Love Letters and Literature

MissMaven

STORYPDF

Complete English text · A4 reading edition

Contents

Chapter 1 5

Chapter 2 8

Chapter 3 12

Chapter 4 15

Chapter 5 18

Chapter 6 24

Chapter 7 28

Chapter 8 31

Chapter 9 34

Chapter 10 38

Chapter 11 41

Chapter 12 44

Chapter 13 47

Chapter 14 52

Chapter 15 55

Chapter 16 60

Chapter 17 65

Chapter 18 71

Chapter 19 79

Chapter 20 85

Chapter 21 90

Chapter 22 95

Chapter 23 102

Chapter 24 108

Chapter 25 112

Chapter 26 118

Chapter 27 123

Chapter 28 128

Chapter 29 136

Chapter 30 140

Chapter 31 145

Chapter 32 150

Chapter 33 155

Chapter 34 160

Chapter 35 164

Chapter 36 169

Chapter 37 175

Chapter 38 183

Chapter 39 194

Chapter 40 203

Chapter 41 213

Chapter 42 218

Chapter 43 223

Chapter 44 231

Chapter 45 237

Epilogue 243

About this edition

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Chapter 1

Sophia

The light danced across her supple mocha skin like...

No. Delete Delete Delete.

The water pooled effortlessly around her milky thighs like...

Hell no! Milky thighs? That's just gross.

I rub my temples and sigh bitterly as my tired eyes stare blankly at the empty cup sitting parallel to my computer, shamelessly blaming it for my inability to write anything good this evening.

I've been stuck on the same sentence in my story for thirty-eight minutes exactly now because apparently, I can't seem to escape coffee based analogies. Writers' block can kiss my ass, that's for sure.

"Clara, another French roast, soy milk, and two sugars please," I call out to the friendly barista I've come to desperately rely on since beginning my time at this university.

This is the closest café to my apartment, and since I don't have a car it's been a saving grace when I get cabin fever.

Clara gives me a nod of acknowledgment along with a flirtatious smile. Every time I choose this coffee shop I can feel the heat of her inquisitive gaze on me, but I try to ignore her obvious hints. It isn't that I don't think she's beautiful, she unmistakably is, my heart has just already been stolen by someone else.

Someone that is forbidden.

Trying to clear my mind, I take these moments of caffeine anticipation to stretch my legs under the table and fully absorb my surroundings.

I yawn and wiggle my fingers, my stiff joints cracking slightly as I do in true writers' fashion.

Powdery White snow falls from the sky, and I'm selfishly overwhelmed with appreciation for the Cafe's central heating system and roaring wood burning fireplace.

I wrap my baggy beige cotton clad arms around my chest and stare out at the deafening white as it plasters the streets in dangerous blankets.

Wow, I do not want to walk home in that.

My left hand instinctively moves upwards and rummages through my auburn hair as I lose myself even further to my own subconscious.

I'm only slightly aware of just how shallow I must look right now with my green eyes trained outside, but their stare seeing things far off and flgurative.

I've never liked the cold, but I've always loved the winter time. Warm sweaters, hot coffee, and fuzzy slippers hold a special place in my heart. Being cursed with the social skills of a sleep-deprived sloth, I value all things reclusive and otherwise solitary.

Christmas has long passed, but bows and wreaths still decorate the lamp posts outside. The smell of pine takes its place in every establishment in the form of deep green candles this time of year, the upper-middle-class Caucasian population single-handedly keeping Bath and Body Works in business.

I know I'm part of the problem, but I don't care. Choke me on the smells of winter, and I'll go oh so calmly into that good night.

semester is just days away from starting back up. My heart pangs at the realization.

Only a few more days until I get to see him again, but before I'm able to think too long about my own depraved fantasies I'm pulled back to a piping hot reality.

"One Sophie special, hot and ready," Clara announces as she sets the beautiftu decorated beverage down on my table. Small droplets roll down the white ceramic side of the cup on to the purposefully aged wooden table below.

