

His Mate

Author not credited

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Contents

Chapter 1	5
Chapter 2	7
Chapter 3	11
Chapter 4	13
Chapter 5	15
Chapter 6	17
Chapter 7	21
Chapter 8	26
Chapter 9	33
Chapter 10	37
Chapter 11	41
Chapter 12	46
Chapter 13.	54
Chapter 14	58
Chapter 15	63
Chapter 16	73
Chapter 17	78
Chapter 18	86
Chapter 19	90
Chapter 20	97
Chapter 21	105

Chapter 22	112
Chapter 23	119
Chapter 24	128
Chapter 25	132
Chapter 26	135
Chapter 27	144
Chapter 28	153
Chapter 29	160
Epilogue	163

About this edition

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Chapter 1

Slamming my hand onto my alarm for about the sixth time this morning, I finally lifted my body off of my extremely comfy bed. It seemed dramatic, but I felt like I was losing a friend when my skin was no longer touching the soft sheets.

Unfortunately, It was the first day back at school and being a senior, I still didn't think I could ever get used to getting up at six thirty in the morning. I felt genuine pain when I would hear my alarm.

Seeing as the word 'snooze' was hit one too many times, it was now twenty minutes past seven, which didn't give me much time to get ready.

"Gabby, James gets here in twenty minutes, so get up!" Kylie shouted harshly as she pushed the door open to my room. I smiled sarcastically at her before getting to my feet and walking to the bathroom.

Kylie was my fifteen-year-old sister, and she annoyed me more than most things in life. As a child, I was thrilled at the prospect of a new little sister. That was until I heard the first ear-splitting scream from the cot in the hospital room.

Ever since then, its all been downhill.

However, on odd occasions, she can be kind to me, but it was very rare and happened maybe once every year. "I know," I huffed out as I locked the bathroom door and stepped into the shower.

As soon as the warm water hit my head, I was automatically relaxed again. If I had a choice, I would spend my days alternating between my bed and the shower.

Despite not having long until our lift was here, I took a longer shower than necessary, making sure I washed my hair and body, whilst also trying to fully wake myself up. However, it was easier said than done.

As soon as I climbed out, I dried myself and picked out some blue jeans and a white t-shirt to go with them. My wardrobe wasn't exactly very interesting, but it was filled with my comfiest clothes, and that's all I needed.

Dragging a towel through my hair, I left it natural, not having enough time to do anything remotely nice with it. My hair was a dark brown colour and fell comfortably below my chest, and like most people in my family, it was thick and wavy, with some curls falling at odd places.

I applied a small amount of make up and put the necessary books into my school bag.

Surprisingly the shower, the hair, the make up and books only took fifteen minutes, leaving me time to eat breakfast. "Breakfast is ready!" As if on cue, my mother called us from the bottom of the stairs.

Running down to the kitchen, I sat down on one of the kitchen seats and threw on a denim jacket hanging off the back of it. "You excited to start work today?" I asked mom, smelling pure heaven when she placed a plate of pancakes in front of us.

"Of course," she smiled with pearly white teeth and began digging into the pancakes in front of her, "I checked out the hospital the other day and I love it," I smiled back at her, seeing her happy made me happy and that's all that mattered to me.

Chapter 2

As soon as I entered the science lab, my nose was immediately hit with the smell of Bunsen burners and chemicals, unfamiliar to my nostrils. Flora was sat in our usual seats at the back of the class. Her blonde hair was easily spotted from where I was standing.

However, when I walked over to the seat, I was not met with her usual warm welcome since her eyes were glued to her phone screen, scrolling through a Facebook page. "Since when do you use Facebook?" I asked, knowing that I had only seen the app being opened on my mom's phone.

I used it only to speak to family members, and to be notified when it was someone's birthday, which I could never seem to remember.

"It was my last resort to find Caleb," before I could respond, she spoke again, "did you know that he doesn't have Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat?" she emphasised like it was the end of the world.

I stared at her for a while before I could conjure up a response, "Who is Caleb?" I asked, the name being the only thing on my mind after her rant.

As a reply, she thrust her phone into my face to show me a profile picture of a face I already didn't want to be familiar with. Even though he had a straight face in the photo as he stood with some other people, I could sense his smirk already.

"From this, I have learnt that he is a Capricorn, he has a mom, a step-dad, an older brother and a younger sister." She said without letting out a breath. Before I could even be impressed with how much she had found out, she carried on.

"His older brother lives in Europe somewhere and his little sister lives with him." She finally said, keeping her eyes firmly locked on his Facebook page like a possessed stalker. In the photo, the boy stood beside the young girl I assumed to be his sister, but I didn't see any sign of an older brother.

I furrowed my eyebrows at her, "how do you know he has an older brother?"

"Oh, I learnt that from everyone else." She seemed pretty proud with her findings as she locked her phone and threw it in her back pocket after seeing Mr Davies walk into the room.

Despite the fact that it was Chemistry, one of the most boring classes on my timetable, Mr Davies was the only teacher to make a tedious subject sound almost, fun.

However, the room suddenly fell silent, like it did in the halls. The boy, now known to me as Caleb, followed it. He was circling his wrists with his hands, rubbing the area that appeared red underneath his fingers.

"Oh my god," I heard Flora whisper slowly from beside me, but I wasn't listening to her. Instead, I was looking at the boy again. His eyes caught mine for the second time before a stupidly familiar smirk plastered onto his face again.

"Caleb Andrews is it?" The boy nodded hesitantly at Mr Davies, ignoring the worshipping eyes of everyone sitting around the class. "Welcome, take a seat," Mr Davies said to him, scanning the room before finally pinpointing the seat next to me.

Mr Davies' smile lifted as he looked straight over to me, "Gabriella Hart has a spare seat, you can sit there for now," the teacher said before going back to write on the board.

I threw my head into my arms as I felt the glares of jealous girls looking my way. If they wanted to sit here, I would gratefully give up the seat to anyone. He slowly walked over, keeping his eyes locked with mine. I struggled to tear my eyes away from his glare. Annoyingly, he scraped the chair out; making a noise that would cause anyone to shudder.

Much to my discomfort, he slumped down in the seat next to me after throwing his bag to the floor. "Isn't Gabriella a name for someone in high school musical?" I bit my tongue at his first remark towards me; I could already tell we weren't going to get along.

Instead of replying, which I so desperately wanted to do, I kept my words trapped and stared ahead.

For the remainder of class, he had attempted to get to me in some way shape or form, without even knowing me. At one point, I was tempted to grab something from a shelf and throw it into his face, whatever it may be.

After many attempts at ignoring him, the heavenly sound bell eventually rang and I dashed out of the room, forgetting about Flora. I waited outside for about five minutes after everyone had exited the room.

Where the hell was she? After a lack of patience, I looked in to see an excited Flora talking to him. My eyes rolled automatically as I looked over at their interactions.

From what I could gather, he looked a little bored, but was able to mask the expression with a smile. It angered me that it had hardly been one day and Flora was already throwing herself at him.

Its not like I didn't want it for her, but I already had a bad feeling about him, despite him only sitting next to me once. Instead of waiting for her, I made my way to my next class. I had a late card now because of her.

And him. All of the classes up until lunch went by fast, thankfully. Soon enough, my ears were graced with the sweet sound of the lunch bell. It was hardly a great sound, but the meaning behind it was enough to make me jump out of my seat and run to the cafeteria.

As I walked in, James and Flora were sitting on our usual table in the corner of the room, looking like they were playfully arguing about something. I smiled happily at seeing them before I walked over and sat down.

I pulled out a pot of pasta that I had made the night before. Every day I would thank myself for making something from home, since all the cafeteria food seemed to give off an abhorrent smell, almost making me gag.

"How were your first classes?" James asked the both of us as he threw an arm around my shoulders, giving Flora her title of third wheel. I don't think she ever minded though.

"They were-" "Caleb was in all of mine so they were great," Flora interrupted, smiling happily. I fake smiled back, knowing that the boy she was so passionate about was definitely trouble.

As if on cue, he waltzed into the room, only holding onto a water bottle and striding straight towards where we were sitting. Many people still stared up at him. Obviously the hype of the 'new boy' had yet to die down.

Why was he walking towards our table? As he reached us, he smirked ever so slightly and leaned down to whisper something into her ear. After he finished, he stood up from a tomato red Flora and walked back out of the cafeteria, still relishing in the attention he was getting. What a jerk. • • •

"Wow, it smells nice, what are you cooking?" my mom hardly ever cooked, so this was all new to me. "I'm cooking for seven actually." I nodded in a confused manner as she looked up at me. She gave a small laugh before continuing to cook, "I bumped into an old friend today," she told me whilst whisking a bowl and stirring a different pot at the same time.

"So, how does one person make four?" I asked, hoping that she got her numbers wrong and she had only invited the friend and not the whole family.

"She's coming with her husband, son and daughter." I nodded slowly and backed out of the kitchen. After a long day, the last thing I wanted to do was to socialise with people I didn't know.

"They will be here at seven so get dressed," she called as I began to walk up the stairs to my room, "the son is your age, and the daughter is Kylie's, so you'll have someone to talk to," she cooed as I threw my head down to the floor. Great.

I changed into some plain black jeans and a white off the shoulder top. It wasn't fancy, but it probably wasn't something I would wear everyday. Comfort came above everything when it came to picking my clothes.

As soon as it reached seven, the doorbell rang loudly through the house. I scrunched my eyes together before plucking up the courage to walk downstairs and greet whoever was at the door. Kylie walked ahead of me, smirking innocently but with a hint of smugness.

Where she had a girl to talk to, I was left to converse with a boy that probably went to my school. Therefore, we would probably have to get past the awkward notions about which classes we were in. When I walked downstairs, the door was already open, revealing a tall woman and her husband. They both wore comforting smiles and had food already held in their arms. The girl next to them was pretty.

She had beautifully long blonde hair that fell just above her elbows and was already smiling when the door was opened. However, when my eyes moved upwards towards the next person, bile threatened to creep up my throat, and I suddenly wasn't hungry anymore.

"Shit," I wasn't able to stop myself from cursing as I stared up at the piercing eyes, and the knowing smirk of Caleb Andrews.

Chapter 3

I slapped my hand up to my mouth as mom gave me a deathly glare. However, the woman at the door shrugged it off and smiled even wider, seeing it as humorous.

"I'm Katherine, and this is Clara and Caleb," she said, talking to Kylie and I as she signalled to her two children. "And this is my husband Mike."

Kylie and I awkwardly smiled at the family, not knowing what to do next. Although, Katherine did seem genuinely nice, and only now was I regretting that the first word to come out of my mouth to her was a curse word.

"Welcome everyone," Mom replied, wiping her hands on her turquoise coloured apron. "Why don't you two show our guests around," she signalled to us, to which I fake smiled and looked over at an obviously smirking Caleb.

"And you and Mike can help me in the kitchen," my mom finished before pulling the two along with her to where the kitchen was. 'Be nice' my mother mouthed as I looked over at Kylie and Clara who had already began talking.

I nodded hesitantly as Kylie led Clara into the living room, leaving only Caleb and I in the hallway. Despite looking into his eyes earlier, I kept my eyes trained on the floor, not wanting to look at him again. I was frozen in place, not wanting to say the first thing to him, not wanting to talk to him at all.

"Nice to see you again," His voice finally rang in my ears. Of all people, why was it him that was here? It may seem like I was judging too quickly, but I had a bad feeling about him, and I trusted my gut more than I trusted him.

Instead of continuing to grace him with my annoyance, I followed where Kylie and Clara had gone and sat down on a sofa beside them. They were too preoccupied with their phones to notice me sitting down.

However, as I did, the weight next to me plummeted, and Caleb was sitting comfortably beside me with his stupid smirk still playing at his lips. Did he not have any other facial expression?

"Who you texting?" He asked, leaning over to look at my phone. I pulled it away from him, not wanting him to know that I was furiously typing a long text to Flora about how she should stay away from him.

"Can you leave me alone?" Faking politeness, I smiled back to my phone as I was about to finish the text, but the phone was snatched out of my hand before I could press send.

"You're going to have to talk to me because otherwise, your mom loses one of her dear friends," I sighed. Out all things to threaten me with, he had to choose that one. Even though, I wasn't sure how he would do it, I knew he probably would, and I didn't want to find out how.

"Fine, what do you want to talk about," I asked with irritation laced within my voice. He did me a once over, having the cheek to look me up and down before his eyes settled on mine again.

He grinned like a child, "I want to know more about Flora King," I tensed upon hearing her name from his mouth. No way would I be letting him get a hold of Flora. The same unsettling feeling was still present in my gut when I looked at him.

Chapter 4

The car soon pulled up beside a huge, mansion-like house with modernised windows plastered around the exterior of the building. It was pretty obvious that this house belonged to a family that had a lot of money. I swallowed deeply of the thought of living here.

Obviously I was incredibly grateful, but with the thought of my father on the back of my mind, and that fact I would be living with Caleb, I wasn't sure I was going to enjoy myself here.

Mom's slight sniffing brought me back to reality as we walked to the front door and knocked lightly, not wanting to wake the entire family.

The door soon opened to reveal Katherine, wearing some pyjamas with a sad and empathetic smile spread across her face. "Come in," she whispered as she hugged my mom tightly. Mom hugged her just as tight as Kylie and I stood behind her.

"I'll look after them, don't worry."

"Thank you so much Katherine," My mom felt reassured as she rubbed at her already puffy eyes. Katherine left us alone for a second so that we could say goodbye.

"Are you sure you're alright to be driving mom?" I questioned as she didn't look fit enough to do so. She smiled half-heartedly and held both Kylie and I's faces in her palms.

"I'm getting a taxi from the house, don't worry." She assured me.

"I'll be back in a few weeks, I love you both," she brought me and Kylie into a hug as a small tear escaped my eye, feeling her kiss the top of mine and Kylie's heads. I genuinely felt like I had literally been thrown into this mess at one hundred miles per hour.

Soon after mom left, Katherine led Kylie and I upstairs.

"Kylie, you'll be rooming with Clara," she pointed to a room where the light was turned on, meaning that Clara was probably awake to greet her, "and Gabriella, your room is down the hall, to the left," I smiled as a thank you.

At this point, I was too tired to care about where I was sleeping, I just needed to hit my head onto a pillow and drift into unconsciousness.

"Thank you," I said to her as I walked into the dark room. Luckily, I was able to find the bed and climb into it. Like I'd thought, my head hit the pillow and I was gone. • • •

Before I could even open my eyes and stretch out to the bright light suddenly shining through a window, I felt a large pillow come crashing down on my face, not being as soft as it should've been. "Ouch!" I shouted as I woke up, despite it not hurting that much.

Unfortunately, when I opened my eyes, it was no longer the pillow, but it was Caleb glaring down at me from above. "What are you doing in my room?" I shouted once again as I tried to cover up my indecency.

Of course, this was the time I had chosen to wear a small shirt and some extremely short shorts to bed. "Mom told me to wake you up," he said as I stared up at him, not knowing what I should reply, "so wake up," he shouted back, making me more annoyed than before.

Chapter 5

My mind automatically perked up when I heard the doorbell ring. I had been waiting patiently for Flora and James to get here since Flora was going to help me with my hair and make up. Plus, she was also bringing me an outfit to wear.

I sprinted downstairs to the door, wanting to get it before anyone else could. Then again, Clara and Kylie had the radio on loud enough in the kitchen that I would be surprised if they even heard it. And I couldn't imagine Caleb bothering to come and get it.

"Hey!" I said, opening the door to James and Flora and leading them inside. They both stood in awe at the house, like I did when I first saw it. "This place is huge," Flora said to me, admiring the huge interior of the mansion-like house.

I led Flora and James upstairs and into the room I was staying in. I didn't want to have to interact with Caleb until it came to actually leaving for the party.

However, that wasn't the case when I saw Caleb's long and muscular body sprawled out across my bed, looking like he had been there the whole time. He was reading something on his phone as he called out to my presence in the room.

"Is your friend and halfwit boyfriend here yet?" He asked, not realising that they were right behind me when we walked through the door. I coughed loudly as he turned and smirked to see the three of us.

"Thanks," James said sarcastically, sitting on the bed, but with a good distance between the two of them. After a long silence, Flora finally spoke up to avoid awkwardness.

As soon as possible, Flora began on my make up. I kept stealing glances at James and Caleb, but they had yet to rip each other's heads off with their natural hatred towards each other. They both stared intently at their phones as they waited for us to finish.

I straightened my hair shortly after Flora finished my make up, with Flora having done her hair earlier. I smiled at myself in the mirror, admiring the painted colours on my eyelids, which I could never master.

Flora finally finished and shoved James and Caleb into the next room for us to get changed. "They are very likely to kill each other, you do know that?" I asked Flora as she laughed.

"That's fine, as long as they don't get blood anywhere," she replied before throwing two dresses onto the bed. One was black and one was red, but they both had a similar style.

"Choose one," Flora said to me, admiring the beautiful dresses, "I prefer the red one, but it's your choice," she said quickly, signalling which dress she wanted to wear so I didn't have much choice in the matter.

"I'll wear the black one then," she jumped up and down as I laughed and picked up the dress. It was tight fitting and crossed over at the front, meaning that cleavage would have to be out, whether I liked it or not.

"I knew you'd prefer this one." I pulled the dress on and looked at myself in the mirror. Luckily, Flora and I were similar sizes, with her being slightly skinner, meaning that it was even tighter than I had initially thought. However, I couldn't deny that I liked how it looked. I slipped on some black heels she had brought with her, knowing that I would still probably look like a monkey on a tightrope trying to walk.

Chapter 6

Flora King

Looking around the room, it had all fell silent as this man shouted at Caleb. Nobody seemed to know what was happening, but we all knew it would not end pretty. Then suddenly, his hand thrust into Caleb's face.

James tensed beside me as his body language threatened to help separate what was about to happen, but he quickly retreated and stayed standing next to me. We both looked over at Gabby who stood with a terrified face.

I'm sure James wouldn't be happy about how scared Gabby was looking for Caleb. But, I knew there was something about him. It was what drew me to him in the first place. And I could tell the same exact thing was happening to Gabby.

As soon as the fight started, it had quickly finished, and Caleb was marching back to the kitchen, with other man walking straight out the door. James tensed once again when Gabby followed suit. However, instead of looking to Gabby, he looked back to me, his expression unrecognisable.

However, what made him finally move was Gabby holding onto Caleb as she helped him out the door. James began to stalk towards them, with anger in his eyes, but I held him back, not wanting him to regret anything he did.

She hesitantly looked back at him before continuing to help Caleb. Anger seeped through me as I watched Gabby care more for Caleb than she did for James. James didn't deserve her.

Even I saw the slight hesitation from Gabby before she drank in the 'never have I ever game'. I watched James looking confused and angry before she finally pulled the drink to her lips.

Gabriella was my best friend, and she always has. But, being her best friend meant that I knew her inside and out. I knew when she liked someone, and I knew when she was lying. I would see it everyday with James. He loved her way more than she ever could.

I remember the exact day Gabby had come to school the day after her and James had, you know.

She was so happy, and would talk about how kind and caring he was, and how she was glad she had waited for the right person, like I was doing.

I looked over to James who had guilt and anger spread across his face, clenching his hands together and breathing heavily. I think when I grabbed onto James; it was because I didn't want him to run after Caleb. But, it may have also been that I didn't want him to run after Gabby.

It was selfish, I know. I wanted James to myself whilst his girlfriend chased after a boy she hardly knew.

"Caleb!" James shouted out, even though he knew they were long gone and wouldn't hear his voice. He glared resentfully at the open door where Caleb and Gabby had just walked out of.

"James, you're drunk," I pulled his body round to face mine. He looked defeated, like he had done all he could, and it just wasn't enough. Gabby hadn't really done anything but helped Caleb home, but it was enough to hurt James.

He stared down at me, contemplating something in his head. He kept looking between the door and me, like a tennis match. "Don't go after them," I continued, "it's not worth it." I'd hoped that he would leave them, go back to the kitchen and maybe drink even more.

But I wouldn't mind. For him, I would help him home; I would make sure that he didn't think about her. James and I were also best friends, but like Gabby, the way I felt about him as a friend soon shifted into something else. But, unlike her, I couldn't act upon it.

Before I could do anything about my situation, Gabby was telling me all about their love life and I struggled not to rip my hair out as she told him.

Before I could say anything else to him, I felt his cold, strong hands on my face, using his force to pull my head towards his. I didn't resist his pulling. I knew what he was going to do, but I did nothing to stop it. Before regret could travel through my mind, he had already connected his lips with mine.

When people say fireworks happen, they really mean fireworks.

All thoughts that I previously had about Gabby had disappeared, leaving me only to think about that way James' lips were moving against mine. Feeling like I was floating, I wrapped my hands in his soft hair and I didn't care if anyone saw us.

Although I knew this was wrong, every bone in my body was telling me that it was right. My head, my heart, my mind, everything. We kissed for longer than I had ever seen him kiss Gabby, I felt like he had been craving this for two years, and it was finally happening.

We finally pulled away for a breath. We did nothing but stare at each other, not knowing what to do next.

Thinking that he was going to reject me, push me off and tell me that 'this was all a mistake', my heart raced as he softly grabbed hold of my hand and led me away from the house. I knew where we were going, but I didn't want to give myself hope.

My mind was mixed between the emotions I was feeling for James, and how much I knew this would hurt Gabby. I wasn't sure if it was the alcohol, or something I had always hoped James had felt for me, but I wanted this.

The only excuse I had for my behaviour was that she stole him from me; I deserved this just as much as she ever did.

We soon arrived at his house, which I had become too familiar with. I knew his and Gabby's houses like they were my own. Luckily, when it came to finding the bedroom, it wasn't too difficult.

He lifted me up so my legs were wrapped around his muscular torso, and then he kissed me again, bringing me back to the reality that this wasn't a dream and I was getting what I had wanted for as long as I could remember.

His lips were soft as they glided across mine; closely resembling every dream I've ever had about James and I. My hands were still wrapped up in James' hair as he lowered me softly onto the bed. I wanted this so badly, it hurt.

I wanted my first time to be with him. Even if it wasn't the right time, with consequences we could hardly think about at this moment. Even if he didn't love me back, I felt like he did, underneath.

He took his shirt off, revealing his muscular chest, which I rested my hands on as he kissed me more, holding himself up with his hands by my head. This was perfect. Gabby was right, he was careful and soft.

I pulled the rest of his clothes off whilst he helped pull off mine. Never did I ever think that this would happen, and I had never been happier that it had.

This would be the best mistake I had ever made.

• • •

My eyes were stuck shut, not wanted to reveal them to the burning light of the sun through the window. Slowly, they unstuck and my eyes adjusted to the light, and to where I was. I recognised the room straight away, and the bed I was sleeping in.

James' room.

I turned my head to see James laying next to me. My heart stopped as I stared at the sight of James' naked chest. His arms were sprawled out, revealing his muscular biceps. If I weren't in such a compromising position, I would've swooned at how he looked.

That's when I realised what had happened. The night before all flooded my mind at once, and I was instantly reminded of what we did together. "Oh my god," I shouted out, pulling my naked body out of the sheets, only to cover up quickly with my red dress on the floor.

His eyes shot open as he stared at his surroundings before his eyes landed on me. "Fuck," he mimicked my tone and threw his head into his hands. I wasn't too sure if he was feeling the alcohol, or the regret of last night.

Then the most important name entered both our minds, "Gabby!" We both shouted out at the same time. "What the hell have we done?" I said with my eyes wide and my body slightly hurting from what I initially thought would be a painless experience.

"She doesn't have to know Flora," he suddenly reassured, seeming to be more regretful than I had wanted him to be, "this never happened." I felt a familiar stab to my chest at what he had just said. It reminded me of the days that Gabby would come into school with James. My heart would be aching every single time.

Even if I don't remember much, it was my first time, and it was special. To me.

I quickly nodded, looking around for one necessity that I needed to wear out of the house, other than my dress. I was holding in the tears that were heavily present in my eyes, not wanting them to escape until I was out of the house.

"Where's my bra?" I almost shouted as I searched relentlessly for it. He looked around the bed, hoping that I could find it and leave. "I don't know. Where did you leave it?" He asked, still attempting to search.

"James, we were drunk and we had sex, I don't remember where my fucking bra is!" I shouted back. The anger I had about what I had done, and James' reaction was finally coming to the surface. Stray tears escaped my eyes before I quickly wiped them away, hoping that James hadn't seen them.

Instead of searching, I pulled my dress on and left. I didn't say another word to him as tears finally rolled down my cheeks. I grabbed my purse from next to the door where I didn't remember leaving it, and walked out, holding my arms over my chest.

This was definitely not the way I wanted my first time to be. I wanted it with him, but not like this. More tears rolled down my cheeks as I walked home, regretting everything I had done.

Chapter 7

Gabriella Hart

Slowly, my eyes opened to see a sleeping Caleb. Even though I knew what I was doing last night, I still felt like I had cheated on James. I had laid in bed with another boy, whom I had hardly known for a week. Plus, his arms were still wrapped tightly around my torso.

He didn't actually look as intimidating when he was sleeping compared to when he was awake, despite the bruise from the punch, still surrounding his left eye. It looked pretty painful, but I couldn't help but admire his courage to stand up for himself. His eyes fluttered open to see me creepily staring back at him.

"I feel like shit," Caleb said instead of pushing me out of the bed, which I was very much prepared to do. I could only imagine what Katherine and Mike would say if they'd realised that Caleb and I had slept in the same bed together.

I huffed out in annoyance, mainly with myself for what I had done. "Well you're going to just have to drink water and stay in bed," if it wasn't awkward enough already, after I'd said that, I tried to scoot away off of the bed, but instead I was met with my ass on the floor.

Instead of an 'are you okay?' or 'do you need help?' from Caleb, all I received was one of his stupid remarks. "Have a nice fall?" Caleb asked sarcastically as I stood up and marched out of his room to the bathroom, I needed a shower to rub my body down and to be clean from the party last night, and from Caleb's bed and arms.

