “I love our apartment. You don’t have to move out of the city just because I’ve mentioned some silly dream about—”

“It’s not silly, nerd,” I insisted as I dragged her onto my lap. “Every time you’ve mentioned it, I could see it as our future. I want all those things, too, baby.”

“Really?”

“Really,” I confirmed before kissing her softly. “We can go look at it tomorrow, and if the house isn’t exactly what you want, I’ll sell it and we’ll find the perfect place.”

“This looks perfect,” she breathed, throwing her arms around me and pressing her body into mine.

“You’re perfect,” I groaned when she sifted and her naked breasts rubbed against my chest. “Now, about those orgasms...”

EPILOGUE

RORY

When Gage announced to the media after the final game of his professional football career that we were headed to Florida with our daughter to celebrate his last championship ring, I thought he was joking. I should've known better. But when I padded out of our bedroom in search of him the following morning, I found him digging through Gracen's closet while she played on the floor with a doll her uncle Russell had gotten for her birthday last year.

"What're you looking for?" I asked, reaching down to tousle our daughter's long, dark hair.

Gage looked over his shoulder and flashed me a quick grin before turning back to his exploration of the ridiculous number of clothes our three-year-old had. "Does she still fit in any of the swimsuits your mom bought for her last summer?"

My mom had turned into a grandmazilla after our gender reveal party, buying more pink, tiny newborn outfits than Gracen had been able to wear before she outgrew them. But that hadn't bothered my mom. She just went out and bought Gracen an entire new wardrobe in the three-month size, which began the cycle of Grandma restocking her closet on a regular basis. And of her putting the pressure on Russell and Ridley to give her more grandchildren who lived closer to home.

"Definitely not." I shook my head, my brows drawing together while I tried to figure out why she'd need one when it was freezing cold outside.

He reached for her pink rolling carry-on bag with a sigh. “We’ll just have to buy her new ones while we’re there.”

“I’m super confused.” I moved close so that I could peer down at the clothes he was stuffing into her suitcase. “Where are we going?”

“Florida, remember?” He reached out to palm the swell of my belly. “The pregnancy brain isn’t getting to you, is it?”

I narrowed my eyes, glaring up at him. The absentmindedness that I experienced while pregnant wasn’t something that I enjoyed. At all. “I didn’t forget what you said during your on-field interview last night, if that’s what you’re asking.”

“Then why are you so surprised to find me packing for our baby girl?”

I huffed out a sigh. “Because I thought you were joking.”

“When have I ever played around about family vacation time?” he asked, dipping his head to brush his mouth against mine.

“Never,” I conceded with a soft smile.

Gage had dedicated his offseason to giving us his undivided attention, and he did his best to carve plenty of time out for us during the hecticness of the season too. Even during this past playoffs, when he was pushing hard toward his last chance to win a championship. Each day we’d spent together, he found new ways to show me how much he’d meant those words he’d said to Lennox about me being more important than the game to him—and that devotion extended to the family we were building.

“Damn straight.” He smirked at me. “Spending uninterrupted time with my girls isn’t something I take lightly.”

Placing my hand over his, I shook my head. “You won’t be able to say that pretty soon, geek.”

“I’ll always want to have time with my girls,” he promised, giving my belly a gentle squeeze. “When this one

comes, we'll just add boy time into the mix too.”

How sweet he was over our children never failed to melt my heart. Which made what I needed to say so hard.

I hated to disappoint him, especially when I knew he struggled a little with the idea of being retired when he was still in the prime of his life—just not in football years. Although he'd had offers to coach or broadcast, he still hadn't decided what he wanted to do quite yet, beyond focusing on bringing our baby boy into the world in about four months.

As much as I loved the vacations we'd taken, the last thing I wanted to do in this stage of my pregnancy was to be around crowds of people while I was hot and sweaty from all the sunshine. “I'm not sure I'm up to a big Florida trip right now.”

“Don't worry, baby. I figured you weren't. That's why I didn't book any theme park tickets.”

Gage loved roller coasters almost as much as he did football, so that was quite the surprise. “Really?”

“Yeah, it didn't seem fair since you can't ride on anything with me,” he confirmed with a smile. “We're just going to hang out at a beach house for a couple of weeks. And I asked your parents to come with us, so Gracen will be busy getting spoiled by them while you rest each afternoon.”

“Are you going to join me for those naps?” I wagged my brows in an exaggerated way. “Because cuddle time with my geek would be a big selling point to this trip.”

“Not only will I give you all the cuddles you want, but I also chartered a plane so you can be as comfortable as possible while we fly down there.”

“So you arranged for a beach house, private plane, and built-in babysitters who adore our daughter? That's the trip you want to take to celebrate your big win?” I huffed out a laugh. “Because it sounds more as though you planned all of this with what I'd want in mind, not you.”

“If you're happy, I'm happy.” Lowering his head, he rasped, “And it doesn't hurt that I'll get to see my gorgeous

wife—with her belly full of my baby—dressed in skimpy swimsuits most of the time that we’re there.”

“As a certified math nerd with a shiny degree to prove it, I can confirm there’s a 99.99% chance of that happening.”

It turned out those odds were in his favor...because I practically lived in a swimsuit and cover-up during our trip.

Curious about Cole’s unexpected situation? Find out what happens in [Calling the Play!](#)

Lennox’s story will be part of the [Love series!](#) Keep an eye out for Vows of Love!

And if you join our [newsletter](#), you’ll get an email from us with a link to claim a FREE copy of The Virgin’s Guardian, which was banned by Amazon!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The writing duo of Elle Christensen and Rochelle Paige team up under the Fiona Davenport pen name to bring you sexy, insta-love stories filled with alpha males. If you want a quick & dirty read with a guaranteed happily ever after, then give Fiona Davenport a try!

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