I admire the top of the drink as she picks up my old cup and sets it on a nearby bussing tray. The cream on top is manipulated to form a leaf-like image that's pleasing to the eye, but otherwise pointless since I don't feel like taking a picture for my Instagram. Honestly, ifI shared every time I got a coffee on social media people would assume I was attempting suicide Via caffeine overdose.

"Thank you very much," I say honestly, my gratitude bubbling over in girlish delight. I take a deep breath and inhale the rich sweet aroma, sighing happily as it soothes my wayward mind.

"Ofcourse, anything else I can get for you?" Clara asks me with pleading golden irises, probably in hopes of delaying her inevitable return to her position at the register.

"Actually." I say after a brief thought, my brain sneakily trying to pull me out of my writers' block "could you stick around for a moment while I describe you?" The barista blushes like mad at my request, and I honestly feel bad for getting her hopes up. I wish I could like her in return at least so that her efforts aren't completely wasted on me.

But that is not the case, as much as her glossy stare tells me she wishes it were. I just desperately need to get past this portion of my story, and her obvious Latin heritage makes her the perfect muse.

"Yeah, of course. What's it for?" She agrees with eager lips. "I'm writing a steamy novel, actually" I admit with a pale pink blush, knowing I must sound like a total perv right now. Clara

agrees, but I can tell she doesn't know what to make of my admission. "Alright, well what do I have to do?" Clara shifts nervously between one foot and then the other, so I offer her a calming smile in return. "Just take a seat and relax, I'll handle the rest."

Wow, this could not sound more inappropriate if I tried.

Ignoring the urge to facepalm, I take a long slow gulp of my coffee then set it down on a decorative coaster nearby in an attempt to save the table from more stains. Clara sits across from me and iidgets slightly with unease, her fingers pawing at a loose strand of her black hair. She bites subconsciously on her bottom lip and tries with all her might to not make eye contact with me, but she's unknowingly sparked my creativity like a wildfire.

The blush still clinging to her cheeks draws my attention as I stare at her, and I can feel the creative cogs un-sticking in my mind like a sweet summer rain after a long drought.

I press my fingers back to my keyboard and start typing away like an offended blogger on a mission.

'Her thick black hair was pulled back out of herface, exposing eyes the color of freshly mulled soil. Strands too short to stay tamed have fallen in front of herface, but she just ignores them. She crosses her sun-drenched thighs to mute the tightness building in her core as she looks upon her almost lover with delicious intent. The water has soaked him through by this point, causing her mouth to dry the likes of which she has never experienced before. She wants the person her eyes are clinging to more than she'd like to admit, but would she ever dare to confess these urges aloud?'

"That will about do it," I announce happily to Clara whose likeness will forever be embedded in my freshly started romance novel. "Great, I'm so glad I could help," she giggles coyly at me, no doubt desperate to read what I think about her appearance.

"Mind if I read it?" She predictably asks me, nervousness evident on her dark features.

"Why not," I agree, but just as I'm about to turn my laptop screen towards Clara for her viewing pleasure, a familiar tone sounds through my speakers that stops me in my tracks. I check the time on my wristwatch and feel my heart begin to race as I notice the hour hand resting neatly on the seven o' clock marker.

"Actually, I'm sorry Clara, I have to go, but I promise you can read it next time I stop by." Her face falls, but I can hardly be bothered with validating her today. I shove everything into my bag as quickly as I can and slip my wooly coat back onto my torso.

I shoot a fleeting glance at Clara as I place one hand on the cafe door. She seems genuinely dejected, so I make sure to offer her some form of comfort before braving the frozen elements. "Next time Clara, honestly, I promise!"

Chapter 2

The walk back towards my apartment is unbearably cold, but the promise of what is to come keeps me warm deep inside.

There's j ust something so burning hot about sin, even when it's as innocent and mild as the naughty things swirling around in my head.