Sadly, I can't clean my memory from mine and James' argument last night. If it wasn't bad enough that I slept in the same bed as Caleb, I still had James to worry about, and I wasn't entirely prepared to tell him about it.

There was no school today as we had started school on Thursday and finished the week yesterday, so today I was totally free to just laze around and stay as far away from Caleb as I could get. I jumped out of the shower and changed into some comfy clothes, which consisted of some black leggings and a big blue jumper that had belonged to James, but I'd forgotten to give it back.

"Don't you look nice," Caleb said smugly at the door of the bathroom, as he popped two aspirin into his mouth then gulped it down with some water. I knew he could tell it was James' since it was incredibly oversized, and I wouldn't buy myself one like this.

"Move, I need to dry my hair," I said, trying to shove him out of the doorway but it no avail, he didn't move. Instead, he smirked evilly and gave me a once over. "Make me," he slowly moved closer to me, trapping me against the bathroom sink.

Suddenly, I did something that I never thought I would do to a boy. It was mainly based on instinct and the anger that I was currently holding in about him. I kneed him where I knew it would hurt.

You've probably guessed where.

"Bitch!" he shouted out as he crumbled to the floor in agony. As quick as he fell, I scrambled around his hunched body and sprinted into my room, where I would hopefully stay for the whole weekend.

Sighing relief, I looked up suddenly to see Clara and Kylie sitting on my bed, looking extremely mischievous. "Oh my god, what are you doing!" I shouted, holding onto my chest with a heart threatening to burst out of it. "You scared me!"

"Katherine said that we all need to do something together," Kylie said like a child that was finally getting her way, "and Clara and I get to pick what we're doing," Clara nodded along with her as they both smiled happily.

"Why?" I sighed as I realised that I couldn't have a lazy day. Plus, I wouldn't be able to stay away from Caleb. I mentally sighed as I thought about his stupid face and the arms that I still felt around my waist. "Let's go to the carnival!" Clara shouted enthusiastically as I threw my head back.

I'd remembered that James and Flora had asked me to come with them to the carnival at lunch yesterday, but I'd said no because of the moving situation, and I really didn't like carnivals. "I am not going to that stupid place," Caleb complained as he limped helplessly into my room after overhearing our conversation.

"We're leaving at five," Kylie told us, not giving us a choice in the matter. Just as I was about to reply, my phone started ringing. Katherine's name popped up on the screen as I stared at it, wondering exactly why she called me instead of Caleb or Clara.

"Hello?"

"Hi Gabriella," she started, "Caleb won't answer his phone," no surprises there, "so I have some chores for all of you today," she said as I heard a piece of paper unscrambling on the other side of the phone. I mentally sighed but attempted not to show it as everyone stayed in the room, waiting to see who had called me.

"Ok, Clara is cleaning the bedrooms," she read off what I assumed to be a list, "Kylie is on the bathrooms, and can you and Caleb do the kitchen?" It's the biggest, so I thought I'd put two people on that," she said to me as I smirked at Kylie having to clean the toilets.

However, before I realised that I would have to spend unwanted time with Caleb, Katherine had already thanked me and hung up the phone.

"What is it?" Clara asked me with a questioning look. Faking a smile, I broke the news to them as quickly as I could. "Clara, you're doing the bedrooms, Kylie, you're doing the bathrooms and, Caleb, you and I are cleaning the kitchen," I told them in one quick breath.

"Gross," Kylie complained before leaving my room with Clara to get started on the chores.

"Come on, cleaning buddy!" Caleb shouted, putting his arm around my shoulder with his limp not as heavily present as it was before. "Too close, buddy," I mimicked his tone before pulling his arm off of me and walking down the stairs, to the kitchen.

"That's not what you said last night," I heard him call back, but I ignored him.

I'd rather be cleaning the toilets.

• • •

There were so many dirty dishes. I didn't realise a person could have this many.

Caleb was on wash duty whilst I was drying. Luckily, he'd volunteered to do it since I didn't exactly want to touch any leftover food that may have remained on any of the plates. "This is disgusting," Caleb screeched as his hand touched a piece of pepperoni from Clara and Kylie's pizza that they had ordered last night.

"You're such a girl," I said laughing as his face scrunched up. I could tell his manhood had been damaged since he sustained a harsh glare into the side of my head. "Oh, I'm the girl?" he shouted as he sprayed me with water from the tap by putting his finger over the opening.

"Hey!" I shouted back as I splashed my hand inside the water he had filled in the sink and threw it at him. He threw himself backwards as water splashed all over his white shirt, soaking it through and revealing his distinctively shaped muscles.

He scowled at me before a knowing and familiar smirk soon painted his face. "You checking me out?" I threw my gaze away before water was splashed all over me again. This time, I couldn't help the small smile that crept onto my face.

We both started laughing as we got into a water fight, with water all over ourselves, and the floor. Although I felt incredibly bad for Katherine about the now soaked floor, I was having too much fun to be serious and begin cleaning it all up.

Suddenly, my foot slipped on some water around my feet, and I went sprawling to the floor. I awaited the impact, but didn't expect two arms to grasp around my upper body and stop me from falling down.

I looked up into the eyes of Caleb as he held me. Instead of pulling him off, I was drawn in, I felt like a doll that couldn't move a muscle. He started to lean in, and for some reason, I didn't lean away, I leaned in too.

His lips hovered over mine, as I didn't pull him away from me. He took my stationary position as permission and slowly, yet surely leaned further in, as if the distance between us could be any smaller.

Then, as much as I hated that I wanted it, he closed the distance between us, and our lips met. He kissed me hungrily and gripped his arms around my waist. His lips were softer than I had ever imagined as we fell in sync and I was suddenly wanting more. I threw my hands into his hair and pulled him closer, as if we weren't already pinned up against each other.

James.

I was cheating on James.

I pulled my lips away and slapped my hand over my mouth, feeling automatic guilt and regret. My head fell to the floor as water rushed around my feet. "Oh my god," I said to myself before turning on my heel and sprinting away from him, back up to my bedroom.

Why was I so stupid?

Why couldn't I just keep my mouth shut?

Literally.

Once I'd reached my room, I closed and locked the door hurriedly. "Shit, shit, shit, shit," I repeated to myself as I slid down the door with my head in my hands. I've cheated on James and he will never forgive me.

The more I thought about it, the more I felt bile creep up my throat. I was a horrible person.

-

Two hours passed, and I was still sitting in the same position with hardened tears against my cheeks. I was extremely thirsty but I couldn't pull up the courage to see Caleb's face. I still couldn't believe I had kissed him. It was the worst thing I could do.

Finally after a long, hard thought, I pulled myself up and changed into a suitable outfit for the carnival, which was just a simple, white off-the-shoulder top and some blue denim shorts. I put on

some shoes and took my hair down from the ponytail which was finally dry from the water fight and the shower I had.

Feeling as guilty as ever, I walked out of my room and down the stairs, hoping to avoid Caleb but of course, knowing my luck, I crashed right into him as he instinctively held onto my upper arms. I threw him off quickly, not wanting to feel his touch, which I so desperately craved earlier.

"Sorry," I said quickly, looking over to see Kylie and Clara waiting for me in the lounge with scowls on their faces. "We said be ready at five, and it's almost half past," Kylie seemed very annoyed. "Sorry," I said again and looked back at Caleb who was looking at me like I'd just thrown up on him.

"James and Flora are going to be here in about five minutes to take us", Caleb said, showing a stern face as he said James' name. I swallowed heavily knowing that I would have to face James and fake like nothing had happened.

James arrived in his parents' car as it could fit us all in. I had been pacing around the room ever since I was told he was coming to pick us all up. We all climbed in as I sat facing the window, hoping that I could keep my head turned and not speak.

However, both James and Flora seemed extremely timid as we greeted them. James' hands were clenched around the steering wheel whilst Flora distracted herself by playing with the hem of her dress.

I stared at them with confusion for a few seconds before I decided to ignore it and let James drive us to the carnival, where I wasn't sure if I could hide what I had done with Caleb.

The guilt was eating me alive.

Chapter 8

The car soon pulled up to various flashing lights, almost blinding me. The carnival was in full swing as we walked towards it, the persistent guilty feeling still in my stomach. There were lots of rides that most people would ride until they were sick.

But the situation between Caleb and I made me feel even more sick, which didn't need a ride at all. "What do you want to go on first?" James asked as he intertwined his fingers with mine. I tensed against his hand before relaxing it again, ensuring that he wouldn't notice.

It all felt wrong.

I felt like an absolute cheater, and it was eating away at my body like a virus. I needed to tell James to get it off my chest, but I didn't have the ability to. Caleb strolled next to us as if nothing had happened, whilst I could hardly breath around him after his lips had been on mine.

I remember the day James' father had died. I couldn't stand to see him so hurt and damaged. It was as if everything in his life had gone, and he didn't want to see another day. In no way am I comparing our situation to him and his fathers, but I just couldn't see him that hurt again.

My head spun sideways as the spinner we were currently on shifted from left to right making puke slide up my throat. I was feeling sick with guilt and this was just an added bonus.

As soon as the ride stopped, I rushed off to the bushes, only to be met with mushed up food on the ground from what I'd eaten earlier. One hand rubbed my back and luckily, it was James, and not Caleb or anyone else of that matter. He handed me some napkins and some water.

"You never throw up from rides?" He asked me, still making me feel bad for kissing Caleb. I could barely look at James without the thought eating me alive. "I was feeling ill earlier anyway," I lied as he nodded hesitantly.

It may not have been a complete lie as I genuinely felt sick with guilt and regret but it's not really an illness, although it felt like one. It feels like the lie is eating me up from the inside and eventually, it's going to want to come out. And I couldn't stop it.

"Let's sit down," James said as he led me over to some benches. I didn't deserve him. He could do so much better than the stupid cheater that I was. I couldn't even blame it on Caleb and claim that he kissed me, because I knew it wouldn't be right. Although he initiated it, I made no effort to stop it.

"We're going on some more rides," Flora shouted back as her, Clara, Caleb and Kylie ran over to a haunted house that looked fun, but my stomach wasn't feeling in the mood to be scared. I'd

probably throw up on a zombie or something. I laughed to myself, receiving a strange look from James.

"James, I need to tell you something," I started, quite anxious for what his reaction was going to be. I knew it wasn't going to be good, but I was hoping that I could reassure him that it meant nothing and clam him before he were to see Caleb again.

"I've been angry with myself all day for knowing and not telling you," his face went pale and he listened to what I was about to say. I wasn't sure why he looked like he knew exactly what I was going to say.

I swallowed hard and looked down, not wanting to see his reaction. "Caleb kissed me." I whispered but he still heard as I looked back up to see his face red with anger and he looked like he was about to burst.

"That asshole," he shouted, getting up and marching towards the haunted house. I didn't realise how hard I had been gripping the bench until I lifted my hands to see a few splinter dug into my hands. But, the physical pain couldn't match the emotional pain I was seeing in James' face.

My stomach sunk again as he went on a rampage to find Caleb. He waited impatiently outside the haunted house with me hiding behind him like I didn't know what was coming.

"It was a mistake James, it didn't mean anything!" I shouted, holding onto his arm but he quickly shoved me off, nearly sending me sprawling to the ground. I was a delicate girl, I didn't weigh much so he does realise that when he shoves me off him, I could've flown away for all he knows.

Now is not the time to laugh to myself.

"Hey!" James shouted as Caleb stormed out of the haunted house, laughing at what I assume to be everyone else's scared reactions. "What do you wan-" He nearly said before another hand, for the second time, came crashing towards his face. And again, it was the left eye.

Caleb had better reflexes than I expected because he was back up on his feet, and he punched James back, stumbling back into me, pushing me over, and hitting my head on something. Clara, Kylie and Flora and a few other people were gasping as it all took place.

"Gabby!" One of the boys shouted. I didn't care who it was. I ran off in the opposite direction. Tears stung my eyes and ran down my cheeks. Instead of waiting by the car, I started walking. The walk was only ten minutes so I crossed my arms over my body, feeling the cold wind around my arms.

Suddenly, droplets formed on my dress.

I thought it was my tears until I was sadly mistaken when rain fell heavily on my head and clothes. That's when I started running. I'm not a runner so my legs ached with agony after the first five minutes.

• • •

I slammed the door shut behind me and took off all my wet clothes when I reached my bedroom, more out of anger than anything else. My head still ached from where I had hit it when I changed into some warm clothes.

About fifteen minutes after I'd arrived to the house, I was sitting comfortably in front of the television with a bag of frozen peas held against the back of my head. The front door opened then closed again as I awaited who would walk through.

"Where are Kylie and Clara?" I asked as I realised it was only Caleb.

"They stayed at the carnival," he told me, "they'll walk back a bit later." He pulled off his coat and hood, revealing an even bigger bruise forming with the other one on his left eye. Some blood had also fallen from his head.

"Oh my god, you're bleeding," I shouted out as I ran to where he was in the kitchen, "here, sit down!" He sat in the kitchen seat and I pulled out a first aid kit I frantically looked for until Caleb told me where it was, looking bored.

I held the pack of peas from my head to his face as he dabbed his head with a tissue to stop the blood. "You need to stop getting punched," I said, laughing as he lightly smiled. The first genuine smile I'd seen.

"Well, this one is kind of your fault since you kissed me," he returned back to his smirk, "and told him about it without warning me," my face was in shock at his reply.

"I did not kiss you! You kissed me!" I shouted back.

"Don't give me that bullshit, you kissed me and you know it."

"No I didn't!" I tried to argue back.

"We need to stop arguing," I said quickly, trying to calm him down as he was getting angrier with me.

"Well then stop being a little bitch that can't get her own fucking way all the time," he spat out at me, almost making tears fall once again from my eyes. I really needed to stop crying, it was wearing me out.

With that, he stormed out of the house and slammed the door behind him, making me wince as he left. Resting my head in my hands, I sat at the kitchen table where he had just once sat.

Why was my life so screwed up over a couple of days from moving in with him?

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Why was my life so screwed up over a couple of days from moving in with him?

Chapter 9

My head was still firmly rested in my hands when someone knocked pretty hard and distinctively on the front door. My heart started thumping.

What if it was Caleb and he was back to shout at me? But what if it was James coming to shout at me as well? Either way I was in a bad situation.

Slowly, I tip toed over to the door, hoping that whoever it was, would leave before I got there. But, just my luck, the dark shadowy figure was still standing outside the door but knocked again, this time heavier. Meaning that they probably weren't leaving.

I opened the door, frightened for my life. Only to see the same dark figure that punched Caleb at the party the other day. I was wrong. This situation was much worse than seeing Caleb or James.

"Ah, you must be-," The man said, waiting for my reply, I didn't want to reply but I was too scared of what would happen if I didn't. "Gabriella" I shouted quickly, sounding like a scared little girl, which I was.

"So you're the girl Caleb had his eyes on at the party," I gulped back immediately, almost swallowing my own tongue and all the saliva that remained in my mouth. Then again, I'd rather do that than be here with this man.

"Who are you?" my voice squeaked out, barely recognisable as my own.

"I'm Jake Andrews," His last name was the same as Caleb's, that could only mean that he's- "I'm his older brother," he finished for me, sending a shiver through my body. Although I was terrified and wanting to get away, there was still a burning question in my mind.

Why was he here and why was he talking to me?

"Caleb hasn't told you about me has he?" I shook my head, trying to not show that I was practically shaking inside. Flora had mentioned that he had an older brother at school when she learnt so much about him, but Caleb or his family had never mentioned another sibling.

"Looks like your boyfriend has been hiding some things from you, hasn't he?" He whispered evilly, a small, yet horrible smile had slowly crept onto his face as he spoke. "He's not my boyfriend" I argued back, angrier as I was remembering the argument I had just had with Caleb just a little more than ten minutes ago.

"Well, let me tell you a few things about Caleb," he started, letting himself through the door "here, sit down." He led me over to the kitchen table where I obeyed his orders and sat down out of a fear that was still running through me.

By now, my teeth were chattering and I was so scared of what he would do to me. If he could punch his own brother, god knows what he could do to someone he's only just met.

"Your boyfriend used to get into a lot of fights," he began speaking once I was sat down, "well, he probably still does, for all I know." I nodded hesitantly, continuing to listen to what this man had to say.

"He is not my boyfriend!" I shouted back angrier again.

"Well, your friend was a fighter," nothing he was saying really surprised me, "and I was his-" he stopped and searched for what he was going to say next, "how do you call it? Manager," confusion was plastered across my face since I wasn't quite sure why he was telling me this, but he carried on anyway, ignoring the looks he was receiving from me.

"I used to help him," he paused and stared around the house like it was the first time he had ever seen it. I twiddled with my hands before looking up at a man who possessed familiar features to Caleb. "Help him do what?"

"Fight." I stared widely before letting him continue with what he was saying. Why he was telling me of all people, I was yet to find out. "But one day, he came to me, out of the blue, telling me that he had-" he paused again.

The fact that he was taking a while to tell me was frustrating me to no end.

"He had killed someone fighting." My breathing hitched in my throat as he spoke. Sweat erupted onto my hands with my heart racing as fast as it could. I swallowed back and stared down at the ground.

My whole body felt weak.

Caleb had killed someone.

I could hardly get the words out in my mind. "Is that why he went to-?" I asked but I couldn't get the words out. The reason Caleb was in juvenile prison was because he murdered someone, not just because he was a troubled kid.

"No," he started speaking again, "that was for stealing a motorbike, it's not about that, it's the fact that I think he's dangerous." I listened closely to his words, and he sounded more genuine than I had ever heard Caleb be, "and I'm scared for me and my wife, Annabelle," the name sounded familiar in my head, and that was because he mentioned it when he punched Caleb at the party.

"And so why were you at the party?" I asked him, gulping again. The words 'Caleb killed someone' were still stuck in the back of my mind that I wasn't sure what questions I should be asking this man.

I was in denial.

He sighed heavily. "Caleb has been driving past my house often, and we didn't know what to think, I just wanted him to stay away from us, I don't want him around her," his face showed complete fear and hopelessness, something I had seen in my mother when she had told me about my father.

"Just tell him to stay away from us!" he shouted as he stormed out and slammed the door behind him, leaving me in complete shock. I was still processing whatever it was that Jake had just told me.

The lump in my throat was bigger than ever and I felt like I couldn't breathe. Running to the tap, I poured a glass of water and drank the whole thing without stopping, making me feel sick at the end of it.

I felt a hole in my stomach and I didn't even want to look at Caleb right now. I didn't even know if what Jake was telling me was the truth. All I knew was that his face showed only fear, and someone wouldn't just show that kind of fear if they weren't that scared of someone or something.

Suddenly, once again, the door opened, this time without a knock. "Who is it?" I shouted out as I wrapped a hand around a knife, not pulling it out of its place. I was so frightened that Jake would be back.

Instead, my heart rate went back to its normal state when Clara and Kylie walked through the door. I breathed a sigh of relief as I let go of the knife and steadied myself by sitting down again. "Hey, Gabby, are you okay? We saw you fall earlier?" Clara asked softly, she was so much more different than her brothers.

"Not really, I'm fine about the falling, but your brother was here earlier," I tried to question but instead, was greeted by her questioning face. I guess she couldn't exactly know which brother I was talking about

"Um, Caleb texted me earlier, he said he'll be back later," she said as if I'd gone mad. Although, I felt like I had after the conversation I had recently had with her other brother. "No, Jake was here," I finished quietly but I knew I wasn't mad when Clara went silent and swallowed heavily

"Um, ask Caleb?" she told me hesitantly as her and Kylie walked up the stairs, leaving me to wonder why she acted so weird when I mentioned Jake.

• • •

Caleb arrived home around two hours later and I was already tucked up in bed when he entered my room. Hoping he was going to apologise for arguing with me, he didn't. He sat on my bed and put his hand on my waist.

He did realise that I still had a boyfriend right?

I didn't want to turn around because I didn't want to see his face and feel scared of him. That's not something I wanted. I turned around quickly, ignoring his pleading stare. "Clara told me who came by earlier." I sat up as he moved closer.

"Whatever he's told you is a lie."

Chapter 10

Caleb looked genuinely sincere and truthful; I had no clue what to believe. Enough had happened tonight and I still hadn't completely recovered from being scared out of my mind.

"I will tell you the whole truth if you promise to stay here and not think anything different of me," I nodded quickly. I was lying to him, if it were to be true; it would change my view of him completely.

I still wasn't sure what I was doing. I had known this boy for barely a week, and he had already bulldozed through my friendships, my relationship, my mind, and my life.

"Look, I know Jake told you that I killed someone and how I fought, but it's not completely true," I listened closely trying not to move so he would keep talking. I still wasn't sure why both brothers were suddenly confiding in a girl they had just met.

"I told him I killed someone, I didn't want him with me anymore," I wasn't sure this was a typical brotherly relationship; not a lot of brothers also act as a manager to help another fight. "He used to beat me up to make me stronger," he continued, obviously becoming more comfortable telling me.

I wasn't sure I had ever seen this side to Caleb. It involved no smirking or hidden meanings. He was being absolutely open. "I hid from my him half my life," I felt genuinely sorry for him.

"What's the thing about Annabelle?" I asked, remaining delicate and not wanting to anger him even more since just her name alone was enough to make him flinch.

"She and I were together for a few weeks," he told me, "until Jake came into the picture," I felt a strange feeling in my chest when he told me about him and his brothers fiancé being together before, "I guess he's just a jealous brother and she's an angry ex girlfriend."

"I told them I killed someone to keep them away from me, but they keep harassing me, saying that I'm dangerous and that I should be in prison." I had to restrain myself from wrapping my arms tightly around him in an embrace.

Although he had quickly become a pain in my ass, nobody deserves what Jake is throwing at him. The way Caleb had spoke seemed more truthful than Jake did, but that still didn't mean I fully believed him. How could I when I didn't know the real truth?

"And because he can't get any evidence of it, he's been trying to get to me for other things like stalking and harassing," Instead of restraining myself this time, I wrapped my arms tightly around him, like it was the last time I would ever hug someone.

This was the first time we had been this close and it felt nice, no false actions, like our kiss.

He switched subject pretty quickly, "we have the house to ourselves tomorrow," he said, smirking. There it was; he was back to his usual smirking and annoying Caleb, and I wasn't entirely angry about it.

"How come?" I replied, searching for why almost everyone would be out of the house on a Saturday. "Kylie and Clara have a science fair, which my parents will be taking them to."

"Night princess," he said as he walked back out of my room, leaving me in the darkness until I finally turned around and laid down, holding my phone in my hands. I stared at the empty messages screen. I was expecting at least a text from James or Flora asking if I was okay, but it was silent, they hadn't said anything.

I also wasn't allowed to text my mom because it would be dangerous for me if my father tracked her phone and found my number. My eyes slowly closed with my hand still wrapped round my phone.



"Ready for our lazy day!" Caleb shouted as he bounced on top of me, waking me up in the process. I groaned loudly before attempting to turn over, only to be held down by his legs. "I thought the whole point of a lazy day was to be lazy, as in not moving out of bed."

"You can move out of the bed to the sofa downstairs," he shouted as I sighed at him, attempting to shove his heavy, hard body off of me but failing miserably.

"No!" I shouted, grabbing and gripping onto my bed covers, not letting him take me downstairs. Suddenly, in a quick, swift movement, Caleb had me over his shoulder, giving me only one, singular view.

I smirked to myself as he carried me down the stairs. "You're such an idiot," I shouted as he placed me down on the sofa, smirking. Not one day would I believe that I would actually be friendly with Caleb; the world was probably more likely to end.

"What do you want for breakfast then?" He shouted as he was walking to the kitchen. He was being surprisingly nice today and I have a feeling it's because of what he had told me last night.

"Pancakes!" I slid over to the kitchen to see him leaning against the counter. He looked unimpressed by my decision for the delicious, buttery food. "What? I haven't had them in a while and I really want some," he laughed at me and turned to create the pancake mix.

"Thank you!" I smiled as he began mixing the ingredients. Suddenly, my phone started ringing and thinking it was my mom, I answered it straight away without looking at who was calling.

Big mistake.

"Hello" I said into the phone as I waited for the reply.

"Hey, it's James, can you come round to mine later, we need to talk?" I sighed heavily as I had almost forgotten about James and the drama going on with us at the moment. He sounded blunt, causing me to quickly agree and hang up.

"Hey Caleb, don't wait for me after breakfast, I need to go see someone."

"You're going to go to see that idiot after he punched me in the face and knocked you over," he pointed to the now purple and yellow bruise that had come out clearly over his eye.

"He punched you because you kissed me-" I started, "and he knocked me over by accident because he was punching you for doing it," I laughed, trying to make it sound better than it actually was.

James didn't really care for me that night, even though it was an accident, he didn't exactly jump to check if I was okay. It was like I was just a trashcan that had been knocked over and he didn't bother to pick it up.

"I just don't see why you need to see him after what he's done," Caleb was really starting to care for me for some reason and I'm sure that's why James was more angry than he let on.

"Anyway, bon appetite," Caleb shouted as he placed a perfectly circular and sugary pancake in front of me.

"Thank you Caleb," I said as I began to eat away at the sweet pancake he had made. I was surprised he went to this much effort for me, seeing as he seemed angry that I was going to see James later.

"So how was it?" I masked any emotion on my face and looked at the pancakes as if they were the worst tasting things I had ever eaten. "It was a bit plain and I didn't really like the taste." His face turned down at my reply.

"I'm joking," I got up and smiled before walking towards him. "They were amazing, thank you." I'm sure me thanking him was for a lot more than him just making me breakfast.

• • •

My car pulled up outside James' house, and I felt like I was going to be sick. Why was I more scared to talk to my boyfriend than Caleb?

Before I'd even climbed out of the car, James opened the front door, obviously waiting for me and sprinted towards me as I climbed out. He hugged me like he hadn't seen me in a year and I was too shocked that it took me a few seconds to register what he was doing to then hug him back.

"I'm so sorry!" he whispered with his head buried in the crook of my neck. I nodded against him, not understanding why he had to be so sorry about punching someone I had actually kissed. Surely it was me that should be apologising.

"It was wrong of me, I was jealous and angry and I didn't even notice I knocked you over, please forgive me?" He gave me a sad smile and it was too hard not to forgive him when he did that.

"I'm sorry too, for kissing Caleb," I said quickly before he tried to kiss me. Practically reminding him that if he kissed me, he could be kissing Caleb and that's probably something James wouldn't want to know about.

"Where are your parents?" I asked as we walked into the silent house then into his room. Although I had been here hundreds of times, something felt different. It felt like we had just started dating as strange, nervous butterflies crept into my stomach.

"They've been with friends in Florida, so I have the house to myself for a while." I nodded; slightly annoyed that he didn't even bother to tell me. I could've stayed here and avoided ever having to live with Caleb and the kiss that we shared.

In my mind, I selfishly blamed James for the kiss but it wasn't his fault. For some morbid reason, I actually wanted to kiss Caleb. And I liked it.

We sat on his bed to watch some TV, with my head resting against his chest, like what we seemed to do every Saturday. And like every Saturday, just watching TV wasn't the only thing we ended up doing.

At this moment, I was straddling over him and was kissing him deeply, like I hadn't kissed him in a while. Maybe it was because of the guilt, or just that he had actually apologised for what he had done.

However, out of the corner of my eye I noticed a strap peeping out underneath the couch, which was conveniently next to his bed.

After ignoring it, we continued to kiss before I started to undo his shirt, with my eyes still wandering over to the strap I had suddenly invested my interest in.

That was until my curiosity won, and I pulled myself off of James to pull out whatever it was peeking out from underneath the couch. "Hey!" James called, but I ignored his voice as I pulled the strap to reveal what I thought I would never find in his room.

It was a red-laced bra, and was labelled as Victoria's Secret. My heart plummeted as I felt my stomach drop. It was the same bra I had bought Flora for her birthday last year.

"What the fuck is this?"

Chapter 11

James Henry

I had missed her these past few days, I really had. Just her being around that jerk made me squirm inside and I can tell it's changing her. She just doesn't see it. I want her to see that he is the bad guy and I'm not.

I had been pacing up and down in my room for the past hour. "Just call her you idiot," I chanted to myself, attempting to build up the courage to do it

I have never regretted anything more in my life, what I did with Flora was unacceptable and stupid. I even felt bad for punching the jerk in the face because at least he had standards and didn't have sex with Gabby.

I did it with her virgin best friend, which is even worse.

I just wanted our relationship to stay the same and for her to never find out about Flora and I. Hopefully, her feeling bad about the kiss will take away the fact that I felt extremely bad about what I did. To be honest, I did deserve the punch that came straight after me punching Caleb; I probably deserved over a hundred punches.

Why was I so stupid?

Finally, I sat down on the bed with my hands in my hair and my face slumped down, staring at the floor. I needed to suck it up and call Gabby and get her to come over. I needed to apologise for the punch. No way can I ever mention the Flora thing; I just wanted to forget about it.

I haven't actually spoken to Flora since Friday and although I felt bad about it, there was some fault in her corner as well.

I quickly dialled Gabby's number and she answered straight away, obviously in a good mood for some reason. "Hello?" She asked into the phone. I hadn't heard her voice for a while and just hearing it made me happier.

"Hey, it's James, can you come round to mine later, we need to talk," I replied, trying to sound nonchalant and not phased that she was probably with Caleb.

She agreed quickly, making my stomach drop slightly. She didn't even sound bothered on the phone; she just sounded like she wanted to get rid of me. We both hung up at the same time before I started to make myself look a little more presentable than an old t-shirt and tracksuit bottoms from sleeping.

At certain times in the morning, I was still delicately icing the bruise that had now formed over my eye, it looked disgusting, but I deserved it. I don't think I had ever gotten into a proper fistfight before the one with Caleb.

I changed into some jeans and a shirt I found at the top of my drawer before walking over to the curtain, I noticed a car slowly pulling up onto our drive and knowing it was her, I sprinted down the stairs and out the door towards her car.

I just wanted everything to be good between us again, and I didn't want to think about what we had both done, even though she doesn't exactly know what I've done.

Pain and guilt struck my chest as I wrapped my arms around her like I hadn't seen her for months. "I'm so sorry," I whispered into her ear as she took a few seconds to hug me back.

"It was wrong of me, I was jealous and angry and I didn't even notice I knocked you over, please forgive me?" I argued back pleading for her forgiveness. She smiled lightly at me, making my stomach clench with guilt.

"I'm sorry too, for kissing Caleb," anger rose up inside me but I couldn't get angry, I cheated on her more and I would feel bad for the rest of my life. I led her inside and we walked up to my room. "Where are your parents?" She asked normally like nothing we've both done ever happened.

"They've been in with friends in Florida so I have the house to myself for a while," I said truthfully as we sat on my bed. Sitting on this bed made me feel like she was going to sit down and say that she knows Flora had been here.

I felt a little bad for not telling Gabriella that my parents weren't home but I couldn't exactly ask her mom, with everything that's going on in their family.

We laid on the bed, with her in my arms and it felt like summer when we used to just sit here and watch something together. However, that also led to what was currently happening right now.

Gabby was straddled over me, and kissing me with more intensity than she had ever done before. That was when I started to believe that maybe she wouldn't care if she found out about Flora and I. She loved me too much to let us go.

Just as she started undoing the buttons holding my shirt together, she suddenly leaned off of me and picked up a strap that only just caught my eye underneath the couch.

For some reason, it didn't click until I noticed the same bra I took off someone not two days ago. "What the fuck is this?" Gabby shouted out angrily. The last thing I wanted to happen was for her to be angry with me.

"I can explain."

"Explain what?" she shouted out rhetorically before standing up with the strap still hanging off her finger. "I know this is Flora's bra," she continued but I just couldn't speak, "why the hell is Flora's bra in your room, James?" she shouted out. Her emotion showed a mix of anger and disappointment.

"After the party," I swallowed heavily before I spoke. I had hoped she would have stormed off since I didn't have the guts to tell her what had happened. I could already see the tears that were yet to come from her eyes.

"She came back and we-," I wanted her to guess; I didn't want to have to say it. She sighed outwardly as she glared at me. "Say it James!" she was shouting so loud now and I could notice a stray tear escaping her eye.

"We had sex," I shouted to the same volume as her hand came forcefully towards my face and slapped me across my cheek.

My face ached in the same place I was punched, but that was the last thing I was thinking about. Before I could stop her, she ran out and the slamming of the front door followed after.

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What have I done?

Chapter 12

Gabriella Hart

My hand began to sting from slapping James round the face. I couldn't concentrate on anything when tears were surrounding my eyes. I jumped into the car and drove at least five hundred metres away from his house before I stopped and pulled up.

Tears suddenly came streaming down my face; I never normally cry in front of people and that's why when I do cry, it's away from a lot of people.

Resting my head and hands on the steering wheel, I evaluated what had happened. I had kissed Caleb and James had been angry with me, yet he knew all this time that he had done something ten times worse.

My phone was going off every few seconds as James was constantly trying to text and ring me.

Pulling myself together, I drove back to Caleb's hoping that he would be there. I just needed him right now. I pulled my car up onto the drive and stared up at the monstrosity of a house I was staying in; I should count myself lucky, I would've had to stay with James otherwise.

I didn't know whether to blame James cheating on the fact that everything happened with my mom and dad or the fact that I had to stay with Caleb. Would James have cheated anyway?

The door slammed as I walked in with my eyes almost bursting from redness and soreness. My eyes and head hurt and I knew that James and I were officially over. I couldn't be with someone who I once trusted so much, yet hurt me more than anyone ever could.

Every time I repeated what had happened in my mind, my heart broke once again, breaking into smaller pieces each time. "Hey, Gabby I was wondering if-," Caleb stumbled into the room; oblivious to my emotion until he noticed the redness in my eyes and the way I was attempting to hold myself together.

"Are you okay?" He ran over to me, pulling me into a tight hug. Feeling his warmth felt like tiny butterflies surrounding my body. In this moment, I wanted to kiss him but I knew it would be wrong and it would feel too much like revenge, no matter how desperate I was to get it.

"James-" I was struggling to get the words out as I attempted to say the words I had been attempting to say in my head for the longest time. "He cheated on me." The words stabbed my body again as he suddenly pulled me into his embrace.

Without even thinking, I pulled away from his arms and stared deep into his eyes. I knew that I only wanted one thing at this moment. Therefore, forgetting about everything else in my mind, I forcefully pressed my lips to his.

Our lips were in sync together, and I had never felt safer than where I was right now. We stumbled up to his room and to his bed. I wasn't quite sure what I was doing as I felt the soft comfort of his sheets underneath my back.

Our lips continued to move together and my hands were wrapped up in his hair when he pulled away and hovered over me. "We can't do this." Caleb said to me from his upward position. My arms were slowly retracting from his neck as he looked down at me with guilt in his eyes.

I knew we couldn't do this and I knew it was just a way for me to gain revenge on James, but I felt annoyed at Caleb for some reason. The anger that I felt for James was still built up inside me and was coming out to Caleb.

I stormed out, pulling my top back down in the process as it had slipped up during the midst of our make out session. Once again, tears rolled down my cheeks. Boys really weren't worth the tears I seemed to shed a lot.

Seeing as the rest of the people in the house were at the science fair, I avoided Caleb for the rest of the night - even though he didn't attempt to bother me - and went to bed. I didn't attempt to eat because I didn't think I could stomach anything with the lump that stayed within my throat.

• • •

After almost falling out of bed, I tapped the turn off button on my phone alarm and mentally groaned that I would have to actually get up for school.

The fact that I would also have to face three people that had slowly ruined my life in the past few weeks, was also making me want to fall back into bed and sleep for a lifetime.

I pushed myself up and stepped into the bathroom and into the shower, locking the door behind me.

I couldn't help but think that I would be completely alone today. It's not like I really had an abundance of friends without a knife stabbed into my back. I had practically destroyed the friendships I had, or they had destroyed it themselves.

As I climbed out of the shower, I changed into a loose, white top and some black shorts as the weather today was unbelievably beautiful.

"I'm going walk to school today because I've got loads of homework to do at the library," I mentioned to Katherine when I walked downstairs to see her making breakfast. I'd intentionally

gotten ready twenty minutes before Caleb had woken up, not because I had homework but because I didn't want to see him.

"Ok, you sure you want to walk? I can drive you if you want." Whilst grabbing some fruit, I insisted that I walked to gain some fresh air before smiling and leaving the house to walk to school.

The hot wind was heavy on my shoulders as I walked alone down the long street towards the school.

To make matters worse, today was also the annual football game against our biggest rival high school, so classes were cut short and we got half the day to watch the game. Which I was now not too pleased about because I was meant to go with Flora.

When I arrived at school, there were the odd one or two people who swarmed around, probably doing the same and going to the library to catch up on some last minute homework. Although, that wasn't exactly the reason I was here.

I sat down on a small bench in the middle of the school with my knees up to my chest and checked through several apps on my phone, not really doing anything too productive.

My life was going to be extremely sad today. I sat for about a half hour before nearly hundreds of students were now around the halls, dressed in our school colours and with colours painted all over their faces. A few familiar faces crossed by me but not Flora, James or Caleb yet.

My first period, unfortunately was chemistry with Flora and Caleb who sat right beside me.

I ran in just before the bell, as Flora and Caleb would never get there this early. I sat at one of the front seats, completely ignoring the seating plan. The bell finally rang and everyone crammed into the classroom.

As soon as I saw Flora, my hands automatically clenched and I felt an urge to get up and lunge at her for what she had done to me and my relationship with James. Although, he was also at fault.

Flora gave me a questioning and puzzled look to which I replied with a scowl then faced back to the front. Mr Davies walked in after and looked at me strangely, realising that I was sitting in a completely different seat to my usual one.

As I was one of his favourite students and he was a young, friendly teacher, I gave him a pleading look to which he nodded, pretending to know what was going on, then carried on to teach the class.

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The bell rang for second period and luckily; I had a free period to sit at my fun bench again. Unluckily, Flora had a free period too, and we would usually go to the library together and study, or sit outside and talk for the full hour.

Running out of the room, I tried to avoid Flora by running into the girls' bathroom and pretend to re-apply my make up, despite only wearing little concealer and mascara.

The door suddenly slammed open and Flora strutted in with a once again, questioning look on her face. Was she really too stupid to understand why I was angry and upset?

"Hey Gabby, what's up with you today? You're being weird," she asked, oblivious to my anger building up. If it were visual, smoke would currently be steaming from my nose and ears. "Are you really that stupid?" I shouted back at her with my arms crossed.

The anger was really building up inside me and I was ready to burst.

Still with the same plain and questioning look, she waited for me to give her a reason.

"You cheating, lying whore." I shouted maliciously, but feeling better that I had gotten it out. She swallowed back a lump in her throat and began to walk towards me with realisation plastered across her face. "I am truly sorry Gab-," as she tried to finish, my hand swung forward and punched her straight in the face.

Never have I ever thought that I would punch my best friend, and never would I have ever realised how much it physically hurt to punch my, now ex best friend.

Blood gushed from her nose as I turned and sprinted out of the bathroom and into the now empty hallway and out into the school parking lot. My day was going worse than I had expected, and my expectations were already pretty low.

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My life was going to be extremely sad today. I sat for about a half hour before nearly hundreds of students were now around the halls, dressed in our school colours and with colours painted all over their faces. A few familiar faces crossed by me but not Flora, James or Caleb yet.

My first period, unfortunately was chemistry with Flora and Caleb who sat right beside me.

I ran in just before the bell, as Flora and Caleb would never get there this early. I sat at one of the front seats, completely ignoring the seating plan. The bell finally rang and everyone crammed into the classroom.

As soon as I saw Flora, my hands automatically clenched and I felt an urge to get up and lunge at her for what she had done to me and my relationship with James. Although, he was also at fault.

Flora gave me a questioning and puzzled look to which I replied with a scowl then faced back to the front. Mr Davies walked in after and looked at me strangely, realising that I was sitting in a completely different seat to my usual one.

As I was one of his favourite students and he was a young, friendly teacher, I gave him a pleading look to which he nodded, pretending to know what was going on, then carried on to teach the class.

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The bell rang for second period and luckily; I had a free period to sit at my fun bench again. Unluckily, Flora had a free period too, and we would usually go to the library together and study, or sit outside and talk for the full hour.

Running out of the room, I tried to avoid Flora by running into the girls' bathroom and pretend to re-apply my make up, despite only wearing little concealer and mascara.

The door suddenly slammed open and Flora strutted in with a once again, questioning look on her face. Was she really too stupid to understand why I was angry and upset?

"Hey Gabby, what's up with you today? You're being weird," she asked, oblivious to my anger building up. If it were visual, smoke would currently be steaming from my nose and ears. "Are you really that stupid?" I shouted back at her with my arms crossed.

The anger was really building up inside me and I was ready to burst.

Still with the same plain and questioning look, she waited for me to give her a reason.

"You cheating, lying whore." I shouted maliciously, but feeling better that I had gotten it out. She swallowed back a lump in her throat and began to walk towards me with realisation plastered across her face. "I am truly sorry Gab-," as she tried to finish, my hand swung forward and punched her straight in the face.

Never have I ever thought that I would punch my best friend, and never would I have ever realised how much it physically hurt to punch my, now ex best friend.

Blood gushed from her nose as I turned and sprinted out of the bathroom and into the now empty hallway and out into the school parking lot. My day was going worse than I had expected, and my expectations were already pretty low.

Chapter 13.

Flora King

I don't think I could actually fully describe how much I hated Monday's. Having chemistry was just an added part to make my day even worse than it already was. "Hey Flora," Caleb walked up to me as I made my way to class. He seemed rather happy, seeing as he was always usually in some kind of bad mood over something.

"Hey," I replied, smiling lightly back at him. He opened the door for me and waved me in. "How did you enjoy the party on Friday?" Caleb asked inquisitively whilst smirking, knowing something that I definitely didn't. I gulped back slightly at the remembrance of the night.

He was giving me funny looks as he waited for my answer. "It was fine," I swallowed back the guilt from sleeping with James and pushed it to the back of my mind. I couldn't think about that right now, it was something that I don't think I ever wanted to think about again.

As long as Gabby didn't find out, James and I could just forget about it and the guilt would soon disappear, hopefully.

When we finally sat down in our seats, I thought about the person that had been worse off in this whole situation. James' smiled crept into my mind as I thought about him. I felt incredibly bad for him. He didn't deserve to be the punching bag for something that I had done. I was the one that slept with him, yet he still ended up worse because of it.

Before, when we were walking to our seats, we had noticed something rather unusual with the seating arrangement in the class. Gabby wasn't sitting in her usual place. She was now sitting right at the front and Mr Davies had allowed her to. Of course, being the teachers pet to him, she had the ability to get around that kind of thing.

Then I thought about it in my mind. I couldn't get angry or mock Gabby. What I've done to her will probably haunt me for the rest of my life and I will have to make it up to her without her actually ever finding out. It was eating me alive by the second.

"What's her problem?" I asked Caleb as we began pulling out various books and notes for the class beginning in a few minutes. "Not sure," Caleb said quickly, keeping his head down. He definitely knew something I didn't.

Nobody at the moment seemed to be on good terms with each other. In the space of a few days, everything had turned completely upside down. And I think its mainly due to a certain boy turning up at the start of the year.

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After a lesson of pure torture, having to listen to different chemistry related things and staring at the back of Gabby's head, I was finally too frustrated and wanted to ask her why she was being so distant and stubborn today. I guessed she was still upset about her small disagreement with James, but I couldn't tell.

As soon as the bell rang, she almost sprinted out of the room, attempting to get away from everyone. Luckily, my seat could see the doors to the girls bathroom on the other side of the hall to the classroom and I watched as she stormed inside, looking angrier than I had ever seen her before.

I ran in shortly after. The both of us had a free period now so whatever was on her mind, she could tell me all about it without us having to miss any classes.

As I walked in, she was patting her cheeks in the mirror, ignoring the strange looks she was getting from the odd few girls walking out of the bathroom. I gave her a questioning look as I walked up to her.

"Hey Gabby, what's up with you today? You're being weird," I asked softly, maybe if I asked this, she would actually tell me what's wrong and stop closing herself off and not letting people in, and she's been doing that quite often lately.

"Are you really that stupid?" I was taken aback by what she said and how she was shouting at me. I was so confused and I didn't know what she was talking about. Then again, a small thought crossed my mind about James, but I knew that he would never tell her about what had happened, so it couldn't possibly be that.

She had her arms crossed in a manner that made a lump form in my throat. Anger seemed to be prominent in her eyes as she stared back at me. "You cheating, lying whore," immediately, the words catapulted into my brain and I realised what she was taking about.

It suddenly made me think about Caleb's smirk in chemistry and how Gabby had been so angry with me today without even saying a word to me. Gabby had found out that I slept with James. I didn't know what to say, I couldn't get any words out and I was too shaken to even look her in the eyes.

I swallowed back the lump in my throat that was clogging my words together. "I am truly sorry Gab-" I tried to say but a hand came in a quick motion towards my face.

As soon as I felt the sharp pain of her hand colliding with my face, my eyes went black for a few seconds until red crossed my eyes and blood was pouring from my nose. When I looked up, the door slamming clouded my hearing and vision.

She was already gone.

My stomach twisted, not only from seeing blood but from seeing my best friend walk out on me and find out that I had slept with her boyfriend. I knew it was wrong but when I was in the position, I was addicted to him. I wanted nothing more to be with him.

But I had never realised that I would be sacrificing a girl that had meant so much to me as a best friend and almost a sister.

I stormed out myself, not realising that blood was still dripping from my nose onto the floor of the corridor. Sighing, I stumbled to the nurses office, passing various strange stares as I looked like a drunk person that didn't realise they had been punched. My hand was currently covered in the red liquid and it was taking everything inside me not to faint at this very moment.

"Oh my goodness, sweetie!" the nurse shouted as I pushed myself through the doors and into another room. "What happened?" She asked as she held my nose so that no more blood would hopefully fall from it.

"I tripped in the girls bathroom," I replied quickly, trying to mask my anger and guilt as I didn't want to say anything to get Gabby in trouble. I had already ruined her life in so many ways that this would just be the cherry on the top.

The nurse smiled lightly at me as she gave me a knowing look, as if to know that I was straight up lying to her, but I didn't care. I just wanted to go home and get away from anyone named Gabriella, Caleb or James today.

The bell had rung twice whilst I was still in the nurses office, until I was finally allowed out of the doors to see a worried James waiting outside. For some reason, I thought he was thinking that Gabby was in there but he was genuinely waiting and worrying about me. "Are you ok?" He held onto me and inspected the nose that was currently red with a bruise forming around it.

"Why do you care?" I replied hastily as I walked off into the cafeteria to grab some food. I felt so hungry but I didn't want to eat. I didn't have to stomach after knowing that Gabby knew and knowing that I had ruined her relationship with James.

"I do care because I like you, you're my friend," the words hurt me whilst I waited in the line with James whispering behind me. He only saw me as a friend and it slowly made my heart break. Nodding quickly, I walked along with the crowd to the food section and collected some lunch then sat at a nearby table on my own.

"Where's Gabby?" James asked as he sat down opposite me with a muffin whilst I picked at some fries on my plate. I'm not sure why he was asking for her. It's not exactly like she'd be wanting to

speak to him anyway. "She left." At least I thought she did. James would've seen her if she was still here.

"She left because we got into a fight about something," I'm pretty sure he knew what it was about. He stared at me intently, waiting for a reason for the fight before I glared at him and he realised what the fight was about.

"How did she find out?" I asked hesitantly as he stared down at his untouched muffin. He gulped loudly before looking back up at me.

"She found your bra," I immediately regretted not staying and looking for it, but on the other hand, it was James' fault for saying that it was a mistake and leaving me to leave as quickly as I could.

Finishing off my fries, I walked out, and luckily, James didn't follow. I approached my locker as my nose still ached from the punch. A few people had stared at me strangely, wondering how I now had a large bruise appearing in the centre of my face. To be quite honest, I really deserved it.

Despite everything that had happened between us, I was still worried and wondering where Gabby was. She wasn't the type of person to skip school and miss out on so many classes.

The football game outside was beginning to start as the hallways were emptying with crowds of fan girls with numbers painted onto their faces were running out. I didn't feel like going so I skipped and climbed into my car.

Before I could put the key into the ignition, my eyes became clouded with tears and soon enough, they were streaming down my cheeks and into my hands, soaking myself and my t-shirt.

What the hell have I done?

Chapter 14

Gabriella Hart

Walking slowly up to my locker, I grabbed a few of my books that I would need for studying later on and covered my face inside of it. My head was completely full of all the thinking I had been doing, and I just needed a rest. The first thing I wanted to do was to get out of this school already.

As soon as noise erupted around me through the halls, I pulled my head back out, due to not wanting to look like I had escaped the asylum down the road. However, pulling my head out of my locker also resulted in me seeing a scene that I really didn't want to see this morning, or ever.

Caleb had his lips pressed against Haley Smith's neck, probably placing large and noticeable hickeys all the way up to her jaw. She was always known to be a girl that gave it up to almost anybody, but I didn't think that Caleb would go for someone like her. I assumed that he would see her as too easy.

My heart sunk inside my chest as they slowly brought their lips together and kissed for what seemed to last forever until she pulled away and walked off with his arm wrapped around her shoulders. It made my heart sink into my chest and I really wasn't sure why.

Knowing Caleb for such a short amount of time didn't give me the permission to be jealous or annoyed. I closed my locker hastily and slowly walked towards main school doors.

My head dropped when I realised I didn't have a car to drive home in and I had to endure a long walk home. After everything that had happened today, I really wasn't in the mood to speak to anyone anyway. Therefore, I turned on my sad playlist on Spotify and placed the earphones into my ears before letting the music drown out the silence.

Skipping school really wasn't like me and so every step I seemed to take away from school, the more wrong it felt that I wasn't there in a class. However, after what had happened this morning with Flora in the bathroom, it was probably best that I skipped the last few classes and the football game later on.

It's not like I was really going to learn from classes or watch the game when my head was constantly filled with my made up image of James and Flora together. It was also filled with the image of Haley and Caleb, kissing each other as if their lives depended on it.

The thought of the two couples together was making my head begin to hurt. They were all going to be happy, leaving me out of the picture completely. I still couldn't believe that we were barely a month into senior year, and my life had already fallen into a mess.

I still couldn't help but imagine what could've happened if I hadn't taken Caleb home that night from the party. James and I would still be together, but I wouldn't have known that he was willing to cheat on me so easily after a small disagreement.

My eyes opened properly to look at the street ahead where I could see the house I was having to live in for a while.

I was actually starting to miss my mom. She was the one person I could always talk to about anything and if it weren't for my pathetic excuse for a father, I would still be at home with her. I would have been able to come home and cry into her lap whilst she played with my hair and fed me ice cream by the tonne.

As I approached the house, my knuckles were beginning to really sting from punching Flora. The bones inside were in pain and I was starting to worry that I had broken something. Although, I'm not sure Flora's face is hard enough for me to break anything on it.

My emotions were still mixed up and I wasn't sure whether to be angry or upset that I had lost two extremely important relationships in my life. James was someone I would always go to. He would be the first one to text me in the morning and the last to text me at night.

Whereas, Flora was my best friend. I could tell her anything and she could tell me everything. We were inseparable and knew every single thing about each other.

I wasn't sure which relationship I cared most about losing.

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Kylie and Clara arrived home around three hours later to see me slouched on the couch with a large tub of almost finished Ben & Jerrys ice cream beside me. Even if I wasn't upset, I would still be devouring the cookie dough until I was scraping the carton.