I'm a good girl, I really am, but even good girls do something had every once in a while. After all, wasn't it Alexander Pope who said 'To err is human?'.

I giggle to myself as my frozen fingertips painfully unlock my apartment door, and I hurry inside.

I shed my extra layers and quickly pull my laptop back from my bag before discarding the rest of my belongings on to the floor. I shake off my snow-covered shoes on my way to my sofa and sit with a soft thud on the comfy pillow top that's shamelessly covered in Cheeto dust and candy wrappers.

Heaving my laptop onto my lap, I kick my feet up on my coffee table and open my internet browser. I click the bookmark titled "Bookish-Escapes.com" and wait impatiently for the screen to load. I didn't realize it at first, but I had begun gnawing on my bottom lip in anticipation.

As soon as the website loads, the direct messenger feature springs up and life instantly ignites back into my emerald eyes. Like clockwork, I have a message from him.

IchabodTom

Hello, my lovely Lane. I've missed you terribly.

I suck in a soft breath at his admission. It's been four months like this. Messaging each other back and forth every evening, but guilt has made its way into my heart. No matter how badly we both want to, we can never talk like this face to face.

LiteraryLane21

And I've missed you. Tell me about your Sunday.

I hit send and wait for his response. He doesn't usually take very long, but I still decide to make myself some tea while I wait. I slide on slippery socks into the kitchen and turn my kettle on. I unfold a tea bag, placing it gingerly in my baby blue mug, and grab the honey from a cabinet. Leaning against the cold marble counter top, I hug my arms across my shoulders and start to reminisce.

It all began so innocently, I swear.

I had walked up to his desk last semester to hand in my assignment after spending far too long rummaging through every single one of my folders for it. The class had cleared out already, and professor Thomas Crane was lost in his computer screen.

"I finally found it, sir, sorry about that." He looked up at me with vibrant blue eyes and gave me a comforting smile, gorgeous dimples decorating his cheeks as he did. "No worries, Sophia. I look forward to reading your work. You are very talented." His voice was the definition of masculinity, and just like every other girl on campus, I was hooked.

Professor Crane grabbed my assignment from me and began walkng it over to his briefcase for safe keeping. Out of the corner of my eye,

I saw something pop up on his screen and heard a small chime. I knew it was rude to look, but I just couldn't help myself. A message for IchabodTom was displayed before my eyes, and I struggled not to giggle. I couldn't help but to think how absolutely clever his username was, and it honestly made my heart throb even harder with longing for, well, more. The depths of my mind had already started unraveling a very seliish plan before I even realized it, and now here we are.

Almost lovers.

That same familiar chime pulls me back from my memories, and at the same time, my kettle begins to wail.

I quickly pour the hot liquid into my glass and iinish it off with a dollop of honey before scurrying back over to my computer.

IchabodTom

I 've just been preparing my lessons for next semester. God, I wish you were here with me. I could use your expertise on Shakespearean sonnets right about now. Although, I don't know if I 'd be so focused on sonnets if you were beside me. I ’m desperate to meetyou, darling.

I wouldn't be so eager, Professor.

I roll my eyes to myself but can't deny his words affect me. I feel a familiar warmth spreading through my chest. If only he knew who I was, a pair of hungry eyes among many others watching him teach, undressing him with my gaze all the while. If he knew I was a student, he would want nothing more to do with me.

If there's one thing I know about my professor, it's that he's not weak-willed or foolish enough to risk his career over a student. He would hate me for what I've done if he ever discovered the truth, and even if there were a student convincing enough to lure him into their bed it wouldn't be me.

I've given Thomas a vague description of my appearance, but nothing that could ever give away my true identity. I've told him I'm an adult woman who lives in the area, but that I'm much too

shy to meet him in person. I know I'm absolutely terrible, but my heart has never been so enamored by someone before. I crave him even if he never knows who I really am.