"Hey Gabriella," Clara called as she saw me. However, her expression slightly faltered when she saw that I was already dressed in my pyjamas and watching a marathon of friends episodes. "Were you at school today?" She asked before sitting down next to me and watching the episode.

"I had to study so I left before the game started," I quickly replied and hoped that she wouldn't notice the fact that there were no books anywhere near me, and instead there was just a bunch of junk food that I had bought for times like this.

Kylie, however, being the brat of a younger sister that she was, sat down beside me with a knowing look. "Flora had a big nose bleed today," she mentioned and I immediately tensed up. "Know anything about that?" I gulped back slightly as I gave her a small glare.

"She gets nosebleeds often," I quickly shut her up as they both continued to watch the show without asking anymore questions. "Guess who asked me to the winter ball?" Clara said to me, seeming really excited all of a sudden. I guessed that it was a way to forget that the only date I would have to the winter ball would probably be Netflix and some more Ben & Jerrys.

"Who?" I asked, joining in with her excitement. I attempted to mask the pain that I had been feeling for the last few hours and smiled lightly at her. "Graham Perry," the name quickly struck my mind as I realised he was one of the extremely good looking sophomores that basically every freshman worshipped.

"Yay!" I smiled and hugged her lightly. "And who are you going with Kylie?" I asked with my eyebrow titled upwards. I hoped that I would be getting her back for asking about Flora, but she remained shy and kept her eyes away from me.

"Who is it?" I asked Clara as she smiled like she didn't want to tell me. Clara simply shrugged and looked over to Kylie, as if to ask if she could tell me. "Do you want me to tickle you, Ky?" I asked her as she whipped her head round and shook her head profusely.

"Don't you dare-," before she could finish her sentence, I began to poke at her sides and she erupted into a loud laughter, not being able to stop. I knew she was extremely ticklish there so I easily used it to my advantage.

Almost as soon as I started, she was on the floor with tears flowing from her eyes. "Stop, stop! I'll tell you." She tried to say between each laugh as I pulled my hands away and waited for her to tell me.

"It's Henry Campbell." She spoke quietly, although I still heard the name being muttered. My mouth was gaped open as I brought the face to the name. "You mean, the British boy in your grade?" I asked as she smiled and nodded. I couldn't deny that the kid had been blessed with some extremely fortunate genes.

"Lucky bitch isn't she?" I laughed at Clara as we all slouched down and played some more of friends whilst stuffing our mouths with Hershey's kisses that had been left in a pile for only my own consumption.

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The front door creaked open before a figure walked in. I mentally scolded myself for wanting it to be Caleb, but that thought was immediately extinguished as Katherine and Mike walked in with bags in their arms.

"Hey girls, can we have some help putting the groceries away?" Katherine asked as she carried a few to the kitchen.

Without thinking, we all got up and ran to help them. We loaded the refrigerator items in, whilst Katherine dealt with dry foods and placed them into their correct homes. "Kylie and Gabby, we have some good news and some bad news." Katherine asked as she put some of the fruit in the bowl in the middle of the table.

We both nodded as she began to speak again.

"The good news is that your mom is fine, I have been in touch with her and she misses you both, so much," Katherine started. My heart raced slightly at hearing something about my mom. She was safe, and that's all I cared about, no matter what the bad news may be.

"But the bad news is that she won't be back for a few more weeks." Katherine swallowed back heavily, waiting for our reply. After everything that has happened these past few days, this news didn't even seem too bad. The both of us looked at each other before smiling gratefully back at Katherine.

"Are you sure it's ok with you two? I'm sure we could ask a cousin somewhere to look after us." I offered but Katherine and Mike laughed lightly at me.

"It's fine! We love having you two here, and you need to stay in this state to go to school" Mike told us with a wide smile as well as he continued to load some food into various cupboards around the kitchen.

I haven't really gotten to know Mike and Katherine yet because of the party and carnival I went to, plus their work took up a lot of their time as well.

"Since Caleb is at a friends' house and I know that you're all not busy tonight, why don't we have a family night?" Mike questioned as he finished and walked back over to Katherine. "We'll play some games and order some pizza."

We all happily agreed together before continuing to put the groceries away and cleaning over the kitchen table to be used as our games area. I knew I needed something like this to make myself feel better, especially after everything that's happened.

Once we had set up the game of jenga and played for a while, arguments had already erupted about who had lost and who had made the tower fall.

"No, you pushed it!" Mike shouted jokingly at Kylie as they both laughed when the jenga tower fell down. We built it back up again and we played and ate the variety pizzas that surrounded us in the cardboard boxes.

The door, once again, creaked open and this time, Caleb walked in, looking bored like always. My heart almost stopped when I caught his eyes with mine, but I quickly diverted them and looked elsewhere.

"Hey, come play?" Mike shouted to him as he sighed heavily, looking tired from probably being with Haley all evening. "I'm fine thanks," he groaned out as his eyes flashed to mine again and gave me a strange look before he disappeared up the stairs.

Why did he look at me like that?

Chapter 15

The week went on just as frustratingly as it had started. James and Flora always sat together on the same table that we used to. They would occasionally look over at me, but I would only return an angered glare.

A bruise had slowly formed around Flora's face, almost making me smile at my handiwork. She had attempted to cover it up with make up, but just knowing it was there made me happier. She deserved a lot more than a punch to the nose.

I didn't actually feel at all bad about it. I just wanted her to feel what I felt but in a physical type of pain rather than emotional. Then again, what I was feeling felt both physically and emotionally draining. It was killing me to see the both of them everyday, but I was also rather good at hiding how I felt.

Caleb had been ignoring me for the whole week, even at home. At school he would be with one girl from each social group everyday and then bring back a different one in the evening. It was like he was dangling them in front of me, making me feel a mixture of anger and jealousy wrapped into one.

Every time another girl walked through the door, an increased anger would build up inside of me, then I would wake up in the morning, go to school and see Flora and James, increasing my anger even more.

When I sat alone at the table in the cafeteria, I had started to tell myself that I really should have made more friends in high school since at this very moment, all I had was an ex-boyfriend, an ex-best friend and a roommate that I couldn't even stand to look at.

Currently, I was lying on my bed at six on a Friday evening, with no plans and only homework and studying to complete.

"Can everyone come downstairs to the main room, please?" I heard Katherine's voice call from the bottom of the stairs, followed by several footsteps walking down. I assumed that Kylie and Clara had walked downstairs, followed by Caleb's heavy footsteps.

For once, Caleb was actually home and without a girl, even though he probably snuck her out of the window earlier this evening. I wouldn't put it past him.

Gulping back, I walked down the stairs into the main room where Caleb, Clara and Kylie were already seated on the couch, opposite Katherine and Mike.

I sat down at the only available place, which happened to be squished right beside Caleb. He smirked at me out of the corner of his mouth and I was fighting every urge to wipe it straight off his face, with my fist.

I'm not sure I could take much more bad news, so I silently prayed that this was the best news that they would ever give me. Hopefully mom was coming home and everything could get back to normal.

As soon as we were all seated, Katherine began speaking. "This weekend, Mike and I are going on a weekend retreat to our beach house." She expressed excitedly. Mike smiled and looked at all of us. I couldn't help the jealousy I felt for them, being able to get away from this town and everyone in it.

"We're leaving later tonight and we'll be back around until Sunday afternoon." Mike finished as Caleb relaxed his shoulders next to me. I knew exactly what he was thinking and I was going to be quick to dismiss the growing idea in his mind.

"So, Gabriella and Caleb, you two are in charge and the house will be clean by the time we get back." Katherine exaggerated to all of us as she stood up and straightened out her clothing. Caleb was still smirking as his parents began to walk away.

"Oh, and no parties," Mike said sternly, giving Caleb a long look, as if to know that if one were to happen, it would most likely be due to Caleb.

Of course it would.

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Mike and Katherine spent three hours packing and getting ready until they finally left at around eight, leaving us some dinner to eat. However, I wasn't too hungry and instead, I just wanted to remain in my room and get a good nights sleep.

We all closed the door as their car drove off down the road. We waved them off before Caleb shut the door and smirked at all of us. But, I turned to leave, wanting nothing more than to be tucked up in bed with Netflix.

However, my arm was suddenly pulled back by Caleb whose touch made me shiver slightly. He let go as I positioned myself to listen to what he had to say. "We are throwing a party tonight." He shouted, lighting up Kylie's face and darkening mine and Clara's.

"No." we both said simultaneously, watching as Caleb's and Kylie's faces contorted into a questioning yet pleading look. "You heard what your mom and dad said, no parties." I said as sternly as I could, crossing my arms and staring at Caleb as he sighed sarcastically.

"And who made you the one in charge." I crossed my arms and glared at him angrily, holding his eyes to mine. "Both of us, actually." Caleb retired as I shook my head and began to leave again. However, not before Caleb pulled me back again.

"Mom and dad would kill us Caleb." Clara pleaded, standing by my side to show she agreed with me. I smiled down at her as a thank you before looking back at Kylie and Caleb, both with a mischievous glint in their eyes.

"What they don't know won't kill them." Kylie finished as she stood next to Caleb to show she agreed with him. I didn't want to argue, I didn't have the energy to and right now, it felt like Clara and I were fighting a losing battle.

Instead of saying anything else, I walked upstairs and laid on my bed, only to be followed by Caleb who barged in and sat next to me. I sat up to listen to him only because I wanted him to get out of my room.

"What?" I asked as I sat back against the wall. He did the same as he moved closer to me, making me tense up. I hadn't been on this bed and close to him since last week, and the thought made my body fall weak

"You know you secretly want this party," he whispered as he rested his hand on my thigh. "No thanks," I pushed his hand off as he sighed at me and smirked instead.

"Please," I turned to look at him and actually noticed a small part of sincerity in his eyes, which wasn't something you'd ever see in Caleb. "Fine," I caved in and leaned my head on his shoulder out of instinct, before I reminded myself not to and I sat up properly again.

"Good, because I was going to do it anyway, I just wanted to see you in something nice." He whispered again before jumping off and giving me a wink as he strutted off out of the room, giving me a rather good view of him on the way out.

Man, he has a nice butt.

My thoughts took over, staring at his backside as he exited my room. My mind suddenly reminded itself that he was an idiot and not something I ever wanted to be with, making me retract my words.

Laughing at myself, I laid back down and continued to finish homework I was behind on already. I rested my chin in my palm and began writing all the answers I knew before sitting for ages, attempting to work out the ones I didn't.

I finished homework around an hour later, only to hear Caleb shouting his mouth off from the bottom of the stairs.

"The party starts in an hour." Sighing, I got myself up and searched through the wardrobe, containing all the clothes I had brought with me. I hadn't exactly prepared for a party to be happening, but I knew one thing I could wear.

I pulled out a blue denim skirt and a black lace-up top to wear with it before I put on some make up, a little more than I would wear for school. Next, I straightened out my long, frizzy hair, making it more into waves than straightened.

Lastly, I changed into the outfit and paired it with a pair of black boots. I stared at my reflection in the mirror, rather happy with the outcome before I closed up my room and walked down the stairs.

When I got to the kitchen, Kylie and Clara were wearing pretty dresses and were drinking some sodas, which I hoped were only soda and nothing else.

Caleb was casually laying cups out and alcohol out, including vodka. I gulped back remembering the last time I had too much vodka and was throwing up nearly all day and night. I shuddered at the experience before pouring myself some water instead.

"You look nice," Caleb said seductively, eyeing me up and down, and walking towards me. I laughed and thanked him before turning back to Kylie and Clara's. Caleb probably had about twenty girls he's slept with coming to this party tonight and just the thought of it made my stomach twist.

Everyone started arriving as soon as the first door bell went. I smiled at my reflection in the hallway mirror before I stood with some people to make myself seem more sociable than I actually am.

I'd forgotten that I didn't actually have any people at this school I would count as close friends. Sure, everyone was nice, but nobody was as close to me as Flora and James were. I only had this girl I was talking to for a while now but I didn't even know her name.

"So, what's happening with you and James?" The girl asked me, obviously wanting to know about the current status of our relationship. I was surprised nobody had guessed we had broken up, seeing as we no longer sit together.

"We're not together anymore, it wasn't working out." I hated the fact that I was lying, but I also hated the fact that I was cheated on and couldn't expose James for the cheater that he really was. I wasn't the type of person to shout it from the rooftop, as much as I wanted to.

Switching the conversation over what boys were in the room, I let her continue speaking even though one of my ears were secretly listening in on Caleb's conversation with a few boys a few metres away from us.

"She's hot, you've done well," I heard from one boy as he pointed towards me and the girl. If it was about me, it was a nice compliment, but it wasn't as if Caleb had done well. We weren't even together.

I noticed as Caleb scowled at the boy across from him but quickly shrugged it off as he switched the conversation to something irrelevant that boys talk about.

The girl in front of me was still talking when I glanced over again to Caleb again. However, his eyes caught mine as I smirked to myself and turned back to the girl in front of me.

"Is something funny?" The girl asked as I plastered on a fake smile and shook my head. She continued talking as I felt my mind wandering away to something else. "Sorry, I have to go." I said to the girl as she smiled and waved me away before talking nonsense to someone else.

I watched as the house's occupancy grew the music thundered all around me. People were dancing in the main room as I pushed my way through them to get to the front door for some air that I desperately needed.

However, as I was about to grab the door handle, it turned, notifying me that someone was about to walk through the door. I smiled as I let the door open, ready to greet whoever was on the other side.

My heart fell through my chest as I recognised the faces on the other side of the door immediately. James and Flora were smiling at each other until they looked at me and their expressions fell, obviously not expecting to have seen me at a party this big.

It wasn't the fact that they were here that bothered me. What had hurt me was that their hands were clasped together and that they were happy.

They were happy without me.

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Caleb had been ignoring me for the whole week, even at home. At school he would be with one girl from each social group everyday and then bring back a different one in the evening. It was like he was dangling them in front of me, making me feel a mixture of anger and jealousy wrapped into one.

Every time another girl walked through the door, an increased anger would build up inside of me, then I would wake up in the morning, go to school and see Flora and James, increasing my anger even more.

When I sat alone at the table in the cafeteria, I had started to tell myself that I really should have made more friends in high school since at this very moment, all I had was an ex-boyfriend, an ex-best friend and a roommate that I couldn't even stand to look at.

Currently, I was lying on my bed at six on a Friday evening, with no plans and only homework and studying to complete.

"Can everyone come downstairs to the main room, please?" I heard Katherine's voice call from the bottom of the stairs, followed by several footsteps walking down. I assumed that Kylie and Clara had walked downstairs, followed by Celeb's heavy footsteps.

For once, Caleb was actually home and without a girl, even though he probably snuck her out of the window earlier this evening. I wouldn't put it past him.

Gulping back, I walked down the stairs into the main room where Caleb, Clara and Kylie were already seated on the couch, opposite Katherine and Mike.

I sat down at the only available place, which happened to be squished right beside Caleb. He smirked at me out of the corner of his mouth and I was fighting every urge to wipe it straight off his face, with my fist.

I'm not sure I could take much more bad news, so I silently prayed that this was the best news that they would ever give me. Hopefully mom was coming home and everything could get back to normal.

As soon as we were all seated, Katherine began speaking. "This weekend, Mike and I are going on a weekend retreat to our beach house." She expressed excitedly. Mike smiled and looked at all of us. I couldn't help the jealousy I felt for them, being able to get away from this town and everyone in it.

"We're leaving later tonight and we'll be back around until Sunday afternoon." Mike finished as Caleb relaxed his shoulders next to me. I knew exactly what he was thinking and I was going to be quick to dismiss the growing idea in his mind.

"So, Gabriella and Caleb, you two are in charge and the house will be clean by the time we get back." Katherine exaggerated to all of us as she stood up and straightened out her clothing. Caleb was still smirking as his parents began to walk away.

"Oh, and no parties," Mike said sternly, giving Caleb a long look, as if to know that if one were to happen, it would most likely be due to Caleb.

Of course it would.

...

Mike and Katherine spent three hours packing and getting ready until they finally left at around eight, leaving us some dinner to eat. However, I wasn't too hungry and instead, I just wanted to remain in my room and get a good nights sleep.

We all closed the door as their car drove off down the road. We waved them off before Caleb shut the door and smirked at all of us. But, I turned to leave, wanting nothing more than to be tucked up in bed with Netflix.

However, my arm was suddenly pulled back by Caleb whose touch made me shiver slightly. He let go as I positioned myself to listen to what he had to say. "We are throwing a party tonight." He shouted, lighting up Kylie's face and darkening mine and Clara's.

"No." we both said simultaneously, watching as Caleb's and Kylie's faces contorted into a questioning yet pleading look. "You heard what your mom and dad said, no parties." I said as sternly as I could, crossing my arms and staring at Caleb as he sighed sarcastically.

"And who made you the one in charge." I crossed my arms and glared at him angrily, holding his eyes to mine. "Both of us, actually." Caleb retired as I shook my head and began to leave again. However, not before Caleb pulled me back again.

"Mom and dad would kill us Caleb." Clara pleaded, standing by my side to show she agreed with me. I smiled down at her as a thank you before looking back at Kylie and Caleb, both with a mischievous glint in their eyes.

"What they don't know won't kill them." Kylie finished as she stood next to Caleb to show she agreed with him. I didn't want to argue, I didn't have the energy to and right now, it felt like Clara and I were fighting a losing battle.

Instead of saying anything else, I walked upstairs and laid on my bed, only to be followed by Caleb who barged in and sat next to me. I sat up to listen to him only because I wanted him to get out of my room.

"What?" I asked as I sat back against the wall. He did the same as he moved closer to me, making me tense up. I hadn't been on this bed and close to him since last week, and the thought made my body fall weak

"You know you secretly want this party," he whispered as he rested his hand on my thigh. "No thanks," I pushed his hand off as he sighed at me and smirked instead.

"Please," I turned to look at him and actually noticed a small part of sincerity in his eyes, which wasn't something you'd ever see in Caleb. "Fine," I caved in and and leaned my head on his shoulder out of instinct, before I reminded myself not to and I sat up properly again.

"Good, because I was going to do it anyway, I just wanted to see you in something nice." He whispered again before jumping off and giving me a wink as he strutted off out of the room, giving me a rather good view of him on the way out.

Man, he has a nice butt.

My thoughts took over, staring at his backside as he exited my room. My mind suddenly reminded itself that he was an idiot and not something I ever wanted to be with, making me retract my words.

Laughing at myself, I laid back down and continued to finish homework I was behind on already. I rested my chin in my palm and began writing all the answers I knew before sitting for ages, attempting to work out the ones I didn't.

I finished homework around an hour later, only to hear Caleb shouting his mouth off from the bottom of the stairs.

"The party starts in an hour." Sighing, I got myself up and searched through the wardrobe, containing all the clothes I had brought with me. I hadn't exactly prepared for a party to be happening, but I knew one thing I could wear.

I pulled out a blue denim skirt and a black lace-up top to wear with it before I put on some make up, a little more than I would wear for school. Next, I straightened out my long, frizzy hair, making it more into waves than straightened.

Lastly, I changed into the outfit and paired it with a pair of black boots. I stared at my reflection in the mirror, rather happy with the outcome before I closed up my room and walked down the stairs.

When I got to the kitchen, Kylie and Clara were wearing pretty dresses and were drinking some sodas, which I hoped were only soda and nothing else.

Caleb was casually laying cups out and alcohol out, including vodka. I gulped back remembering the last time I had too much vodka and was throwing up nearly all day and night. I shuddered at the experience before pouring myself some water instead.

"You look nice," Caleb said seductively, eyeing me up and down, and walking towards me. I laughed and thanked him before turning back to Kylie and Clara's. Caleb probably had about twenty girls he's slept with coming to this party tonight and just the thought of it made my stomach twist.

Everyone started arriving as soon as the first door bell went. I smiled at my reflection in the hallway mirror before I stood with some people to make myself seem more sociable than I actually am.

I'd forgotten that I didn't actually have any people at this school I would count as close friends. Sure, everyone was nice, but nobody was as close to me as Flora and James were. I only had this girl I was talking to for a while now but I didn't even know her name.

"So, what's happening with you and James?" The girl asked me, obviously wanting to know about the current status of our relationship. I was surprised nobody had guessed we had broken up, seeing as we no longer sit together.

"We're not together anymore, it wasn't working out." I hated the fact that I was lying, but I also hated the fact that I was cheated on and couldn't expose James for the cheater that he really was. I wasn't the type of person to shout it from the rooftop, as much as I wanted to.

Switching the conversation over what boys were in the room, I let her continue speaking even though one of my ears were secretly listening in on Caleb's conversation with a few boys a few metres away from us.

"She's hot, you've done well," I heard from one boy as he pointed towards me and the girl. If it was about me, it was a nice compliment, but it wasn't as if Caleb had done well. We weren't even together.

I noticed as Caleb scowled at the boy across from him but quickly shrugged it off as he switched the conversation to something irrelevant that boys talk about.

The girl in front of me was still talking when I glanced over again to Caleb again. However, his eyes caught mine as I smirked to myself and turned back to the girl in front of me.

"Is something funny?" The girl asked as I plastered on a fake smile and shook my head. She continued talking as I felt my mind wandering away to something else. "Sorry, I have to go." I said to the girl as she smiled and waved me away before talking nonsense to someone else.

I watched as the house's occupancy grew the music thundered all around me. People were dancing in the main room as I pushed my way through them to get to the front door for some air that I desperately needed.

However, as I was about to grab the door handle, it turned, notifying me that someone was about to walk through the door. I smiled as I let the door open, ready to greet whoever was on the other side.

My heart fell through my chest as I recognised the faces on the other side of the door immediately. James and Flora were smiling at each other until they looked at me and their expressions fell, obviously not expecting to have seen me at a party this big.

It wasn't the fact that they were here that bothered me. What had hurt me was that their hands were clasped together and that they were happy.

They were happy without me.

Chapter 16

My feet were planted to the ground as I stared in shock at the two people in front of me. Suddenly the thought of fresh air was a lot less appealing and my voice was struggling to find its way past my lips.

My hands tensed as I dug my nails into my palms, almost drawing blood from underneath. "What the hell are you doing here?" I held tightly onto the door with the other hand as they stared at me in shock.

Their hands immediately unclasped as I bit down hard onto my tongue. "Gab-," before James could finish, I slammed the door shut, drowning out their voices from the other side.

My mind searches for a reason that they were here. If it was an idea for an apology then I think it would be better if they turned around and went home, because they were the last people I wanted to see and I refused to let them ruin my night.

My body fell numb as I walked away from the now closed door, attempting to hold in the tears that were breaching their way to the surface. My head ached from the loud music bursting my ear drums as I walked towards the stairs, just wanting to be alone in my room.

I stumbled my way up the stairs and pulled my door open before hastily slamming it shut and falling to the floor. I held my hand over my mouth to stop sounds coming as tears fell viciously down my cheeks.

I pulled myself up and sat down on the edge of the bed, wiping my eyes and the makeup I had done earlier. At this point, I couldn't care less if my eyes were blotched black from the tears, or that my cheeks were red and puffy from hastily wiping them until they went away.

However, I suddenly turned away when someone opened my door and walked in. "It's occupied," I shouted out, hoping that whoever it was, whether it was a couple or not, would just leave me alone.

"You ok?" Caleb's voice made me turn around. He immediately noticed that I was crying and sat down on the bed with me. I wanted nothing more than to just push him away, but I didn't have the energy to do it.

"Why do you even care?" I retorted, a lot more hastily than I had prepared to. He shook his head and leaned closer to me. I pushed him away and sat further back. "Please, just leave me alone Caleb."

He leaned closer again as I attempted to push him back, but he was a lot stronger than I was. "I'm not leaving," he replied as I looked into his eyes in defeat. "I do care about you, Gabby." I rolled my eyes at that as he shook his head again. "What happened?"

In one quick movement, I fell into his arms and he wrapped his body around mine. I let the tears fall again, soaking the shoulder of his shirt. He simply laughed and held me tighter when he realised that mascara was all over his white shirt. "Sorry." I laughed as he simply pulled it off.

His muscles were clearly defined when his shirt was off. I swooned at the sight before I was reminded of what had just happened.

He wiped away a few of my tears before holding my cheeks and awaiting the answer. A sigh escaped my lips as I told him about James and Flora coming to the party. He seemed just as angry as I was until a familiar smirk crept onto his lips.

"I'll go change my shirt and clean yourself up, then meet me downstairs by the kitchen table." I gave him a questioning look before nodding anyway and letting him escape my room again.

I wiped the smudged make up from my eyes and cheeks to make it look a little better before I reapplied some mascara and concealer to the areas that had been wiped clean. I readjusted my hair and took a deep breath, telling myself that Caleb had a plan to make me feel better.

Spraying some more perfume on my neck, I opened my bedroom door again, now a lot more calmed and free from tears. However, as I walked back down the stairs, I spotted the two of them again.

However, my emotion was no longer sadness, I was angry and filled with rage against them. They were laughing at something together next to where the alcohol was, somehow mocking me, which made me even angrier.

How dare they even enter this house, let alone smile and laugh at my expense whilst I'm here.

Caleb was standing in the kitchen, like he had said he would. He was now wearing a black shirt, making my knees fall weak slightly. He was laughing with someone I didn't recognise until he saw me.

James and Flora were standing maybe a few metres away as I gritted my teeth hard and walked towards Caleb. He smiled as he saw me and immediately grabbed onto my waist.

I questioned him slightly with my eyes but he gave me a knowing look and I followed his lead when he walked over to one side of the kitchen, in perfect view for James and Flora, and also enough privacy from anyone else at the party.

The both of them spotted us immediately. Flora seemed to swallow, hard. Where as James looked a little angry, just how he looked when we were at the carnival. Thinking back to it, I really wish it would've been me to punch him. Right in the jaw.

I suddenly turned back to Caleb when his warm touch held onto my cheek. I furrowed my eyebrows as he leaned forwards. I almost pushed him away but something drew me towards him. Holding onto him, I leant towards him, knowing exactly what was going to happen.

He crashed his lips on top of mine, pulling me closer to deepen the kiss. I ran my hand through his hair and held onto his cheek with the other. He smiled against the kiss as I completely forgot why we were doing it. I was only thinking about the moment.

Every feeling I had ever had for James had disappeared and every remaining piece of anger inside me was gone.

The kiss had become less of a revenge plot and more of something I actually wanted. Caleb bit my lip slightly as I grinned and kissed him again.

We were both out of breath when we pulled away, still staring into each others eyes, as if nobody else was in the room, especially not James and Flora.

Caleb, instead, smirked and turned to look at James and Flora. "It worked." I felt myself fall out of the daze I was in with Caleb as I felt my heart sink a little. This was just about revenge for Caleb, nothing else.

When I turned around, James looked even angrier than before, with smoke practically bursting from his eardrums. Flora, however, was looking over at James pleadingly, pulling on his arm to get him to walk away.

Although I wanted more from the kiss, I smiled nevertheless and turned back to Caleb, now smirking at me

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Laughing with Caleb's friends, I looked over and saw Kylie and Clara flirting with some boys in their grade. Definitely the boys they're going to winter formal with. Kylie would never flirt with a boy unless she had to.

"Shots!" The boy next to me shouted, and instead of staying away from the vodka, I didn't care. I wanted to taste something on my lips that wasn't Caleb but instead, a shot glass.

After around five shots of the disgusting liquid, I was beginning to feel a slight buzz in my head. Caleb was laughing the whole time as he too, took a few shots.

However, after taking one more, I stumbled over to the stairs and sat on the staircase, trying to balance myself before I did something stupid or fell over.

I played a game on my phone, hoping to distract myself from how drunk I was, and how much I wanted to kiss Caleb again. I suddenly felt the presence of somebody beside me and it wasn't until I turned that my expression fell.

James.

"I need to talk to you-." Before he could finish, I pushed his chest away and began walking back up the stairs. I knew the only way to sober up was to go to bed, and in this state, speaking to James was a bad idea. "Leave me alone."

However, my wrist was suddenly grabbed onto as I reached the top of the stairs. James was holding onto it and I simply pulled it away with haste. "Look, I'm so sorry about what happened between Flora and I. It was a mistake at the time and I'm so sorry." He begged but I wasn't having any of it.

"You made a big mistake!" I shouted as I was about to grab onto my door handle. "Actually," I said as I turned around to him again. "You were the mistake." I shouted again as I ran into my room and slammed the door, only for it to be opened again by James.

He went to hold my hand but I pulled it away as quickly as I could. "Don't touch me!" I shouted louder and walked away, hoping that he would get the hint and leave me alone.

"You broke my heart James, you slept with my best friend! Does that not make sense in that small head of yours?" I finished as I pushed him out of the room and locked the door, knowing that he would leave me alone.

As much as he would want to speak to me and apologise, he knew when it was time to leave me alone for good. And now was that moment.

The tears fell again and this time, I didn't stop them. I now wasn't sure what I was actually crying about, whether it was about Caleb or James, I didn't even know.

After staring at my clock for what felt like hours, the music finally stopped at around five in the morning. The downstairs front door finally closed about half an hour later, signalling that everyone had left, thankfully.

I didn't want to be alone, I wanted someone to talk to. Stumbling into the hallway, I was still drunk and the only name I could think of was Caleb's. Sliding his door open, I looked in to see Caleb with a girl laying beside him in the bed.

Feeling my heart drop from my chest, I closed the door and struggled to breathe as I ran back to my room and fell down on the bed.

What is wrong with me?

The only person I knew I needed right now was my mom. I wished to hold her and hug her tightly, never letting go. I had never missed her this much before, and I'm not sure I could go much long without seeing her.

Another stray tear escaped my eye for about the hundredth time tonight. It seeped into the pillow as I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

Chapter 17

My head was in agony when I woke up in the morning. My mouth felt dry and my face felt red from how much I had cried last night. Make up still covered my face, making me feel even more disgusting than I already felt.

Vomit threatened to make its way up my throat before I swallowed it back, craving aspirin to aid my hangover. I wiped the remaining make up from my face before cleaning my teeth and tying my hair up on top of my head.

The thought of how disgusting the house would be was making me feel even more sick to my stomach.

Water had been placed on my bedside table by someone, but I wasn't exactly worrying about who put it there. I swallowed large gulps of the liquid until my throat felt more refreshed and the taste of vodka had disappeared from my mouth.

It was a Saturday morning and that was probably one of the only things I actually knew at this point. I checked the clock to see it had just turned two in the afternoon.

Instead of lying in bed all day, I stood up slowly and made my way downstairs, ignoring the mess around my feet and across all the furniture. Red cups littered every inch of the house, making me imagine how much alcohol was actually consumed last night.

I shuddered at the thought before I scanned the cupboard and found some aspirin. I took it with some water before sitting at the kitchen table and holding my head in my hands.

The smell of the house resembled a mix of cigarettes and vodka whilst someone had accidentally used the fruit bowl as an ash tray.

Clara and Kylie were also in the kitchen, eating breakfast, surrounded by empty cups that were once filled with alcohol. "Hey, how was your night?" Clara asked, hinting that she knew I got drunk.

"Fine, how was yours?" I asked back sarcastically to show that I understood what she meant and that I really wasn't feeling too good. She simply laughed and turned to Kylie.

"Ours was good, wasn't it?" Kylie nodded to her quickly as she was too busy scoffing down whatever cereal she had poured for herself.

Footsteps tiptoed down the stairs and thinking it was Caleb, I turned straight away to see a girl who I didn't actually know, walking down the stairs wearing less than half of her clothing.

"Sorry, where's the front door?" She asked as I pointed round a corner and to where the door was as she scooted out from where she was standing. Kylie and Clara laughed at her expense as grinned, despite feeling the exact opposite inside.

A strange feeling crept inside me as I shrugged it away and pulled out a black bin bag and began filling it with all the littered cups and food that had been left on the side in the kitchen.

Caleb walked down shortly after the girl, making my stomach twist again. "How is everyone on this fine morning?" He asked, stretching out his body, obviously in a good mood despite the hangover he probably had.

"Fine," I bluntly replied, skipping past him to start cleaning at the stairs. Picking up cups was more boring that I expected, then again my expectations couldn't have been very high.

Caleb simply smiled as he grabbed another bin bag. "I'll help," Caleb said as he strutted over to me, picking up cups on his way. I rolled my eyes as I walked up each step, picking up everything that had been thrown there.

I was getting very fed up of seeing and hearing about cups by the time I had finished on the stairs. "What's up?" Caleb whispered to me, leaning down to my level which was sitting on one of the stairs, picking glitter from the carpet, which I didn't even understand how it had gotten there.

"Nothing." I replied to him, biting my bottom lip and picking up as much trash as I could find to avoid a conversation. I think I was just grabbing at nothing at one point when I walked over to the living room.

However, Caleb followed me as Clara and Kylie continued cleaning the kitchen and everything around it. "There is something, just tell me." I shook my head and threw a few more cups into my bag.

Something was wrong. I really needed him for a part of last night before bed and he was cuddled up with some random girl that couldn't even wear proper clothes when she walked out of the house.

Sighing, I filled up one black bag then started filling another as Caleb sat on the couch next to where I was standing. Before I could move away, he pulled me by my waist so I was sitting next to him.

"Get off," I almost shouted, getting angrier as he tried to talk to me. I stood back up and hastily threw more trash into the bag. "I can see why James and Flora can't stand to be around you sometimes." He smirked as my stomach turned inside out.

He was the last person I'd ever expect to say something that cruel to me. I wasn't just a throw away girl he could treat like shit, but I was sure feeling like it.

We finished the cleaning in silence except for the talking between Clara and Kylie, but other than that, everyone did their job and completed it rather well. The house looked good as new once we had finished at some point in the evening.

I think we were all too tired to speak and I sure as hell didn't want to speak to Caleb again after what he said to me. My phone started ringing from upstairs so I sprinted up to get it, wanting to get away from the silence that was filling the house.

Every time my phone rang, I'd always hoped it was my mom telling me she was coming home. I missed her like crazy and after everything that's happened this past week, I really needed my mom here, back home with Kylie and I.

Putting the phone to my ear and not checking caller ID, I answered it with a hopeful look in my eyes. "Hello?" I spoke into the phone, waiting for someone to reply.

"Hey." I noticed her voice straight away. Anger ran through my veins as I prepared to hang up on her. Just before I pulled down the phone away from my ear, she shouted down the phone

"Please don't hang up, I really need to speak to you!" I decided that I didn't exactly have much to lose by listening to her. I wouldn't forgive her as easily as I wanted to. My anger was more directed at James now that I had taken my anger out on Flora.

"What is it?"

"Please come to my house later, I really need to speak to you," she confessed in a voice that seemed like she was crying.

I thought about it for a while. I stayed so silent on the phone, Flora had to say my name a few times just to get answer from me. "Fine." I replied, as much as I didn't want to. She seems shocked when she answered.

As much as I hated to admit it, I missed Flora. I knew how much she had liked James and I took him for myself. What she did was the worst thing a person could ever do to me, but I didn't feel that way about James anymore.

As much of a bitch Flora was, I needed someone to

to talk to. Surviving alone was becoming too difficult and I needed my best friend back. My mom always taught me the saying of forgive but don't forget, and this situation was exactly when that saying would apply.

I hung up shortly after and breathed out a sigh. I wasn't completely sure if it was a happy, upset or confused sigh.

I soon changed out of last night's clothes and into some suitable clothing which consisted of some long leggings, a loose top and my black boots. It wasn't exactly a fashion statement but they were my most comfortable clothes and I wasn't too bothered about looking good to walk a few blocks down the street.

Not mentioning it to anyone, I walked out into the freezing cold air. Flora's house was only a short walk away so I crossed my arms to conserve heat I had left in my body before walking with my head down towards Flora's.

By the time I got to her house, I was almost frozen solid from the wind and the freezing cold temperature. Knocking slowly on the door, I remembered when I could just walk in without asking and it would be a normal thing. Now it felt strange.

I don't think I've ever knocked on her door before except from when I first met her.

From about kindergarten, we've been inseparable and I didn't want to lose that with her over a boy, especially a boy I didn't care about anymore. I mentally sighed as she opened the door, giving me a sad smile before motioning me inside. It felt strange to feel unwelcomed in my best friend's house.

I knew I would never forget about what she had done, and she knew that. She knew that the whole time we were speaking and her continuous apologies reminded me that I would never ever forget.

"It's fine, Flo," I said slowly between gritted teeth after she had apologised numerous times and had cried another few times. She leaned in and gave me a tight hug. I did the same with less comfort.

It would take me a while to completely forgive her, but I guessed that this was a start. I still didn't think I could bring myself to forgive James yet. He was a piece of shit and although Flora was also, I needed someone that I could lean on.

And she was the only person I knew I somehow could.

My head was in agony when I woke up in the morning. My mouth felt dry and my face felt red from how much I had cried last night. Makeup still covered my face, making me feel even more disgusting than I already felt.

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I think we were all too tired to speak and I sure as hell didn't want to speak to Caleb again after what he said to me. My phone started ringing from upstairs so I sprinted up to get it, wanting to get away from the silence that was filling the house.

Every time my phone rang, I'd always hoped it was my mom telling me she was coming home. I missed her like crazy and after everything that's happened this past week, I really needed my mom here, back home with Kylie and I.

Putting the phone to my ear and not checking caller ID, I answered it with a hopeful look in my eyes. "Hello?" I spoke into the phone, waiting for someone to reply.

"Hey." I noticed her voice straight away. Anger ran through my veins as I prepared to hang up on her. Just before I pulled down the phone away from my ear, she shouted down the phone

"Please don't hang up, I really need to speak to you!" I decided that I didn't exactly have much to lose by listening to her. I wouldn't forgive her as easily as I wanted to. My anger was more directed at James now that I had taken my anger out on Flora.

"What is it?"

"Please come to my house later, I really need to speak to you," she confessed in a voice that seemed like she was crying.

I thought about it for a while. I stayed so silent on the phone, Flora had to say my name a few times just to get answer from me. "Fine." I replied, as much as I didn't want to. She seems shocked when she answered.

As much as I hated to admit it, I missed Flora. I knew how much she had liked James and I took him for myself. What she did was the worst thing a person could ever do to me, but I didn't feel that way about James anymore.

As much of a bitch Flora was, I needed someone to

to talk to. Surviving alone was becoming too difficult and I needed my best friend back. My mom always taught me the saying of forgive but don't forget, and this situation was exactly when that saying would apply.

I hung up shortly after and breathed out a sigh. I wasn't completely sure if it was a happy, upset or confused sigh.

I soon changed out of last night's clothes and into some suitable clothing which consisted of some long leggings, a loose top and my black boots. It wasn't exactly a fashion statement but they were my most comfort clothes and I wasn't too bothered about looking good to walk a few blocks down the street.

Not mentioning it to anyone, I walked out into the freezing cold air. Flora's house was only a short walk away so I crossed my arms to conserve heat I had left in my body before walking with my head down towards Flora's.

By the time I got to her house, I was almost frozen solid from the wind and the freezing cold temperature. Knocking slowly on the door, I remembered when I could just walk in without asking and it would be a normal thing. Now it felt strange.

I don't think I've ever knocked on her door before except from when I first met her.

From about kindergarten, we've been inseparable and I didn't want to lose that with her over a boy, especially a boy I didn't care about anymore. I mentally sighed as she opened the door, giving me a sad smile before motioning me inside. It felt strange to feel un-welcomed in my best friends house.

I knew I would never forget about what she had done, and she knew that. She knew that the whole time we were speaking and her continuous apologies reminded me that I would never ever forget.

"It's fine, Flo," I said slowly between gritted teeth after she had apologised numerous times and had cried another few times. She leaned in and gave me a tight hug. I did the same with less comfort.

It would take me a while to completely forgive her, but I guessed that this was a start. I still didn't think I could bring myself to forgive James yet. He was a piece of shit and although Flora was also, I needed someone that I could lean on.

And she was the only person I knew I somehow could.

Chapter 18

I was a lot happier when I arrived back at the house after having been to Floras, and spending the rest of the evening at the park, away from Caleb completely.

Even though Flora and I had made up, I was never going to forget what she had done to me, and she knew that.

I just wanted everything to be good between Caleb and I already; it's had been long enough. One minute he's sweet and actually somewhat kind to me, and the next moment, he seems like the sarcastic, horrible boy that arrived at our school in handcuffs.

Walking back home, the winds were blowing heavier and the air was becoming colder and I knew I needed to really start wearing coats and jackets when it got like this. My hands were shivering and my lips were turning purple at the temperature.

Food was the last thing on my mind and I just wanted to get to bed and sleep off the hangover that had been clouding over my mind all day.

However, someone like Caleb, who is probably immune to hangovers by now, can continue his day like normal whilst the less fortunate ones like me are stuck in bed with pills, sick buckets and water.

Walking inside the house, it was all clean except the few trash bags outside the front door, which were filled with red cups and alcohol, with a pungent smell of cigarettes omitting from it.

"Well done guys," I shouted as I walked in to see Clara and Kylie lying on the sofa with a blanket in between them and a Netflix show playing on the tv. I hated to admit that I was insanely jealous and actually excited to get back up to my room and into bed.

They both nodded and smiled before I walked slowly upstairs to my room where I changed into some comfier clothes than what I was currently in. I had no clue where Caleb was but at this point, I didn't really care. I was too hungover to worry about his whereabouts.

Turning on the television, I switched to Netflix and blindly voted between Gossip Girl and The Vampire Diaries. I suddenly landed on Gossip Girl as I began playing the episode about Chuck and Blair not admitting that they love each other.

Like usual.

Not realising it, I got to halfway through the episode when my eyes fell closed. The hangover had finally taken over and I drifted asleep, just what I had been wanting since I woke up this morning.

• • •

My eyes were practically stuck together when I finally woke up. I searched frantically for my phone until I found it and pulled it up to where I could see it. The screen immediately turned on to reveal the time.

"Shit!" I shouted as I realised that I had slept a lot longer than I had ever intended to. It was late morning and I had fallen asleep rather early last night. At least my hangover had completely disappeared.

Light was bursting through the windows with the curtains open. I mentally scolded myself for not closing them when I fell asleep.

I stood up and noticed Mike and Katherine's car was now parked on the drive, signalling that they were home after their weekend at their beach house. I had hoped that someone in the house had moved the trash bags last night, otherwise we were totally screwed.

I could hear quiet talking downstairs but it wasn't loud enough for me to actually hear what they were talking about. Walking downstairs, Caleb, Mike and Katherine were sitting on the couch, talking about the weekend.

"We just hung out and ate pizza." Caleb told them and I was rather surprised that they couldn't smell the abhorrent smell of alcohol and cigarettes still present in the air.

"Gabby!" Mike shouted out as he noticed me coming down the stairs. I smiled back at them and sat next Caleb as they continued to talk about what they did at the beach house and how nice it was to be there.

"So, did you have a good weekend?" Katherine asked me as I smiled and looked over at Caleb, forgetting that I wasn't on good terms with him. He simply smirked back and looked to his parents.

"It was great," I smiled and felt a small nudge from Caleb. I had to hold myself together to stop myself from laughing. I never thought we would get away with it, but here we were. Katherine was smiling to Mike before she looked back to the both of us.

Katherine immediately pulled herself up and began making brunch for all of us. Mike helped as Caleb and I sat down opposite them, talking about their weekend again and how school was at the moment.

"Clara, Kylie, can you come down here please?" Katherine shouted up the stairs as I played with the fork in front of me. Mike was currently talking sports with Caleb as I was in my own little world.

They both walked slowly down the stairs and sat at the table with us. "We have some important news," thinking it was going to be about my mom, I gulped back any lumps that were sitting in my throat.

"We have someone who will be staying with us for a few weeks," Katherine told us as she smiled at all of us. We all looked between each other as I heard the trunk being closed of a car outside the house.

Mike grinned as he went over to the door and greeted whoever was on the other side. A tall, dark, familiar figure stepped through the door and my stomach immediately sunk.

"Jake?" Caleb spoke in an angered voice. I rested my hand on his shoulder as Jake smirked back at all of us, looking like he knew something nobody else did.

"Its nice to see you too, bother." He said to Caleb as I felt his body tense beneath my hand. "Hey Clara," she also looked rather nervous at seeing Jake at the door. However, I could only concentrate on the sinister smile on his lips as he looked over at Kylie and I.

"And who might you two be?" I swallowed as I realised that he knew who I was. He had spoken about me when I first met him at the party that he beat up Caleb. I already knew he was a horrible person, and I didn't need to spend time in a house with him to know that.

"I'm Gabriella, and this is Kylie," he smirked at me again whilst I spoke, making me feel even more uncomfortable than I already was.

• • •

Storming up to my room after the long and extremely awkward silence, I shut the door and sat down on my bed. I felt more sympathy for Caleb, knowing that he would have to stay in the same house as his lying older brother.

However, a small knock sounded at my door as I rested my head in my hands. "Hey, mind if I come in?" Jake asked as he opened the door.

No.

He walked in anyway and casually sat next to me, putting his hand on my thigh. "Get off," I shoved his hand away and shuffled a little to form a distance between us.

"So what about you and your wife thinking that Caleb was stalking you?" I asked with a questioning glare. If he hated Caleb's presence so much, he wouldn't be here to slowly torture him.

"That was a lie, but I'm sure your boyfriend told you that whole story," I held my anger to myself and gritted my teeth. My fingernails dug into my palms as I turned away from, not even wanting to

look at the evil person in front of me, someone who felt a thrill from lying about and beating on his younger brother.

"He's not my boyfriend," I argued back as he smirked knowingly. I wanted to push him away and get him out of my room, but I was planted in my place and I couldn't move.

"You know he likes you, don't you?" The rhetorical question kept my voice silent. Caleb didn't like me. He wouldn't bring home a million girls and sneak them in if he liked me. He wouldn't dare.

Smirking again, he patted my shoulder and walked towards the door. "I'm in the upstairs room if you need me," he waved behind as he strutted out, closing the door leaving me in complete silence.

Turning on Netflix for the second time, I laid back on my bed to think and keep myself calm. I hated the fact that he was here. As much as Caleb annoyed me, I would never wish something like this on him. It's torture.

And Caleb didn't deserve it.

Chapter 19

Waking up on Monday morning, I had forgotten that the person Caleb hated most in the world was literally right above me. I sat up and listened to the quick shuffling from upstairs, making my body feel uncomfortable.

I felt the need to bang on the ceiling to tell him to shut up, but as my height was a disadvantage, I couldn't reach, even standing on the bed. I laughed to myself as I laid back onto the bed and let my head fall to the side.

"Wake up!" I suddenly heard Caleb's voice shout from the other side of my door, making me wake up completely, "I'm taking you to school." Caleb bluntly finished as I heard his footsteps retreating away from the door again.

Sighing quietly, I got up and ran to the shower before anybody else could take it. I wanted to be first in so I could be ready and finish some homework I stupidly hadn't done and instead watched too much Netflix. But then again, that could all be blamed on the day hangover I had suffered with.

Soaking my hair and body, I indulged in this small amount of time I would have in the warmth of the shower. "Hurry up Gabby!" Kylie shouted from outside the bathroom, knocking quite loudly on the door. "I'll be out in a sec," I shouted back, lying. I turned up the heat and washed my hair.

After taking my time and feeling fully clean, wrapped a towel round my body and walked out of the bathroom to an angry looking Kylie. "It's meant to be ten minutes per person," she practically growled as she shoved past me and closed the door behind her.

I simply rolled my eyes as my body suddenly ran into someone else in the hall, despite nobody except for Kylie being out here earlier. Looking up, it was Jake with hair that looked a mess on top of his head.

"Sorry Gabriella, my bad," he said slowly, sounding like an actual gentleman for once, but the smirk on his face told me otherwise. I rolled my eyes again and shoved past him to get back to my room.

I changed into some blue jeans and a white shirt before applying a little bit of make up and drying my hair into a state that looked decent enough to go to school with.

Caleb was slouched down on the couch when I finally walked downstairs. My eyes caught the side of his head as I looked him up and down. His hair was messily done and he was dressed rather casual, but he looked good.

I mentally scolded myself for checking him out when he spotted me out of the corner of his eye. My cheeks heated up as I turned and walked into the kitchen to make myself some breakfast. "Are you blushing?"

"No!" I immediately denied it as I made myself some toast and ate it as I followed Caleb out to the car. He was still smirking when I sat down next to him and avoided his eyes by looking out of the window instead.

The journey to school itself was rather awkward. It was completely silent and I felt sick to my stomach that this was what our short-lived friendship had already turned into.

Climbing out of the car, I closed the door and tried to slam it but because of little strength in my arms, I failed miserably. I was angry and the silence was annoying me more than when I used to have to babysit Kylie for a day.

"Hey, wait!" the warmth of his hand around my wrist made me instantly turn round to face him. I hated that he still had this kind of effect on me, even when I was angry with him. "What?" I asked, trying to sound angry, but it came out as more of a whisper than anything.

"I'm taking you for some food tonight," he told me bluntly but with a smile tugging on his face. My eyebrows suddenly lifted as I felt confusion run through me. Where the hell had this come from?

Before I could even answer his question, he walked off in the opposite direction with a salute. "Meet by the car after school." He shouted with his back to me as my eyebrows now furrowed together.

I should've said no but I couldn't help the silence that had fallen when he had asked me. I wanted to hit myself for not arguing but I was too stunned to say anything to him when he was standing in front of me.

Nothing good could ever come from Caleb and I being together, but something draws me in and I just wanted to be with him sometimes, but then I realise what he does as soon as I'm drawn in. He ruins it and we argue again.

• • •

After many classes of attempting to avoid James once again, I succeeded and finally reached the cafeteria with Flora actually sitting with me. I didn't think she would, but she was sucking up to me, attempting to make me fully forgive her for what she had done.

But how could I when she was still involved with James, and had also slept with him when I was still his girlfriend.

With a faked smile, I walked over and sat down with a tray of fries and a sandwich whilst Flora had her own lunch from home. "So, how's things with James?" I asked sarcastically as she ducked her head awkwardly.

Although it wasn't a great question to ask, I knew that we needed to talk about it, and keeping it as a buried conversation wasn't helping anyone. I knew I was over him, but that didn't stop me from wanting to know what position they were in exactly.

Just as I said it, James walked past with a sad smile on his face. I glared back at him as he sat on a table with some other friends.

"We're just friends," she said whilst picking at her food and looking over at James ever so often. I simply rolled my eyes and looked over at her. "Bull shit Flora," she looked up at my expression, and surprisingly, I wasn't actually too angry.

I didn't feel as heartbroken when I thought about them being together. I guessed that I must've not felt how I should've when I was with James. Something was obviously missing, otherwise I would have never spoken to Flora for the rest of my life.

Our conversation about James was finished quickly as we both knew it was not a conversation subject we would really like to prolong.

Instead, we talked about the things we used to. It was still rather awkward between us, but it was getting better and I knew that it wouldn't be like this forever.

I knew that Caleb hated that I was talking to her again, but I couldn't stand the silence that would drown me in the cafeteria when I didn't have anyone to talk to.

After school was finally finished, it was raining heavily as I watched students run to take cover and sprint to their cars to get home. However, my Spanish folder was the only thing keeping my head dry and I hated that Caleb was laughing at me when I finally reached his car.

He was strangely leaning against it in the pouring rain and I wanted nothing more than to hit him for being so stupid.

"Get in the car, you idiot!" I shouted at him as he climbed in one side and I climbed in the other. "Are you stupid? Have you ever heard of an umbrella?" I asked as if he was still in kindergarten and didn't know what he was doing.

"I was making sure you didn't stand me up," he winked at me with dripping hair almost covering his eyes. I wanted, so desperately to wipe the hair from his face but I stopped myself before my hand could move.