LiteraryLane21

Why is it a man as captivating as yourself has decided to devote his nights to conversing with an anonymous stranger instead ofwooing a flesh and blood woman? Honestly, Thomas, haven't you any urges?

I hit send then press my warm teacup up to my lips. The floral aroma relaxes me as I sink deeper into my position on the couch.

Professor Crane could easily have any woman he desires, and it's been a mystery to me for some time now why he wastes his efforts with me, or well, with LiteraryLane21.

IchabodTom

Nothing, and I mean nothing could compare to your mind, Lane. Flesh and blood could never please me even half as well as your words already do. The only woman I want is the one connected to your wit and charm. I have unbearable urges, but whoever said I wasn't acting on them ?

I squeeze my thighs shut and shiver. He's become so bold lately. I sit and stare at his words for several seconds wondering just what we are. We're far more than friends but less than lovers. I'm not a virgin, but I wouldn't say I'm killing it either. It's not that men haven't tried, believe me, they have, It's just that none of the right men have tried.

All things considered, I know I'd be the first to admit that I have a lot to learn about sexual experimentation, but I know what acting on them means.

My professor has been getting off to me.

I bite my lip, a lustful courage foreign to me building in my burning core. I press my fmgers to the keys and swallow the pool of saliva that's formed on my tongue.

LiteraryLane21

You mean to tell me you've been getting off to the thought of me... how selfish. I think I deserve something in return.

Send.

Oh god Sophia what are you doing? You aren't this girl. Or maybe you are, maybe this is who you've become after a semester of watching this gorgeous older man prance around in tight dress shirts and revealing slacks.

I clench every muscle in my body, scolding myself for these inappropriate musings that I have absolutely no intention of putting an end to.

My computer chimes once more, and I brace myself for his response.

IchabodTom

Usually, I wait until the third date to make a girl come, but with you, I'm willing to make an exception.

Oh dear lord, have mercy on my soul.

Chapter 3

Old Books

The smell of dusty books tickles my nose as I shelve the ones lucky enough to have been recently Viewed.

I'm the library assistant at my university, and I could never have dreamed I'd be so lucky. I take care of books all day and they give me money for it.

Suckers!

I make my way back to the rental counter and start scanning in new returns. I've barely dug into my work before I hear a familiar feminine voice clear its throat.

"Excuse me miss, where is the porn section? I have some research to do."

My head shoots right up and an involuntary sigh flies from my lips. Standing there looking completely innocent is my best friend, Fiona Reese. She's got a cheesy grin on her face and she's slumped over onto the counter, her abnormally large bosoms resting on a poor unsuspecting stack of fiction novels.

"Haven't you any shame?" I ask even though I already know the answer.

"Nope," Fiona replies, popping the P. She heaves herself off of my workstation and starts looking around with curious blue eyes, her thick black waves dusted with snow.

"When do you get off, Soph?" She asks without looking my way. She may give me crap about "wasting my time in a library" but I can tell she thinks this is the most beautiful place she's ever seen.

The shelves seem to go on for miles and the ceiling is decorated with intricately painted panels. The floors are reflective so they make it seem like the library is twice as big, and that it could swallow you whole if it so desired.

"I get off at eight," I reply, wondering what she has planned. Fiona's gaze finally falls back to me and she has a mischievous smile plastered on her full red lips.

"Well seeing as how it's our last weekend homework free before classes start I thought we could go out. Paint the town beige. You can throw on your sexiest sweater and everything."

I scoff, looking aghast. "I own plenty of sexy clothes and BEIGE?"

My voice gets louder as my sentence goes on, but Fiona already knows what my answer will be.

"So What do you say?" She asks me eagerly.

"I can't," I reply with an awkward mumble.

"Are you gonna blow me off so you can keep catfishing Dr. Dreamy?"

I don‘t reply, avoiding eye contact entirely, so she throws her arms in the air.

"Seriously?" I can tell she's mad at me. I spend every night like a hermit locked up in my apartment with my face in my computer.