"Do you really think I would stand you up with the weather like this? I need a ride," I smirked over at him as he simply laughed and drove off.

I was hoping this was the start of our second attempt at a friendship, despite knowing that he was going to hurt me again. He was going to bring back another girl and I would feel heartbroken again, and again.

Maybe I just liked the pain of a broken heart.

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Chapter 20

Caleb Andrews

Looking over at her running towards me, her hair was now partly wet and she was carrying a folder over her head. She looked beautiful, even if she did have an angered look plastered onto her faces directed at me.

She was angry because I was standing outside in the rain and the truth was that I wanted to make sure that she was actually coming. I had seen her in the cafeteria with Flora today and it made me hate that she had gone back to a friend that had done something so horrible to her. She shouldn't even be counted as a friend anymore.

She climbed into the passenger seat as I did the same on my side. I knew exactly where I would take her and I had planned it ever since I had first kissed her. There was something that ran through me when I kissed Gabby, and I couldn't help but want to feel that again.

There was a diner I knew about a few towns over that nobody ever went to from this town and so I knew that it would just be the both of us, no distractions.

Not even any friends I had made at school knew skit this. Then again the friends I've recently made are two guys that have been suspended almost six times in one year, so it wasn't exactly looking good.

"So, where are you taking me?" She asked as she leaned against the divider between us and rested her chin against her palms. I chuckled at her as she was desperate to know where we were actually going.

"To eat food," I replied back, making her huff in annoyance. I had learnt by now that she really wasn't a fan of being in the unknown. She always wanted to know what was happening, even if it was something as small as where I was taking her to get some food.

"You'll find out soon enough," I replied with a smirk as her stomach made a gurgling sound, signalling that she was hungry. "Soon enough is too long," she complained and leant back in her seat out of annoyance.

We had been officially travelling for only around five minutes and she was already hungry. This girl really doesn't have much patience when it comes to food.

After around twenty minutes of Gabby shouting into my ear at being hungry, we finally arrived outside of Helen's Diner. It's been my favourite place to go to since arriving in this town, and I had been to it almost every week, mainly just to get away from everything.

It was the best meal I'd ever had and it still was. "Let's go!" I shouted as I parked up in the near empty parking lot and opened the door as she did the same. "This looks so cute," she squealed once again like a little girl.

"Come on," I put my arm around her warm shoulders and dragged her inside to see the new young waitress that was working last week.

Last week, I flirted with her like I usually would, but something felt different between Gabby and I. It felt strange to talk to another girl when I was with her, despite there still being an awkwardness between us about me bringing girls back last week.

"Welcome to Helen's Diner," the girl winked at me, already knowing who I was. "Welcome back," she grinned and led us over to a small table against the window. She placed her hand on my shoulder as she handed us the menus and walked back to the counter.

Gulping back, I stared back at Gabby to gauge her reaction but she was now reading the menu with an intrigued look in her eyes, which made my lips tug into a smile once again.

"Caleb, how's my favourite customer?" Maggie, the older waitress, shouted as she ran over to our table and pulled me into a small yet tight hug. It the weeks I had been coming here, Maggie had quickly become my favourite waitress and was always excited when she saw me come in.

Receiving a questioning look from Gabby, I smiled at her. "I'm good thanks, how are you?" I asked as she smiled down at me and leant up against our table.

"I'm good hun, who's this?" She asked, making me grin over at Gabby. Her cheeks, like usual, had turned a tinge of pink as she looked a little nervous sitting opposite me.

"This is Gabriella," I replied and looked over at her. Maggie smiled and shook Gabby's hand. "Nice to meet you darlin'," Maggie poured another customer some coffee whilst still speaking to us.

"You too" Gabby replied as she smiled happily and played with her hands. She had been looking at the menu but since it had been put down, I assumed she had chosen.

"What can I get you guys?" She asked both of us as she pulled out a notepad and wrote my order down, already knowing it like the back of my hands. They had an amazing steak and fries, and my mouth watered just thinking of it.

"I've got your order, hun," she said to me as I smirked, "What can I get you?" She asked, turning to Gabby.

"I'll have the chicken nuggets please," Gabby replied as Maggie thanked us, then walked off back to the waitressing counter.

"How old are you again?" I joked to Gabby as she leaned over and playfully hit me. She sat back and played with her hands again.

"I just really like chicken nuggets."

The meals came after around ten minutes of a conversation that I actually enjoyed for once with Gabby. Other times, we would be arguing and I would hate every minute of it.

We both scoffed down the food in front of us as she grinned after each chicken nugget she put in her mouth. There was a comfortable silence around us, but it was probably because of how hungry we were.

"So, what was prison like?" She suddenly asked as I coughed slightly on my food. She laughed at my reaction as I looked up into her eyes. "Well, it's not actual prison, it was just a detention centre, and I guess it wasn't great," I told her as she shrugged and continued to eat her chicken nuggets, mildly happy with my answer.

I laughed before digging into my steak again and shaking my head. She really was a strange one.

Gabriella Hart

Caleb had actually been genuinely nice to me today with the occasional comment, which was pretty common in our strange, dysfunctional friendship.

"You know, you're the first girl Caleb has brought here before," Maggie smirked as I watched Caleb rush out to the car in the parking lot. He was going to drive it up to the door so the both of us didn't have to run in the rain.

"Really?" I questioned as I turned to her. A small smile crept on my lips as she nodded. I had imagined Caleb taking girls here all the time when he didn't want them each knowing about each other. It was pretty much two girls a day with him.

I waved goodbye to Maggie as I ran out and climbed into the car. "Thank you," I whispered to him with a smile as he drove back down the road and back home. Even though I was thanking him for the meal, I was also thanking him for everything else.

He was actually here for me when not many other people were.

"Never happening again, princess," he replied as I laughed.

It didn't take long for us to get home and I noticed that no other cars were on the drive, meaning that Mike and Katherine weren't actually home yet. Caleb opened the front door for me as we both walked through.

Caleb went straight back to his usual bored expression and laid down on the couch to watch tv. Running up to my room, I noticed Kylie and Clara's room was open and they weren't in there.

"Where's Clara and Kylie?" I shouted downstairs to Caleb, loud enough so I could be heard over whatever the hell he was watching. "They've gone to a friends," he shouted back louder so that I could hear.

I felt bad that I hadn't properly check in on Kylie lately. We hadn't spoken like we used to, and I wondered about how she was and if she was still ok. She didn't even know my father, but I knew that it still forced a weight onto her shoulders.

Being reminded of Kylie and Clara, I suddenly remembered that I still had mine and James' tickets to the winter ball the school was holding soon.

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"Hello Gabriella, Remember me?"

Caleb Andrews

Looking over at her running towards me, her hair was now partly wet and she was carrying a folder over her head. She looked beautiful, even if she did have an angered look plastered onto her faces directed at me.

She was angry because I was standing outside in the rain and the truth was that I wanted to make sure that she was actually coming. I had seen her in the cafeteria with Flora today and it made me hate that she had gone back to a friend that had done something so horrible to her. She shouldn't even be counted as a friend anymore.

She climbed into the passenger seat as I did the same on my side. I knew exactly where I would take her and I had planned it ever since I had first kissed her. There was something that ran through me when I kissed Gabby, and I couldn't help but want to feel that again.

There was a diner I knew about a few towns over that nobody ever went to from this town and so I knew that it would just be the both of us, no distractions.

Not even any friends I had made at school knew skit this. Then again the friends I've recently made are two guys that have been suspended almost six times in one year, so it wasn't exactly looking good.

"So, where are you taking me?" She asked as she leaned against the divider between us and rested her chin against her palms. I chuckled at her as she was desperate to know where we were actually going.

"To eat food," I replied back, making her huff in annoyance. I had learnt by now that she really wasn't a fan of being in the unknown. She always wanted to know what was happening, even if it was something as small as where I was taking her to get some food.

"You'll find out soon enough," I replied with a smirk as her stomach made a gurgling sound, signalling that she was hungry. "Soon enough is too long," she complained and leant back in her seat out of annoyance.

We had been officially travelling for only around five minutes and she was already hungry. This girl really doesn't have much patience when it comes to food.

After around twenty minutes of Gabby shouting into my ear at being hungry, we finally arrived outside of Helen's Diner. It's been my favourite place to go to since arriving in this town, and I had been to it almost every week, mainly just to get away from everything.

It was the best meal I'd ever had and it still was. "Let's go!" I shouted as I parked up in the near empty parking lot and opened the door as she did the same. "This looks so cute," she squealed once again like a little girl.

"Come on," I put my arm around her warm shoulders and dragged her inside to see the new young waitress that was working last week.

Last week, I flirted with her like I usually would, but something felt different between Gabby and I. It felt strange to talk to another girl when I was with her, despite there still being an awkwardness between us about me bringing girls back last week.

"Welcome to Helen's Diner," the girl winked at me, already knowing who I was. "Welcome back," she grinned and led us over to a small table against the window. She placed her hand on my shoulder as she handed us the menus and walked back to the counter.

Gulping back, I stared back at Gabby to gauge her reaction but she was now reading the menu with an intrigued look in her eyes, which made my lips tug into a smile once again.

"Caleb, how's my favourite customer?" Maggie, the older waitress, shouted as she ran over to our table and pulled me into a small yet tight hug. It the weeks I had been coming here, Maggie had quickly become my favourite waitress and was always excited when she saw me come in.

Receiving a questioning look from Gabby, I smiled at her. "I'm good thanks, how are you?" I asked as she smiled down at me and leant up against our table.

"I'm good hun, who's this?" She asked, making me grin over at Gabby. Her cheeks, like usual, had turned a tinge of pink as she looked a little nervous sitting opposite me.

"This is Gabriella," I replied and looked over at her. Maggie smiled and shook Gabby's hand. "Nice to meet you darlin'," Maggie poured another customer some coffee whilst still speaking to us.

"You too" Gabby replied as she smiled happily and played with her hands. She had been looking at the menu but since it had been put down, I assumed she had chosen.

"What can I get you guys?" She asked both of us as she pulled out a notepad and wrote my order down, already knowing it like the back of my hands. They had an amazing steak and fries, and my mouth watered just thinking of it.

"I've got your order, hun," she said to me as I smirked, "What can I get you?" She asked, turning to Gabby.

"I'll have the chicken nuggets please," Gabby replied as Maggie thanked us, then walked off back to the waitressing counter.

"How old are you again?" I joked to Gabby as she leaned over and playfully hit me. She sat back and played with her hands again.

"I just really like chicken nuggets."

The meals came after around ten minutes of a conversation that I actually enjoyed for once with Gabby. Other times, we would be arguing and I would hate every minute of it.

We both scoffed down the food in front of us as she grinned after each chicken nugget she put in her mouth. There was a comfortable silence around us, but it was probably because of how hungry we were.

"So, what was prison like?" She suddenly asked as I coughed slightly on my food. She laughed at my reaction as I looked up into her eyes. "Well, it's not actual prison, it was just a detention centre, and I guess it wasn't great," I told her as she shrugged and continued to eat her chicken nuggets, mildly happy with my answer.

I laughed before digging into my steak again and shaking my head. She really was a strange one.

Gabriella Hart

Caleb had actually been genuinely nice to me today with the occasional comment, which was pretty common in our strange, dysfunctional friendship.

"You know, you're the first girl Caleb has brought here before," Maggie smirked as I watched Caleb rush out to the car in the parking lot. He was going to drive it up to the door so the both of us didn't have to run in the rain.

"Really?" I questioned as I turned to her. A small smile crept on my lips as she nodded. I had imagined Caleb taking girls here all the time when he didn't want them each knowing about each other. It was pretty much two girls a day with him.

I waved goodbye to Maggie as I ran out and climbed into the car. "Thank you," I whispered to him with a smile as he drove back down the road and back home. Even though I was thanking him for the meal, I was also thanking him for everything else.

He was actually here for me when not many other people were.

"Never happening again, princess," he replied as I laughed.

It didn't take long for us to get home and I noticed that no other cars were on the drive, meaning that Mike and Katherine weren't actually home yet. Caleb opened the front door for me as we both walked through.

Caleb went straight back to his usual bored expression and laid down on the couch to watch tv. Running up to my room, I noticed Kylie and Clara's room was open and they weren't in there.

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"Hello Gabriella, Remember me?"

Chapter 21

The voice on the other end of the phone was sinister and slow. Despite the voice being rather different to what I had remembered, it was all too familiar and I was scared to ask who it was.

"Who is this?" I asked into the phone as my heart fell through my chest. I already guessed who it was, but I needed confirmation or to be wrong. I would much rather be wrong.

"You know who it is, Gabby," I hadn't even realised that I had stopped breathing and I couldn't utter another breath or word. "It's your father, Matthew." I played with the hem of my shirt to distract myself, but it was no use.

"How did you get my number?" My voice came out shaky as I felt vomit crawl up my throat. Knowing that it was my father on the other end was making my body tense and I couldn't move.

"I found your mother," the four words escaped his lips as his voice sounded deep and rough. I felt myself begin to speak, but nothing came out. "I'm actually on my way to see her now, in Oak Springs, Florida."

I didn't even know where my mother was staying, but the certainty in his voice told me that he knew exactly where. Oak springs was a place we used to visit for family vacations, it was the only time I remembered being happy before my father ended up in prison.

I never thought my father would think to go back there, especially to find my mother. His words pierced my ears every time he spoke as if felt tears prick at my eyes.

"What do you want?" My voice was dry and quiet when I spoke. If there was some way to keep him away from my mother, then I was going to do whatever I could.

"How's Kylie?" He asked, changing the subject and making my skin crawl. Kylie wasn't born yet when my father left, so just hearing him say her name made me want to kill him. I wanted to hurt him for everything he had done to my mother.

I wouldn't let him hurt her again.

"What do you want?" I repeated, attempting to make my voice sound a little more stern, but it failed. I attempted to keep my breathing steady to stop myself from having a panic attack.

I heard him sigh on the other end of the line as I dug my fingernails into my palms. "Meet me in Oak Springs, at Café Florence." I knew where that was seeing as that's where we used to go almost every day when we visited.

It was also a continued tradition, but without my father, and knowing that he would be there made me want to scream. He would destroy any good memories I had from the place before he went.

I swallowed hard before agreeing to his terms. "But, if I meet you, you have to stay away from mom," I demanded with a much louder voice this time..

"Meet in two days time, at noon," he replied with a with a deep chuckle before hanging up, not actually answering my initial request for him to stay away from her.

I let my breathing go again and soon enough I was having a full on panic attack. I continued to breath heavily as I felt my body falling apart. Knowing I would have to come into contact with my father again was making my stomach twist inside out.

The only person I needed right now was my mom. I needed to hold onto her and never let go, but she also happened to be the reason why I was doing this. I wouldn't let him hurt her again, not like he used to.

Tears escaped my eyes as I wiped them hastily. I couldn't think what he would need from me, I didn't owe him anything in my life.

He owes me a life I have lived without a good and loving father. He ruined my mother's life and kept her on a constant edge for fifteen years, wondering when he would be released and come after her again. My father was like a recurring nightmare that never went away.

My mind suddenly went into overdrive as I panicked again and searched online for the earliest flights to Florida. I knew it was crazy, but I needed to do this for my mom, and I didn't care what the repercussions would be back onto me.

I pulled the credit card mom had given me for emergencies out of my purse and typed in the details. Once she knew what this was for, she would understand why I needed to go.

Frantically throwing clothes and items into a backpack, I changed into some black jeans and a white shirt. I tied my hair into a high ponytail and took the make up off of my face.

Knowing that nobody else would be home except Caleb, I could sneak out without being noticed. Jake could've been upstairs and I really don't want to leave them two alone, but I cared more about my mother and feared what my father would do.

I tip-toed down the stairs, trying to make as little noise as possible. Caleb was thankfully away from the living room, and at this point, I didn't really care where he was. I had one objective and it was all I cared about.

Taking a deep breath, I placed my phone onto the counter beside the front door and opened it, walking out into the freezing cold air.

I had only one bag and my driving license with me to check in, so I walked towards my car and with one last sigh, I drove the car up the street and to the airport where the tears began to flow heavily down my cheeks.

• • •

"Flight 6832 to Miami, Florida, now boarding." The woman over the intercom spoke as I tightened my grip on my backpack strap. "Please make your way to gate four," she finished, blasting the loud noise in my ears when the intercom was turned off.

It was just around midnight and I knew that Mike and Katherine would be home by now. I couldn't leave a note because they were the type of people to come looking for me, and this was something I needed to do on my own.

I couldn't let people I cared about, become involved with my father. He was an evil man, and despite the fact that I didn't know him well, I was still his daughter and that had to mean something to him.

Emotions were once again taking over so I wiped my eyes to stop anymore tears. Grabbing my hand backpack, I walked towards the gate and gave the woman my ID.

"Enjoy your flight," the woman that was checking the tickets said to me with a bright smile on her lips. I fake smiled back at her before walking through the tunnel towards the plane.

Pushing through a few people, I finally reached my seat and placed my bag underneath the seat in front of me. I couldn't even relax when I laid my head back against the seat. My body was tense and on edge about meeting my father.

Luckily, I had booked a late seat and nobody was sat next to me, last I checked anyway. That also meant that for the next five to six hours, I could just sleep and rest, and hopefully not think about my father for as long as possible.

Worrying about what Mike and Katherine would think was the least of my worries. I had my father to deal with and he was ten times scarier than having to face them after running away.

Pulling out a book, I began to read to help myself to fall asleep as the plane took off. It was my least favourite part of the plane journey because I felt my body being lifted from my seat and I felt unsafe.

"Can I get you anything, miss?" One of the flight attendants asked from beside me, she had brown hair tucked into a bun at the back of her head and her make up was done perfectly like it was applied by a professional.

"Um, can I just have a water please," I asked, craving something to moisten my throat. It felt dry with how much I had been swallowing. I was nervous and I couldn't help the sick feeling in my stomach that just wouldn't go away.

After the seatbelt sign went off, I pulled my tray down and drank the water I was given before closing my eyes and placing the blanket provided by the plane over me so I could actually get some sleep.

"Welcome to Florida," the male flight attendant spoke over the intercom, interrupting my long sleep. "We are beginning our descent into Miami, Florida, so please fasten your seat belts and thank you for travelling with us today, we hope you see you flying with us again soon."

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What was I getting myself into?

Chapter 22

Caleb Andrews

When I woke up for school, I felt just as tired as I did before I went to sleep. My parents arrived home from work quite late, but they went straight to bed when they got in, leaving Gabby, who was also probably asleep, Jake and I, whilst Clara and Kylie were still staying at a friends.

I think I had a natural ability to wake up without an alarm but people like Gabby need an alarm so she always had her phone going off at stupid o'clock in the morning.

However, like every morning, I would usually hear Gabby's alarm an hour before mine, giving me another hour to sleep. But I didn't hear hers this morning. Instead, I woke up to mine and felt a sudden rush of concern flow through me.

I had simply guessed that she had forgotten to set it and needed waking up instead, although I knew she wouldn't be too happy with being woken up this late.

I pulled on some jeans and a t-shirt to wear to school and walked up to Gabby's door and knocked. "Hey Gabby, you ready?" I called, not hearing her voice from inside.

"Gabby?" I shouted a little louder this time, knowing that the only other person in the house was Jake, no matter how much I hated that thought.

No reply.

Feeling genuinely concerned, I knocked again and then opened the door. My heart began to race when I realised that her bed had not been slept in and I knew that she loved her bed too much to not get a good nights sleep in it.

My mind was wondering where the hell she was as I realised that she had probably just gone to school a little earlier.

However, as soon as I was ready to leave the house, the light caught something by the door as I noticed her phone sitting, switched off, on the side, as if she had left it there and walked out.

I knew she would've never left the house without her phone. For the short time that I've known Gabby, I've learnt quite a bit about her, and being without her phone was definitely something that would never happen.

Pulling her phone off of the counter, I examined it, knowing that she probably didn't have much to hide so she wouldn't set a passcode. But like always, luck was not on my side this morning, and she had one set.

I knew it was bad to be going through her phone, but I would have never done it if I wasn't genuinely concerned as to where she actually was. And I was hoping that something on her phone would reassure me.

Why did they even invent a passcode on phones when they knew that everyone would like to check other people's phones, especially in situations like this?

Then again, people like me is probably why they created them in the first place.

I sighed as I entered various random codes, trying to figure out the code, but I ended up getting a minute lock on it.

I ended up waiting a total of thirty minutes for her phone to unlock until I realised the number was her sisters birthday, which was a lot harder to find out, seeing as I wasn't actually friends with her on Facebook.

However, thankfully, her birthday was still available for me to see on my own phone, so I typed it in on Gabby's and to make matters better, it was correct.

As soon as I slid the unlock open, a text message from an unknown number was displayed across the screen, having already been read by Gabby before she had obviously put the phone down.

Finally realising what the text was, I was shocked because the address was all the way out in Florida, and I couldn't imagine her going all the way out there just to meet with whoever it was.

However, I was worried she was alone on the other side of America probably and I didn't want anything to happen to her. And I knew that she was extremely likely to go, especially if it meant protecting her family.

I don't think I would forgive myself if anything happened to her. So being the love sick puppy that I was, I booked a ticket with one of my credit cards so that my parents wouldn't find out.

It's not like they ever check my statements anyway.

Quickly texting my parents, I told them that Gabby and I wouldn't be here tonight as we're staying at friends houses then going to school the next day.

That would thankfully give us enough time to get back and it's not like I'm going to leave her alone in Florida. We were told to look after her and Kylie and that's what we're going to do.

Packing a small bag, I got into my car and drove to the airport instead of school, never did I ever think this would be the place I would be going instead of school, no matter how much I didn't like it.

...

"Hey, do you mind if I sit here?" A tall, blonde girl around my age was smirking at me when I looked up from my seat on the plane. She was extremely beautiful, but I knew that the only girl going through my mind at this moment, was Gabby.

I simply smiled and shook my head as she perched herself next to me. "Jess," she smiled as she outstretched her hand for me to shake. I smiled back and shook her hand. "Caleb."

Although this beautiful girl was sitting next to me, I couldn't stop thinking about Gabby, despite her probably just seeing us as a little less than friends after everything that's happened.

So why am I travelling across the country to find her, help her and bring her back? Probably because I don't see her as much as an friend as she does.

The plane soon lifted off the ground and Jess was chatting in my ear all journey. Normally I would be reluctant to even let her sit here without my lips on hers but I want feeling it at the moment.

It definitely wasn't because of Gabby, was it?

"So what brings you to Florida?" Jessica asked in a seductive manner, placing her hand on my shoulder then caressing it. I don't think I could stand six hours next to this girl anymore.

"Searching for someone." I replied bluntly, turning to look out of the window to make her voice go away.

I genuinely didn't want to talk to her and she probably thought I was the easy type that was fall at her heels right here, right now but I wasn't in the mood. Especially when I was this worried about Gabby.

"I think you've found them," She smiled in a girl version of my smirk. She must be the girl version of me. Or the guy I used to be.

Moving quickly, I found an empty chair next to an old man, so I scooted past her and sat next to him, saluting her as I placed my bag underneath the chair in front of me. She looked pissed off as she turned back to the front and huffed, crossing her arms.

I couldn't believe I was travelling across the country for a girl and suddenly I feel uncomfortable sitting next to one, what is wrong with me?

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The hot air was nothing like California.

California was extremely warm and even hotter in the summer, but it was way cooler than Florida. Florida was like going on a vacation where the hot air immediately hits you when you step off the plane.

I stared down at my watch as I walked out of the airplane. I had less than seventeen hour to find Gabby and get her back to the airport to go home, and the only thing I had was the name of a café and a time that she was meeting someone.

But I knew that it probably couldn't be interrupted unless something got out of hand, in which I would be there in one second flat if it meant keeping Gabby safe.

Seventeen hours.

That's all the time I had left to find her.

Caleb Andrews

When I woke up for school, I felt just as tired as I did before I went to sleep. My parents arrived home from work quite late, but they went straight to bed when they got in, leaving Gabby, who was also probably asleep, Jake and I, whilst Clara and Kylie were still staying at a friends.

I think I had a natural ability to wake up without an alarm but people like Gabby need an alarm so she always had her phone going off at stupid o'clock in the morning.

However, like every morning, I would usually hear Gabby's alarm an hour before mine, giving me another hour to sleep. But I didn't hear hers this morning. Instead, I woke up to mine and felt a sudden rush of concern flow through me.

I had simply guessed that she had forgotten to set it and needed waking up instead, although I knew she wouldn't be too happy with being woken up this late.

I pulled on some jeans and a t-shirt to wear to school and walked up to Gabby's door and knocked. "Hey Gabby, you ready?" I called, not hearing her voice from inside.

"Gabby?" I shouted a little louder this time, knowing that the only other person in the house was Jake, no matter how much I hated that thought.

No reply.

Feeling genuinely concerned, I knocked again and then opened the door. My heart began to race when I realised that her bed had not been slept in and I knew that she loved her bed too much to not get a good nights sleep in it.

My mind was wondering where the hell she was as I realised that she had probably just gone to school a little earlier.

However, as soon as I was ready to leave the house, the light caught something by the door as I noticed her phone sitting, switched off, on the side, as if she had left it there and walked out.

I knew she would've never left the house without her phone. For the short time that I've known Gabby, I've learnt quite a bit about her, and being without her phone was definitely something that would never happen.

Pulling her phone off of the counter, I examined it, knowing that she probably didn't have much to hide so she wouldn't set a passcode. But like always, luck was not on my side this morning, and she had one set.

I knew it was bad to be going through her phone, but I would have never done it if I wasn't genuinely concerned as to where she actually was. And I was hoping that something on her phone would reassure me.

Why did they even invent a passcode on phones when they knew that everyone would like to check other people's phones, especially in situations like this?

Then again, people like me is probably why they created them in the first place.

I sighed as I entered various random codes, trying to figure out the code, but I ended up getting a minute lock on it.

I ended up waiting a total of thirty minutes for her phone to unlock until I realised the number was her sisters birthday, which was a lot harder to find out, seeing as I wasn't actually friends with her on Facebook.

However, thankfully, her birthday was still available for me to see on my own phone, so I typed it in on Gabby's and to make matters better, it was correct.

As soon as I slid the unlock open, a text message from an unknown number was displayed across the screen, having already been read by Gabby before she had obviously put the phone down.

Finally realising what the text was, I was shocked because the address was all the way out in Florida, and I couldn't imagine her going all the way out there just to meet with whoever it was.

However, I was worried she was alone on the other side of America probably and I didn't want anything to happen to her. And I knew that she was extremely likely to go, especially if it meant protecting her family.

I don't think I would forgive myself if anything happened to her. So being the love sick puppy that I was, I booked a ticket with one of my credit cards so that my parents wouldn't find out.

It's not like they ever check my statements anyway.

Quickly texting my parents, I told them that Gabby and I wouldn't be here tonight as we're staying at friends houses then going to school the next day.

That would thankfully give us enough time to get back and it's not like I'm going to leave her alone in Florida. We were told to look after her and Kylie and that's what we're going to do.

Packing a small bag, I got into my car and drove to the airport instead of school, never did I ever think this would be the place I would be going instead of school, no matter how much I didn't like it.

• • •

"Hey, do you mind if I sit here?" A tall, blonde girl around my age was smirking at me when I looked up from my seat on the plane. She was extremely beautiful, but I knew that the only girl going through my mind at this moment, was Gabby.

I simply smiled and shook my head as she perched herself next to me. "Jess," she smiled as she outstretched her hand for me to shake. I smiled back and shook her hand. "Caleb."

Although this beautiful girl was sitting next to me, I couldn't stop thinking about Gabby, despite her probably just seeing us as a little less than friends after everything that's happened.

So why am I travelling across the country to find her, help her and bring her back? Probably because I don't see her as much as an friend as she does.

The plane soon lifted off the ground and Jess was chatting in my ear all journey. Normally I would be reluctant to even let her sit here without my lips on hers but I want feeling it at the moment.

It definitely wasn't because of Gabby, was it?

"So what brings you to Florida?" Jessica asked in a seductive manner, placing her hand on my shoulder then caressing it. I don't think I could stand six hours next to this girl anymore.

"Searching for someone." I replied bluntly, turning to look out of the window to make her voice go away.

I genuinely didn't want to talk to her and she probably thought I was the easy type that was fall at her heels right here, right now but I wasn't in the mood. Especially when I was this worried about Gabby.

"I think you've found them," She smiled in a girl version of my smirk. She must be the girl version of me. Or the guy I used to be.

Moving quickly, I found an empty chair next to an old man, so I scooted past her and sat next to him, saluting her as I placed my bag underneath the chair in front of me. She looked pissed off as she turned back to the front and huffed, crossing her arms.

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Chapter 23

Gabriella Hart

My stomach was churning inside out as I felt a sickness to my body. However, I hadn't yet eaten this morning, so nothing I could attempt to expel would actually come out.

In matter of twenty minutes, I would be meeting Matthew for the first time since he left our family. It was the last time I looked him in the eyes, and I didn't even feel old enough to remember the feeling.

He didn't deserve to be called my father. And that was because he was never a father figure to me. A father wouldn't threaten causing pain to their family, and he wouldn't treat us like this.

I think he made it pretty clear that he also wasn't a Father to me when he threatened me. His blood was running through my veins, but he was just a toxic excuse for something that was somehow related to me.

I still felt terrible that I hadn't told anyone where I was going. I could only imagine how worried Katherine and Mike would be at losing one of their girls they had intended to take responsibility of.

But the less people that knew about this, the better. I'm sure Matthew would somehow find a way to them, and he would destroy their lives like he is slowly doing with mine.

You always hear about a father protecting their daughter and holding their hearts forever, no matter what, but Matthew would never be that for me. He was an evil man and I wanted nothing to do with him after whatever he wanted today.

"Just meet him, talk and leave," I told myself as my words stuttered as I felt my voice shake. I swallowed back hard and began to walk towards the cafe we planned to meet, my legs growing increasingly unsteady the closer I got.

The town we were in was quaint and small but there were luckily enough witnesses if anything were to happen to me. The cafe logo was a deep, dark blue but fading as it had been here for a while.

I stumbled towards it and swung open the rusty door, receiving a ding of the bell as I entered. I couldn't help but breath in the slight smell of bacon and eggs in the air, distracting me slightly from what was about to happen.

"Hiya darlin, can I get you a seat?" A tall woman asked in a slight accent, she was seeming to be in her late forties and had short, blonde, curly hair.

"Table for two please," I said scanning the room but not seeing anyone who was male, looking remotely like me and who was around the age I suspected Matthew to be at this moment.

I breathed out a sigh of relief when I realised that he wasn't at the café yet, giving me time for composure and to prepare myself for what was about to happen.

I didn't even know what he wanted, I just knew that I wanted to get it over and done with before today was finished.

Staring across the street, my heart began beating frantically when I spotted a man crossing the road, looking stern in his expression and seemingly with a direction in mind.

As I was sitting by the window, I had a clear view of him and he had a clear view of me. He stopped dead in his tracks when he spotted me on the other side of the glass.

It was a smirk, but it wasn't like anything I had seen in anyone before. His was evil and he looked as if he was laughing at something. Therefore, I swallowed hard and looked back down at my hands, waiting for him to walk in.

There was no denying that this man was my father.

He had the same look in his eyes that I had seen in Kylie's one too many times when she knew she had done something wrong. His hair was a similar colour to mine, making me squirm slightly.

My mind finished its daydream as I spotted the man now walking towards my table.

Only now was I able to get a closer look at him. He looked as if he hadn't showered or shaved in weeks, and it was definitely obvious by the rusty smell that followed when he walked over.

He was wearing tattered clothing, including some old jeans and a ripped flannel shirt.

"Gabiella?" His scratchy voice asked, making me wince. Hearing his voice sent goosebumps up the sides of my arms, and I wasn't sure whether to keep the eye contact or look away.

I nodded as he sat down opposite me and smiled, revealing his unclean, yellowed teeth.

"Hi sweetie," he said softly reaching his hands forwards toward mine already sitting on the table. He seemed to be acting as a completely different person to how he was portrayed in the letter and on the phone to me.

"Please don't bring out the innocent card now, Matthew," his name sounded like a curse word when it had escaped my mouth. "Do you even realise what you have done to this family?" I shouted in a hushed tone, trying not to attract too much attention towards us.

"Can you call me dad?" He asked, smiling and acting as if I hadn't just snapped at him. I felt my body drop at how much he had ignored what I had just said to him.

"I'm not sure why you think you'd deserve that title," I simply replied and sat back in my seat, feeling a lot better than I had been when he first walked in.

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He grabbed onto my hands but I quickly pulled them back and listened for what he had to say. "I'm a changed man," he told me with a pleading look now in his eyes, "I've served my time."

"Can I get you guys anything?" A waitress asked brightly as she interrupted and stood at the end of our table. I smiled back at her as I was about to ask for a few more minutes until Matthew beat me to it.

"Can't you see we're having a conversation!" Matthew shouted and banged his hand on the table, "just give us a minute!" The blonde waitress seemed apologetic as she stepped away from our table. Not before I mouthed a sorry and turned back to Matthew.

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Chapter 24

Gabriella Hart

I held on to him as tight as I could. I didn't ever want to think about letting him go.

"Let's get you home," Caleb said to me before kissing the top of my head as he pulled me with him out of the cafe, leaving some money on the table for the trouble that had been caused in those few short minutes.

We walked out into the brisk wind that whipped my hair in front of my eyes.

He had one arm around me as we climbed inside a taxi he must've come here in. "Airport please," he said to the driver as we sat down and he held me in his arms again.

This was the first time in a while that he had genuinely held me and had shown real compassion towards me. I was glad he came here, otherwise I would've had to be on the plane back home, completely alone and still terrified about the last words my father had said to me.

Part of me regretted what I had said to him, because I knew I had only made the situation in our family a lot worse. But then I knew that inviting him back with open arms would be a mistake. He wasn't stable enough to be a father figure to Kylie and I.

"Thank you for coming," I whispered, hoping he had heard me as my face was on his chest and his arm was around me. No matter how uncomfortable it looked, it was the comfiest and safest I had felt in a long time.

He replied by squeezing my arm lightly and kissing the top of my head again, sending butterflies through my stomach.

The car journey was short, but it felt longer being next to him. I couldn't help but think that Caleb was either changing or that he actually liked me a lot more than he had ever let on before.

"The gate closes in twenty minutes, come on," Caleb snapped me out of my day dream as he paid for the taxi and sprinted to the airport doors with my hand intertwined with his and two bags of luggage in his other hand.

I felt extremely bad as he dragged me along at a running pace I was unable to keep up with.

We rushed through security, pulling off the necessary items and throwing them into trays before placing them back on again on the other side. "Ten minutes," he shouted back to me as I tied my shoe laces and grabbed onto my bag.

I ran after him, giving up breaths every time I stepped. This just signalled to me that I needed to get fitter. I couldn't even run ten metres without being completely out of breath. God didn't give me the natural gene of exercise, as you could probably have guessed.

"Gate four to LAX will be closing shortly," the woman on the intercom spoke to everyone as we rushed towards her.

The next plane wasn't for a few hours so we really needed to get back. "I told them we were staying at a friends but they should expect us home later tonight so we need to get this plane," Caleb shouted back to me, holding my hand again as we sprinted towards the gate.

Luckily enough, they were still open.

"You're lucky," the woman said almost sarcastically but gave us a wide smile and a wink anyway as she took our boarding passes and IDs before handing them back to us.

"Have a safe flight," she said to the both of us as we walked calmly to the plane, catching our breaths back. We found our seats just in time so we slouched down, although I needed to sleep off the marathon I felt that I had just run.

Then again with the amount of exercise that I do, which is nothing, that probably was my idea of a marathon.

Caleb lifted up the annoying arm rest in the middle of us and pulled me towards him so we were in the same position as the taxi, sending me straight back into my relaxed state after everything that had happened.

It allowed me to slowly fall asleep, needing the rest I so desperately craved.

• • •

"Can I get you two anything?" I woke up as the flight attendant asked Caleb.

It seemed that we were almost half way through the flight and I was still wrapped up in Caleb's arms, just how I needed it to be. "Can I have a diet coke, please" I asked almost as a whisper as I opened my eyes better.

"Sure, anything for you sir?" She replied as she handed me a can and a cup. "Can I have a water please?" He asked and soon he was handed with a bottle of water and a cup. "Thanks," he said to her as she turned to the next passengers.

"You alright?" He asked as my face was still buried in his arm. "Yeah, I'm fine, just exhausted," I replied as he shuffled around to get us into a better position.

We laid together for the next few hours, falling in and out of sleep whilst also talking to each other. He would continued to reassure me about my father, although I'm sure he was the last topic I wanted to be talking about.

"Thank you for travelling with us today, I hope that you had a peaceful flight and we hope to see you on another journey with us soon," the intercom woke me up as I had missed the landing but I was still slouched in Caleb's now awake arms.

"Hey," he said as he checked the time. I smiled up at him and for the first time in a while, I just wanted to kiss him. We were sat in the perfect position, but I just couldn't force myself to do it, especially with not knowing how he also felt.

We both sat up as he stood and collected our bags. I took my bag from him and smiled happily. "Thank you," I said as he stood with his arm round me again, sending shivers round my back.

We waited for a few minutes until we were finally let off and able to walk to where people normally pick you up.

"My cars down the street from here, we can walk to it," he described as we started walking out of the airport towards where his car was parked.

"Did you tell anyone you were coming here?" I asked Caleb, but before he was able to reply, a familiar voice interrupted both of our thoughts.

"Well, what a surprise this is."

Slowly, my head lifted to see Jake standing in front of us by the airport doors, mainly where people waited for the arrivals.

"We could ask you the same question?" Caleb almost growled at him as his grip on me tightened. We were definitely in the shit now. It would be impossible to convince Jake to keep this a secret from their parents.

"I'm waiting for Annabelle if you must know, she's staying with us whilst our house is being refurbished here." The word here stuck in my mind and obviously in Caleb's mind as well as he spoke up before I could.

"You're moving here?" Caleb asked as I turned back to look at Jake, now smirking over at the both of us.

"Yes," he replied bluntly and looked between the both of us and at our hands that were currently intertwined. "What are you two doing here?" Jake smirked and stepped forwards, trying to act tougher than Caleb.

"We needed to get somewhere but now we're back so it doesn't matter," I was watching the encounter unfold but I just wanted it to end and I wanted to go home. It felt like eggshells around them that I was quietly standing on.

"Yeah, we better get going, see you at home Jake," I attempted to move Caleb's tough physique but he wouldn't budge. "Come on," I whispered and soon enough he walked off, giving Jake an evil glare as we walked out of the automatic doors and out towards his car.

• • •

"I'm so tired," I said to Caleb as we walked though the front door, straight after giving a sigh of relief from not seeing Katherine's or Mike's car in the drive way.

"How can you be tired? You slept and drooled on me the entire journey!" Caleb shouted whilst laughing at me. He continued to laugh as my face contorted into that of embarrassment and anger. "Did I drool?" I almost screamed as I ran to the mirror in the hallway to check if I had any dried marks down the side of my face.

"I was joking," He laughed as we walked upstairs to get to our separate bedrooms.

However, before we both opened our doors, I called him again. "Caleb?" I asked as he turned and gave me a questioning look. "Thank you for coming to get me, I'm sorry I ran off to meet him," I said as quickly as I could to make the apology less agonising than it already was.

"Don't worry, I had fun," he replied, "minus everything about his father." I rolled my eyes before I looked at him seriously again.

"What if he goes after my mom?" I asked, remembering that my mom was still out there.

He stepped towards me and wrapped his arms tightly around me again for reassurance. "He doesn't know where she is." Caleb spoke as he hugged me tightly and I replied with the same gesture and tightness. "Everything will be fine."

The hug lasted long enough until we finally separated and went to go to sleep. Caleb had been a changed person whilst we were in Florida.

It just made me wonder how long it would actually last.

Chapter 25

Waking up, it felt like a completely different day. I felt happier and overall better than the day before, which definitely wasn't going to be too hard to beat.

However, as soon as I thought of my father, I immediately wanted to hurt something, preferably Matthew if he was here.

Right now, I was waiting at the front door for Caleb to eventually come down the stairs. Usually it was me that was the slow one and took about ten hours in the morning, but this was a new low for him, he was taking ages.

"Hurry up!" I shouted as loudly as I could, knowing that nobody else was inside the house this morning. It would have been the end of the day by the time he came downstairs.

"I'm coming!" He shouted back as he sprinted down the stairs, making my ears burst from the noise he was making. "You're a bit impatient this morning, princess," my heart began beating faster when he used the pet name I had grown to miss.

"Let's go," he said whilst he grabbed an apple and walked with me to the car. "And after seven years, they've finally left," I shouted sarcastically, lightly shoving his shoulder as we climbed into either side of his car.

"Shut up," he retorted as I buckled my seatbelt and sat back into the warmth of his car.

"You smell particularly nice today," he said to me, making me blush slightly so I turned my head to look out of the window of the car. "Is that a blush I see?" He teased as he tried to poke me.

"Saying are you blushing is obviously going to make me blush," I almost shouted as I turned back with my cheeks returning to a neutral colour.

"Okay then, but it's cute don't worry," he said making me blush again. I needed to stop, otherwise I may as well just become a tomato for him to really make fun of me.

I accepted his compliment quickly, then I let the car fall silent until we arrived at school.

When we did, I breathed a sigh of relief. "See you at lunch," he shouted to me as he had already walked off with a wave. Silently, I agreed and began walking to first period as Caleb had already made us at least ten minutes late.

Luckily, all of the classes I had didn't involve much movement or brain strenuous activity so I sat with my eyes open but everything else closed until my ears opened up eventually to the bell for lunch.

Breathing out a heavy sigh, I finally sprinted out of the temporary prison and towards the cafeteria.

My heart beat was racing, knowing that I was going to see Caleb again. It's hard to understand how quickly my heart had healed from James, but something in Caleb had helped along with that, and seeing James every day obviously wasn't doing it a lot of good.

"Hey Gab, over here!" Flora shouted as I walked over to where Caleb was also sitting. He turned round and smiled at me and my heart began racing again, whilst I stared longingly at the dimples that were covering his cheeks.

"What happened for the last few days? Where have you two been?" She pestered as I sat next to Caleb and knocked his shoulder lightly.

Instead of answering, we both smiled at each other and laughed like small kids until my smile was replaced with a frown to see James coming towards us from behind Flora.

I thought he was going to turn and walk to another table after my glare but to my dismay, he stood next to Flora. I will give him points though, he looked pretty miserable and that was my initial aim with everything that had happened.

"What do you want?" I said loud enough before Caleb or Flora could intervene in the stare off between us. "Can I sit?" He asked as politely as he could, but I still felt my body tense with his words.

"Let me think about that for second," I left a brief pause and held my finger up to my chin for emphasis, "no." I replied sternly, sitting back in the chair, not realising that Caleb's arm was behind it.

"Just let him sit and ignore him," Flora begged Caleb and I. I waved my hand up in the air, signalling that he could sit but he didn't deserve me to tell him.

Cheating bastard.

You'd think I wouldn't have forgiven Flora so easily but I have done plenty of things that were nearly as bad in our friendship. And I knew that she liked him when I first went out with James but I was too selfish to remember.

I faced Caleb and began to talk to him to take my attention away from the fact that my cheating ex-boyfriend was sitting less than one metre away from me.

"Look, Gabby, I'm really sorry—

James tried to speak but I interrupted him before he could get all of his words out. "An apology isn't going to cut it." I shouted as I stood up and stormed out of the cafeteria and towards the bathroom.

Luckily, nobody came after me so I stayed for the last twenty minutes and applied some make up onto my face to make it look a little less angry.

The bell finally rang and I only had one class left which was algebra, the worst class I have.

"Hey Gabby," a boy I recognised as Dylan said as I walked into the room and sat on the desk next to his. Dylan was one of those friends that you only really knew and spoke to at school. I could go a whole year without speaking to him, and it would be as if nothing had changed.

"Hey," I replied as I pulled my books and notepad out of the bag I was holding.

"Saw the argument between you and James," he announced as I sat down beside him, "you alright?" He asked, smiling.

"It wasn't an argument it was a statement, he's a cheater and I want nothing to do with him anymore," I replied, scribbling on the page in front of me harder as I spoke.

"So he did cheat?" He asked, seeming surprised as I whipped my head round to face him properly.

"Why, what are the rumours?" I asked, sighing.

God knows what everyone thinks has happened.

"That he never liked you and that you never liked him and that he has a small dick," he finished, giggling like a school girl.

"Well, the last one is confirmed," I said out of anger, laughing along with him.

The class was over quickly and I knew Caleb had a free period last so he would hopefully be waiting by the car. I walked out of the school to see his car but with nobody stood by it, which was quite unusual for Caleb.

Maybe he got out late or something.

Reassuring myself, I stood by his car and opened up snapchat then watched the hundreds of stories that were now plastered all over the app.

Chapter 26

Caleb Andrews

I smiled as I laid down onto the bed. I touched my lips, remembering the kiss that I shared with Gabby, less than ten minutes ago. I was so stupid to kiss the blonde girl from earlier.

I didn't even remember her name.

I had been trying to forget and deny all the things I felt about Gabby for the past few days, and I guess I just thought kissing someone else would help, but it didn't, it didn't help at all.

If anything, it made me feel ten times worse.

My phone sounded loudly in my ear, bringing me out of my thoughts. Thinking it was the blonde, I looked at it, ready to press the delete button until I noticed the message said from unknown.

I read the message over and my heart thumped faster than it ever had before.

Caleb,

Meet me at Maple street bar.

DO NOT bring Gabby

You know who it is.

I had no clue how Gabby's father had gotten my number and it couldn't be a prank message since I'd just met him one day ago and nobody else but Gabby, her mom, Kylie and I knew who he was. Unless it was Jake trying to mess with me.

But how would he know about it?

Instead of waiting any longer. I wrote a note for Gabby telling her not to find me. I knew that she had the same mindset as I did when she went Florida, and that wasn't good for the either of us. I walked out towards the car and drove towards Maple street bar, at least where I knew it was, which was in a pretty sketchy area.

This better be Jake.

The drive down to the bar was extremely long, and I was scared to see what was waiting for me there, meaning that I'm sure I was driving slightly slower in order to delay what was going to be there for me.

As I walked in, the lights hit my eyes and I searched round the room for a sign of someone looking for me, or better yet, Jake. There were a few men sat at the bar, drinking away whatever they could before they returned to their wives.

Suddenly, I noticed him, sitting still with a drink in his hands.

"Why did you send me that message?" I shouted, grabbing tightly onto his collar with my hands.

This is one of the first times I have ever been above Jake and can control him. He had controlled me enough of my life and sending fake, threatening messages wasn't going to help him gain control over me again.

"What message?" He shouted back as he struggled free, but the anger surrounding my body had created the strength to keep ahold of him.

"You know what message I'm talking about, don't lie to me!" I almost screamed at him above the music that was currently playing in the bar.

However, his eyes went wide as he stared over at something past my eyes. I dropped his collar as I took a deep breath and turned around.

Gabriella Hart

"Have you two heard from Caleb?" I asked as I opened Clara and Kylie's room to see them sitting on the bed, completing some school work together. "No, sorry," Clara simply replied as her eyebrows furrowed at my worried expression. "Is something wrong?"

"I don't know, he just left and never said anything and now he won't answer my calls and—

I sounded exactly like a worried girlfriend.

"You like him don't you?" Clara asked, smiling widely at me, whilst Kylie just simply smirked beside her and closed her textbook.

"Don't be ridiculous," I replied in the loudest, denying tone I had ever used. I swallowed hard as I attempted to look at anything but their questioning eyes. "You like him Gab, just admit it." Kylie said to me, not looking up but scribbling some notes down on a page.

Before I could reply, the phone from downstairs rang. I grinned sheepishly to them as I ran down and picked up the house phone. "Hello?" I spoke into the phone before reminding myself that I didn't actually live here and answering felt a little intrusive.

But then the thoughts of Caleb calling the house made me suddenly run down to answer, and you can't exactly blame my instincts.

"Gabby! Bring Clara and Kylie down to the hospital now!" Katherine's panicked voice entered my mind as my body went into overdrive. "Something's happened to Caleb!" Katherine shouted down the phone.

I dropped the phone, not being able to feel my legs. I felt my knees buckle as I fell to the floor. I didn't even know what had happened to Caleb, but the feeling inside my body was not a good one.

Quickly, I picked up the phone again and told Katherine we would be there soon. I hung up to catch my breath as I sat down on the floor again.

What's happened to him?

Until I saw him, I shouldn't get too stressed. "Clara and Kylie, were going to the hospital, something's happened to Caleb!" I shouted, keeping my voice in a single pitch to avoid worrying Clara about her brother.

"Is he ok?" Clara asked with widened eyes as we climbed into the car. She had redness surrounding her eyes as if she'd be crying which I'm pretty sure she had.

"I'm not sure," I replied equally as worried as I sped towards the hospital. Guilt and panic was surrounding my body as I pressed down on the accelerate.

We rushed in to see Katherine and Mike in the waiting room, he was clutching onto her as she was allowing tears to fall from her eyes. I felt my heart fall into my stomach at seeing their expressions.

"Wh—what's happened?" I stuttered, getting more and more worried by the second. Katherine's tears made me feel sick to my stomach so I ran over to the hospital desk.

"Caleb, Caleb Andrews," I shouted to the woman and she led me into one of the rooms. I turned back to see Clara and Kylie comforting Katherine as I rushed to follow the nurse to where I was.

If this didn't confirm what I felt for Caleb, then I'm not sure what would.

Walking in, I wasn't expecting to see Caleb beaten up and bruised. He had his eyes shut and looked as if he was badly injured. I took a sharp intake of breath and the cardiac monitor sounds registered in my mind.

I couldn't hold it in anymore, I held his hand and cried into it. "Gabby?" A slow, yet quiet voice engulfed my ears. I looked up and he was awake.

"Gabby, I—

He tried to speak but his eyes closed and the sounds sped up.

"I love you," I finished the sentence I was hoping he was going to say. Different sounds cut through my ears as about five different doctors and nurses came rushing in.

"What's happened?" I asked between short breaths again. A woman held my arms and pushed me out of the room, "we need you to stay out here," she shouted and my breath was lost.

If I lost Caleb, I didn't know what I would do. I watched through the curtains to see them holding him and helping him. My breathing hitched in my throat seeing him like this.

I did love him. And I didn't want lose him.

• • •

We all laid across the seats, waiting for a sign from one of the doctors that he would be ok but nobody spoke to us. They tip-toed around us like we were waiting for something much worse than I had hoped.

The doctors looked longingly at us, which made my heart race. "Andrews family?" A nurse called but Kylie and I stood up along with the rest of the family anyway, wanting to know what was happening

"He is stable but he's not woken up yet, we will keep you updated." She said to us with saddened eyes, "you can now see him but I suggest some of you get some food or go home and sleep since it won't be good for your health if you stay here all night without sleep." she suggested, reassuring us slightly but not enough to know that he was actually going to wake up.

"We'll go get the food," I said, dragging Kylie with me so the family could have some time with him.

"How are you feeling?" She asked as she wrapped her arms around me in a slight embrace as we continued to walk down to the hospital cafeteria. "I know you and him were quite close," she said.

"I'm fine, I'm just worried about him," I replied, pulling her towards my side. "Shall we just get a few sandwiches for everyone?" I asked her when we reached the food hall.

She smiled and nodded as she began picking at some food from the cafeteria.

However, my mind was interrupted by the sounds of my phone ringing. I felt sick to my stomach enough and the thought that it could be my father was making me feel even worse.