She'd be a bit more proud of me though if she knew What kind of things we've begun talking about lately.

"It's not cat-fishing." I defend. "I‘m not pretending to be someone else." Fiona gives a short fake laugh at that.

"No, you're just pretending to be no one."

I roll my eyes in defense but honestly, that's accurate.

Both of my hands run through my loose red tinged curls, and I sigh deep and heavy.

"Come on Sophie, have drinks with me. What is the point of being 21 if you're just gonna drink coffee and stay home?" Fiona sticks her bottom lip out and pouts.

I scrunch up my nose in uncomfortable thought. Fiona is right, and I do feel bad for practically blowing her off all winter. I suppose one night away from my computer couldn't hurt.

"Fine. Fine. I'll go." I say with a shrug, trying to play it down. "Why the hell not?"

Fiona's face lights up. "Holy Freck are you serious?"

I nod and can't help but laugh. "Awesome! I'm gonna go pack some stuff for tonight then meet you at your apartment when you get off." Fiona scurries away like a jubilant little girl and I can't help but laugh. What a dork.

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"Put your hands behind your head and step away from the computer!" Fiona's voice shrieks in my ear as she lunges to snatch my laptop out of my hands.

"I just want to let him know that I won't be able to talk tonight!" I say defensively. "Is that so crazy?"

Fiona looks at me with absolute disgust. "Are you new to this? Honestly? How can you be so naive? This is a grown ass man you're dealing with, Sophia.

A beautiful one to boot. He may not know who the hell you are but there's one thing he does know: you stay home every night and talk to him and wait for him" Fiona puts my computer in her overnight bag "you can have this back once you've learned your lesson."

"And what lesson is that exactly?" I reply with complete and utter annoyance, my patience worn to nubs.

"That you wait for no man. And that you are desirable by many, not just him. Now, go put this on."

Fiona hands me a dress that has a plunging neckline and stops well above my knees. "Okaaay, but you know it's like 10 degrees outside right?" I complain but Fiona just shrugs me off

"That's what coats are for isn't it?"

I go to my bedroom to figure out Fiona's outfit of choice. It's a lovely army green sort of color that I do suppose compliments my skin well. The dress is stretchy but not the cheap costume kind. It's very simple by design but unbelievably flattering. I stare at myself for several moments before a bitter feeling fills my stomach.

Guilt pulls at my subconscious as I think of Professor Crane waiting eagerly for me to talk with him. I'll just have to explain later and hope he doesn't get too upset.

I try very hard to not let the powerful introverted side of my personality hold me back. However, knowing I'll have to deal with pervs and jerks trying to hit on me makes me want to bail on this idea entirely.

Fiona and I have been friends for as long as I can remember, both of us easily classed as weirdos, but she's got one thousand times more courage than I'll ever have. Her extroverted shenanigans always land me in uncomfortable situations.

"Holy crap, look at you!" Fiona coos as she walks in. I instantly blush and notice she's got her own outf1t on as well. Bold and red, with her huge chest on full display, Fiona looks like every mans twisted fantasy.

The starts off good and then she eats your soul kind.

"I'm so proud of you for doing this," she assures me, and I feel my chest tighten. "I know you're probably one second away from ripping that dress off, putting on some footie pajamas, and watching The Food N etwork, but I'm just proud you've come this far." She laughs and it helps to settle my anxiety.

"I'm not gonna change my mind," I assure her. "That being said, let's go before I do." We both share a giggle and bundle up for the cold. Thank goodness Fiona has a car.

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Chapter 4

Thick smoke fills my lungs as we walk into a little downtown dive bar not too far from campus. The air is thick with mostly fruity scents because everyone has decided vaping is much cooler than cigarettes. I fallow Fiona to a little corner booth where we shed our coats and purses. I may he a little paranoid, but it's almost like I can already feel dozens of little eyes watching out every move.