My heart beat quickened as I noticed the number to be my mother's. I answered the phone quickly as I watched Kylie continued to collect up food for the Andrews family. "Hello?" My voice cracked but there were a lot of emotions going through me at this moment.

"Hi sweetie," the sound of her voice again made another few tears escape my eyes. However, Kylie noticed this time and mouthed to ask who was calling. I smiled slightly at her as mom continued to speak.

"I have been given the green light to come home," she did to me as butterflies ran through me. "Your father isn't going to going to bother us anymore." I felt my heart quicken at the thought of my father but I ignored it, knowing that if she was coming home, then it had to be safer for us.

I wanted to jump up and down with excitement, but Caleb stayed in the back of my mind, playing the denying part in my mind that I needed him more than anything, and I needed him to come out of this ok.

I couldn't stand to lose him when he was starting to mean the world to me.

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Chapter 27

5 days later

"I'll drive you both in today, if that's ok?" My mom asked as she flipped pancakes at the stove in the kitchen. She had been back for three days now and we had moved back into the house.

Caleb was also out of hospital, but it was only by what I had heard from Katherine and my mom.

After what had happened to him, he hadn't told anyone about it and more importantly, he told Clara to tell me to stay away from him, which is exactly what I had been doing.

I had a gut feeling that I had done something wrong and I had gone over multiple things that I'd done in those last few days that could've caused it, but I had nothing.

I was currently staring blankly at that table with my head in my arms whilst my mom tried to get through to me, which she had been failing at since she got back. I hated that I was taking everything out on her and Kylie, but I was still desperately trying to wrap my head around Caleb and what I had done.

Kylie nudged me to reply. "Yes, that's fine," I replied as my mom sighed and carried on making breakfast.

"Are you happy that you're back?" Kylie asked mom as she turned and smiled at her. I liked that Kylie was trying to make the room brighter with conversation, but I just wasn't in the mood to speak to anyone like she was speaking to mom.

"A lot happier, I spent most of the time with an old friend, but I'd much rather be back here," Mom replied as she held the side of Kylie's cheek, "I'm happy to see both my girls," she finished as she walked round and kissed us both on the head.

She placed pancakes in front of us and smiled lightly. I felt incredibly bad that I wasn't being very happy, but seeing as someone who I loved almost died and now wants nothing to do me, I have plenty of reasons to be upset.

...

"Have a good day you two," my mom shouted as we scrambled to climb out of the car for school, seeing as we were already a few minutes late from taking so long to eat our pancakes.

My loss of appetite was also having an effect on how much energy I had. Rushing to school just wasn't my priority, making classes harder to understand and teachers angrier at how late I was becoming.

"Gabby, can I speak to you for a minute?" She asked politely as I closed the door again and put on a fake smile. "I know about everything that has happened between you and Caleb," I felt my heart drop.

She didn't know half of what was between Caleb and I. "I have spoken to Katherine and she can't get through to Caleb," she simply told me as I felt another stray tear threaten to escape my eye. "Please don't shut me out Gab," She tried to hold back tears as she spoke to me.

"I know, I'm just finding it difficult," I said to her as my breathing grew ragged again at the singular mention of Caleb and what was going on with me these last few days. "Come here," she said as she leaned in and wrapped both arms around me.

Feeling the warmth of her arms around me, made me feel better. "Thank you," I told her as she kissed me on the forehead.

I climbed out and stared up at the school that I didn't want to be anywhere near. Unfortunately for me, I had Chemistry which meant I would be with Caleb, and seeing as he was coming back today, I had no choice but to actually see him.

"Hey Gabby," Flora approached me by my locker and wrapped her arms around me without hesitation. All this comfort I was getting from people was making me feel a little better, but my heart was still slowly breaking.

"Do you wanna walk to Chem?" She asked, holding my arm and walking with me to class. I received stares from a lot of people, wondering why I wasn't here for about a week.

Then again, why is it their business?

We walked in only for my heart to miss about ten beats when I saw him sitting there on the back row. He had a few bruises left on his face and he was sitting very far upright, probably meaning he was still recovering from a few broken ribs.

His eyes soon caught mine as I walked in. However, as quickly as he looked up at me, he looked back down again, avoiding any eye contact. That only made my heart hurt even more.

I walked over, abstaining from looking at him. Every time I kept my eyes plastered on something else, they begged to look at him, to ask him why he wouldn't talk to me.

I sat down next to him, feeling his presence strongly next to me that I could almost smell his deep cologne that I smelt every morning when I stayed with him. I missed the times that I would wake up and see him.

I miss him.

I swallowed hard and gave into temptation that had been gnawing at me since I had walked in.

"Hi," I spoke but I didn't hear myself as my eyes were taking up most of my senses, staring at him.

He twitched his head as if he were about to turn and speak, but he didn't easily give up and kept his head facing forwards.

I felt my eyes roll as I pondered for a few minutes, trying to guess what would get his attention. And then I thought of something perfect.

I rocked back on my chair a few times until I finally collapsed over, using my hands to catch my fall but enough to make Caleb turn and look at me to make sure I was ok.

He grabbed onto me, but I was on the ground already. I smirked up at him as he just looked even more angered than before. He allowed the side of his mouth to creep into a smirk but it was quickly replaced by a frown. I did the same and sat back up next to him.

Luckily there were not very many people in the class yet so it wasn't too embarrassing.

"Please just talk to me Caleb," I pleaded as a whisper, hoping that he would turn and talk to me.

"About what?" He whispered back to me with anger laced in his voice, frightening me a little.

"Sorry, it's just—" he attempted to finish his sentence but stopped abruptly.

"What?" I asked him with some hope in my mind.

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I nodded and turned back to my work, my stomach feeling as if it wanted to flip upside down.

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Turning back to walk again, I was suddenly stopped by a hand holding onto my mouth and soon enough, everything went dark with something thrown over my eyes.

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"You going somewhere?" My mom asked as she walked past my room with a basket full of dirty clothes. "I'm going to speak to Gabby," I finally uttered as she stared widely at me with a small smile creeping onto her lips.

"Finally, you two need to get together already," I laughed at her before awkwardly rubbing the back of my neck. Slowly, I made the final decision to walk round to Gabby's. I knew I was ready to tell her.

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Not just because of the broken ribs, but because I knew who the unknown number was and I knew that they would do anything to hurt me. Like they had already done before.

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Come alone or she dies

I lost my breath at the last few words.

If he did anything to hurt her, I would kill him.

5 days later

"I'll drive you both in today, if that's ok?" My mom asked as she flipped pancakes at the stove in the kitchen. She had been back for three days now and we had moved back into the house.

Caleb was also out of hospital, but it was only by what I had heard from Katherine and my mom.

After what had happened to him, he hadn't told anyone about it and more importantly, he told Clara to tell me to stay away from him, which is exactly what I had been doing.

I had a gut feeling that I had done something wrong and I had gone over multiple things that I'd done in those last few days that could've caused it, but I had nothing.

I was currently staring blankly at that table with my head in my arms whilst my mom tried to get through to me, which she had been failing at since she got back. I hated that I was taking everything out on her and Kylie, but I was still desperately trying to wrap my head around Caleb and what I had done.

Kylie nudged me to reply. "Yes, that's fine," I replied as my mom sighed and carried on making breakfast.

"Are you happy that you're back?" Kylie asked mom as she turned and smiled at her. I liked that Kylie was trying to make the room brighter with conversation, but I just wasn't in the mood to speak to anyone like she was speaking to mom.

"A lot happier, I spent most of the time with an old friend, but I'd much rather be back here," Mom replied as she held the side of Kylie's cheek, "I'm happy to see both my girls," she finished as she walked round and kissed us both on the head.

She placed pancakes in front of us and smiled lightly. I felt incredibly bad that I wasn't being very happy, but seeing as someone who I loved almost died and now wants nothing to do me, I have plenty of reasons to be upset.

• • •

"Have a good day you two," my mom shouted as we scrambled to climb out of the car for school, seeing as we were already a few minutes late from taking so long to eat our pancakes.

My loss of appetite was also having an effect on how much energy I had. Rushing to school just wasn't my priority, making classes harder to understand and teachers angrier at how late I was becoming.

"Gabby, can I speak to you for a minute?" She asked politely as I closed the door again and put on a fake smile. "I know about everything that has happened between you and Caleb," I felt my heart drop.

She didn't know half of what was between Caleb and I. "I have spoken to Katherine and she can't get through to Caleb," she simply told me as I felt another stray tear threaten to escape my eye. "Please don't shut me out Gab," She tried to hold back tears as she spoke to me.

"I know, I'm just finding it difficult," I said to her as my breathing grew ragged again at the singular mention of Caleb and what was going on with me these last few days. "Come here," she said as she leaned in and wrapped both arms around me.

Feeling the warmth of her arms around me, made me feel better. "Thank you," I told her as she kissed me on the forehead.

I climbed out and stared up at the school that I didn't want to be anywhere near. Unfortunately for me, I had Chemistry which meant I would be with Caleb, and seeing as he was coming back today, I had no choice but to actually see him.

"Hey Gabby," Flora approached me by my locker and wrapped her arms around me without hesitation. All this comfort I was getting from people was making me feel a little better, but my heart was still slowly breaking.

"Do you wanna walk to Chem?" She asked, holding my arm and walking with me to class. I received stares from a lot of people, wondering why I wasn't here for about a week.

Then again, why is it their business?

We walked in only for my heart to miss about ten beats when I saw him sitting there on the back row. He had a few bruises left on his face and he was sitting very far upright, probably meaning he was still recovering from a few broken ribs.

His eyes soon caught mine as I walked in. However, as quickly as he looked up at me, he looked back down again, avoiding any eye contact. That only made my heart hurt even more.

I walked over, abstaining from looking at him. Every time I kept my eyes plastered on something else, they begged to look at him, to ask him why he wouldn't talk to me.

I sat down next to him, feeling his presence strongly next to me that I could almost smell his deep cologne that I smelt every morning when I stayed with him. I missed the times that I would wake up and see him.

I miss him.

I swallowed hard and gave into temptation that had been gnawing at me since I had walked in. "Hi," I spoke but I didn't hear myself as my eyes were taking up most of my senses, staring at him.

He twitched his head as if he were about to turn and speak, but he didn't easily give up and kept his head facing forwards.

I felt my eyes roll as I pondered for a few minutes, trying to guess what would get his attention. And then I thought of something perfect.

I rocked back on my chair a few times until I finally collapsed over, using my hands to catch my fall but enough to make Caleb turn and look at me to make sure I was ok.

He grabbed onto me, but I was on the ground already. I smirked up at him as he just looked even more angered than before. He allowed the side of his mouth to creep into a smirk but it was quickly replaced by a frown. I did the same and sat back up next to him.

Luckily there were not very many people in the class yet so it wasn't too embarrassing.

"Please just talk to me Caleb," I pleaded as a whisper, hoping that he would turn and talk to me.

"About what?" He whispered back to me with anger laced in his voice, frightening me a little.

"Sorry, it's just—" he attempted to finish his sentence but stopped abruptly.

"What?" I asked him with some hope in my mind.

"Nothing," he really looked like he didn't want to answer so I left it and lowered my head again.

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Chapter 28

Gabriella Hart

The cover over my eyes was blocking out any light that was potentially on the other side of it. What felt like duct tape was spread across my mouth but it was too tight to lick off or even attempt to get away.

This was one of my biggest fears and I felt my throat and body close up at the thought of being trapped like this with no understanding of what was happening to me.

"Are you ready to see me, princess?" the all too familiar voice seeped in my ears, making me internally cringe. His voice sounded even worse than before, especially with more anger laced within it.

Caleb calls me princess but hearing this man call me it made me feel sick. He pulled the duct tape hastily from my mouth in one quick, painful motion.

Without thinking, I started shouting. "Help, someone help!" I shouted as loud as I could before I felt a hand on my mouth again. "Shut up!" he shouted but I had other motives than to just sit here and let him control me like he had done before.

I bit as hard as I could into his hand until I could taste blood, and I tried to scramble to my feet until I realised that my feet were tied up and I fell, landing on my foot, twisting it tightly underneath my shin.

I screamed in pain.

"Do not utter a word, or I will kill you," a cold, sharp metal object was now placed against my neck as I attempted to pull myself back up into a seated position, despite the extreme pain now running through my foot to my ankle.

Feeling the sudden sharp edge told me that it was a knife, so I stayed silent as he pulled off my blindfold, blinding me quickly with the one swinging light I had immediately noticed when my eyes opened.

I looked around at the old building that looked like an empty factory without the machines that would usually occupy a place like this. The floor was pulled up so it was ruined and scratchy on my legs that were rested on the ground.

Old broken lights hung and swung from the ceiling like an abandoned warehouse. "What do you want?" I asked between laboured breaths. If I breathed out or swallowed any harder, the knife would cut sorely through the skin currently rested against me.

"What every father wants, his family reunited." He replied, standing up, taking the knife away from my neck. Relief swelled though my body but still tensed at the thought of him being there above me.

"After you have done this, I doubt we'll become a reunited family," I regretted it straight away because he lunged towards me and placed the tip of the knife against my leg.

My whole body froze as I felt the cold metal rip through my jeans and stop against my skin. "Please don't." I squeaked out with little to no effort. Tears were covering up my vision as he stared through me.

"Then answer this question, Gabriella," I nodded hastily as he smirked evilly. "Am I your father?" He slipped the knife away from my leg so he was holding it up instead of against my skin.

Whilst he was talking, I was using my finger to pull the rope off my hands behind me. It looked a whole lot easier in films but this was the hardest thing I'd ever had to do.

Then again, my hands were tied up really tight that it was stopping the blood flow which was making it harder for me to pull them off.

"You will never be my father," I had too much pride to let him know that he would ever be my father again. However, regret immediately ran through me as I watched his next move.

Suddenly, the knife in his hand plunged deeply into my leg.

The metal sliced through my skin quickly. I felt nothing at first but then the pain rushed like a wave up the side of my leg. I was consumed in agony so I closed my eyes to mask the tears that were now naturally flowing down my cheeks with a scream that erupted from my throat.

I held onto the cold, concrete floor beneath me for support as the pain intensified. "Does it hurt as much as your family walking away from you?" He shouted.

He finally pulled the knife out of my leg, but all I could see was red. Red was slowly pouring out of my slashed leg and I could do nothing to stop it.

I screamed in pain again as he threw the knife away, leaving a ringing echo through the building. "Your boyfriend will be here soon to pay you a visit." I swallowed hard, knowing he meant Caleb and I didn't want Caleb to get hurt.

He was already hurt enough

"But I'm your daughter, why are you doing this to me?" I shouted to mask the pain and the sounds of me pulling the ropes on my hands. My breaths were becoming shorter and I felt a panic attack approaching.

Count to ten.

I breathed out slowly as he stared at me and grinned. "That's right, you are my daughter and that means we're a family," I didn't reply, I just tensed my leg to attempt to stop the bleeding but it only heightened the pain and worsened the bleeding.

Caleb Andrews

My car stopped outside the abandoned building and my throat tensed up, Gabby was inside and I needed to help her, but every part of my body was telling me that I would get hurt. But if it meant helping Gabby, then I knew that this is what I needed to do.

"Come on," I motivated myself and almost punched the steering wheel with my already bruised knuckles.

Finally, I pulled myself out of the car and stomped towards the building. Instead of knocking, I found a ladder leading up to the roof, which was something I needed to use in order to survey the situation before I walked straight in.

I climbed up the cold, rugged ladder until I reached the top where wind was blowing slightly. I heard shouting from below me, one of them being him.

I climbed down the stairs from the roof to end up above where he and Gabby were. Without thinking, I ran down the stairs and pushed into him, pulling him over flat onto the ground.

He pulled himself up and pulled a gun out of his pocket. "Sorry about the face Caleb," he spat out, wiping some blood from his head. He looked even more rough than when I had seen him last.

I thrust my body towards him to get the gun out of his hands until he punched me square in the face, sending me off balance.

My ribs were screaming in pain as he held onto me and kneed me in the stomach. He was holding the gun against me when I kicked him in the leg, sending him sprawling to the ground. My body tensed when I noticed his finger holding onto the trigger.

I turned to see Gabby, screaming my name but my ears had been ignoring it until now. I looked at her and then back at her father with the gun pointing towards me. I held onto it as hard as I could, pushing it towards his neck.

He put across the same force towards my neck.

Gabriella Hart

I watched them in horror as I shouted his name as many times as I could, not catching his attention.

He wouldn't survive, Matthew would kill him. I watched as the gun was pushed between them during kicks and punches.

Finally I made the right decision to close my eyes.

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Chapter 29

I opened one of my eyes, not wanting to see the outcome of the fight between Matthew and Caleb.

My hands were finally untied so I pulled my feet apart and staggered towards their limp bodies, feeling the searing pain in my body every time my other leg thrust forward.

I screamed in pain as I fell beside them, pushing my father away from Caleb and examining him.

He had blood splashed on his chest but there was no gunshot. I didn't even look up at his face until both his hands held my cheeks, bringing warmth to my body again.

We both stared over to see my fathers body, lifeless and gone with a gunshot straight through his heart.

I leaned into Caleb as he held me in his arms. Tears were streaming down my face, and not because of my fathers death but because I was safe and he wasn't here anymore.

"Your leg!" he exclaimed as he lifted both of us off the ground. "I don't care," I muttered as I pulled his face towards mine and passionately placed my lips onto his.

I wrapped my arms round his shoulders and held him in my embrace. "I love you." I finally spoke, staring up at his face. "I love you too." he replied before kissing me again.

...

"You're ok but you'll need stitches, so we'll take you down after the cops have questioned you," the paramedic told me, placing a small amount of pressure on my leg, putting it into complete agony once again.

"Thank you," I replied, wrapping the blanket tightly around my body.

I looked over to see Caleb speaking to the cops, holding his head with a white piece of material to stop any bleeding.

It looked like they had finished as he walked back up to me and wrapped his arm around me, putting another bigger blanket over us. "You ok?" He asked, but I nodded against his body. I was too cold to speak yet I had to tell the cops what had happened.

Suddenly, a large body bag was rolled out of the building. I buried my face in Caleb's side as he wrapped another arm around me, making it impossible for me to see, even if I had my eyes open.

"Miss Gabriella Hart?" the officer asked as she walked over to me. "You look cold enough already so we'll just speak here," I nodded and sat up a little, still in the embrace of Caleb.

"How did you come to be here Gabriella?" She asked, smiling lightly at me to make the situation seem better than it actually was.

"I was walking home from school and—" I swallowed hard as I thought about it again, "he grabbed me and brought me here," I replied, squeezing onto Caleb's hand which I didn't actually realise I was holding onto.

I smiled up at him then back to the officer. "And what happened whilst you were in there?" She tried to smile but I could tell what I was going to say obviously wasn't going to make her smile.

"He was asking me questions and then he stabbed me in the leg," I was immediately reminded of the pain that was currently swimming through my upper leg. "And then Caleb came and he shot my father—I mean Matthew, out of self defence." I told her, holding tightly into Caleb's hand.

"Thank you, I'm glad you're both ok, we have called your parents and they will meet you at the hospital, so you'd better get going," the officer gave me saddened eyes.

"Oh, and Gabriella, I'm sorry for your loss," she finished, smiling lightly yet awkwardly at me. As she said loss, the word stuck in my mind until I realised that him dying wasn't a loss to me.

I was glad he was gone, he made my mom's life torture and I'm glad that he's now out of our lives. I know it's incredibly horrible and selfish but I think anyone would feel the same.

We climbed inside the ambulance and sat on two of the seats as we were driven to the hospital.

"You okay?" Caleb asked as he held me tightly against him, which was the only way I now felt safe and protected. In his arms.

"Yeah, I'm fine, it just hurts," I told him, signalling to my wrapped up leg that still needed stitches. "I'm so sorry for everything—" he tried to finish but I interrupted before he could.

"Thank you for everything," I said to him, smiling up at his features. He smiled back as I leaned my head onto his shoulder and he held my hand.

We arrived at the hospital and to my surprise, both our families were there already, including Jake.

Here's me thinking that he was responsible for hurting Caleb when in reality, it was my father.

"Mom, Kylie?" I shouted as I stumbled in with some crutches I was given.

"Honey!" My mom was in tears as she and Kylie hugged me, being careful of my leg. "We heard what happened, are you ok sweetie?" Mom said, holding my cheeks and checking my face for bruises.

"He's gone now." I replied as they hugged me again timidly. Mom was breathing heavier, mainly due to her tears, but I knew she wasn't upset, she wanted him gone as much as I did.

I was led over to a room to be stitched up by a doctor. The pain that was going to come out of it, leveled with the relief that I felt now my father was gone.

Each time the needle went through part of my skin, I was one puncture nearer to being done with the pain. The physical pain anyway.

"Ok, that's you done, we're just going to bandage it up, but you will need crutches for a while." He told me as he pinned together my ripped, bloody jeans.

I hobbled out to see Caleb sitting on the hospital seats alone. "Hey," he said, smiling as I sat down next to him. "Our families are down in the cafeteria," he told me as he spontaneously held onto my hand. I nodded as he drew circles on the back of my hand, sending shivers through my body.

"This probably isn't the best time to ask you this because it's a bit insensitive," he said to me as I turned and smiled at him. "Gabby, will you be my girlfriend?" I had been waiting for those words for a long time and finally, they escaped his mouth.

Instead of saying yes, I sealed our relationship with a kiss that I placed slowly onto his lips. I nodded against his lips just in case he didn't get the memo.

"I love you," he whispered, staring straight into my eyes.

"I love you too."

Epilogue

30 days later

Caleb intertwined his hand with mine as he led me outside of my house with my eyes covered with some type of material. "Caleb, where are we going?" I yelled as I nearly tripped on the curb after the driveway.

"Just get in the car," he laughed as he helped me in. Luckily, I had quite good awareness so I did up my seatbelt and smiled across at him when he got in.

"Are you going to tell me yet?" I asked, looking forwards and crossing my arms, I tried to look at him but knowing me, I was probably looking out the window.

"Not yet princess," he said as he held onto my cheek, making me jump but I kissed him anyway as he touched his lips onto mine.

I couldn't actually see him, but it still felt nice. "Now let's go," he said to me, returning to the position he was in and drove the car to wherever he was taking me.

We drove for around twenty minutes until he stopped and parked up somewhere. Hearing nothing but silence around me probably suggested either he was going to secretly kill me or has set up a cute date.

I'm expecting the second option.

Hopefully.

Slowly, two hands crept up to my face and pulled the blindfold off.

What was in front of me was so incredibly beautiful.

It was lit by the sunset and the beach was clear with nobody and nothing on it. He led me out of the car and towards the middle of the beach where a blanket was laid out with a picnic next to it. I stared in awe as he placed his hand around my back.

"Happy anniversary," he said, kissing me on the cheek and embracing me in his arms. "It's been a month," I replied laughing but leaned into the kiss anyway.

"Still a milestone for me," he replied, laughing as I hit him lightly on the chest. We both sat down in a comfortable position where I was laid against him as he leant up against the sand.

He pulled out various cakes and sweet foods but we had eaten most of it in the first five minutes of him getting it out.

"Thank you so much for this," I said, smiling and staring at the sunset that was nearing the edge of the water. "No problem, anything for you, princess," he kissed the top of my head as he spoke, sending shivers through my body, like he usually did.

Normally someone saying the word princess or any sort of cheesy name would make me cringe but coming from Caleb, he always made it sound amazing.

Caleb pulled out some beers and opened them with a small smile on his lips. He knew I was definitely more of a beer person anyway and I usually only drank at parties, but this felt like a celebratory moment to drink.

I had a few gulps before I turned all the way round so I was almost lying on top of Caleb and I kissed him for a proper thank you.

"I forgot to bring the sex on the beach but I'm sure you can provide it," he told me as I shoved him yet kissed him more.

Laughing, I pulled myself off of him and leaned against his side then watched the sunset.

"This is perfect," I told him as I listened to each of his deep breaths with my head was leaning on his chest. He smiled as we watched it go down and finally hit the surface of the water.

"Are you in for some swimming or are you too chicken?" He asked me as he started to produce chicken noises. Whenever he did that, it made me really want to make a point so I slowly pulled my shirt off revealing my black lace bra and I pulled off my skirt revealing the same coloured pants.

"Too chicken am I? or are you the chicken?" I asked, smiling proudly.

"I'm just admiring the view," he told me as he looked me up and down. I leaned down and made it seem like I was about to kiss him before I then pushed him away and sprinted towards the water.

"Last person there is a rotten egg!" I shouted back childishly.

The sound of footsteps patted on the ground behind me, getting closer every second. I turned around to see Caleb slowly gaining on me as he pulled off his shirt and shorts to reveal his favourite Calvin Klein boxers.

Well, my favourite ones too.

I smiled as I picked up speed, I was now less than twenty metres away from the water.

Suddenly, two hands grasped round my waist and I was lifted up over his shoulder and pulled into the water. The ice cold water surrounded my skin as I was pulled under. I laughed to myself as I pushed back up and saw Caleb hysterically laughing.

Now was my time to fake it.

"Owww, my foot is bleeding, I think I've cut it on something under the water!" I screamed as I let the fake tears flow down my cheeks. He immediately stopped laughing and rushed to my rescue.

Just as he was about to grab me, I pushed his head under water and to my surprise, he actually fell under. I was laughing like an idiot as he lifted me up and held onto my waist. "You idiot!" he shouted jokingly as I wrapped my arms round his shoulders.

"Oh, I'm the idiot? You're the one who just fell under because their girlfriend is a brilliant actress," he laughed as he pulled my face towards his and kissed me again.

I wrapped my legs round his waist as the sky darkened. I wasn't as scared as I used to be because I knew that with Caleb, I would be perfectly fine.

"I love you Gabriella Hart." he told me, pulling out of the kiss.

"I love you too Caleb Andrews," I said with one breath as I stared deeply into his eyes, "now and forever."