"Let's get some drinks," Fiona suggests as she digs her wallet out. I walk with her up to the bar and watch as she shamelessly flirts with the bartender. "I'll take a vodka cranberry, and my girl here will take a sex on the beach." The moderately handsome barkeep can't keep his eyes off of Fiona's eye-grabbing cleavage not that it's his fault. They didn't call her "booby trap" in high school for nothing.

I internally scold her lackadaisical actions, but in the end, it works in our favor.

"First rounds on me,1adies," he tells us with a flirtatious wink. I do my best to not be awkward. I smile back and grab my drink making sure not to fall on my face, drop the drink, or die. Once it's in my hand I rush it to my lips, desperate for a taste of that liquid courage.

I take frantic gulps out of desperation, the berry flavors tickling my tongue as the alcohol works it's magic.

Holy crap this is delicious.

"Wow What is this?" I ask Fiona. "It tastes like juice."

"It pretty much is, but watch it. That juice bites." She smirks and pats my back, moving us to our table.

After the second round of adult fruit punch, I can feel the nerves wearing off. It really pathetic that it takes a substantial amount of rum to turn me into a normal person, but I suppose it is what it is.

Fiona and I somehow end up talking to a couple of guys at our booth when out of the corner of my eye he walks in.

My breath hitches, and I nearly choke on my last sip, the alcohol burning my lungs as I watch the most beautiful man I've ever seen make a beeline for the bar.

I shamelessly watch as the bartender hands him a very full glass of amber liquor and my skin erupts in chills.

He didn't order a beer like some men do after a long day, and he didn‘t order shots so he isn't just here to get shit faced.

No, he ordered a whiskey. I would recognize that color anywhere, my father favoring the kind when I was younger.

The alcohol that means I'm here to drown my sorrows, but I want to feel them suffocate as I do. The kind that says I've got nothing else to lose.

He's sitting all alone on a bar stool while I'm watching him tell a story that no one else seems to hear.

Fiona finally notices I've checked out of the conversation with our two table mates, and she follows my misty stare to the bar. Her jaw practically falls to the floor once she sees him, but her quick mind immediately springs into action.

"Alrighty guys, I think I'm ready to be alone with my friend now." Fiona's usually cheerful voice is cold and Iinite as she glares at the men.

"What's wrong, I thought we were having fun?" One of the men questions.

"We were darling but it's girl time now so bye bye." Fiona's 'get lost' stare has the men quickly scurrying away, but I can't take my eyes off of him.

Thomas Crane.

"What are the odds he'd choose this dingy little bar, honestly. I can't escape him, Pi!" I ruff up my hair in obvious aggravation.

Not that I wanted to escape him, but it almost seems like the universe is torturing me for what I've done.

"Go talk to him," Fiona says, glaring at me with her arms crossed. She's definitely tired of my crap.

"Talk to him? Are you crazy? You know that I can't talk to him! I can type sure, and I can plan conversations in my head but talking Fiona?! That's hilarious! I can form sentences about as well as Helen Keller and you know that!" I glare at my best friend who isn't the least bit amused by my outburst.

Fiona eventually sighs and leans over the table, throwing her hands on my shoulders. "Look at me," she orders.

"I am," I say, staring her in her stupid face.

"Even if you mess this up you can still hide behind your username later, but sitting over there is the man you're crazy about and he's obviously got something on his mind. This is your chance, Soph." Fiona leans back and takes a quick sip of her drink, her eyes watching me carefully.

"Now, are you gonna be a little bitch about it or are you going to put on your big girl panties and go seduce your English Professor?"

I stare blankly at Fiona for a count of One. Two. Three.

"You know what?" I say as I grab my drink, downing the remains in one big gulp. "I'm gonna do both."

Awkward Sophia is dead. She's been replaced by cool, sexy, tipsy Sophia instead, and I'm about to make this man fall!

I rise to my feet, and I Can see the slow clap building in Fiona's eyes.

She better not.

I internally scream as I walk towards Thomas, the man I've been pining for all year. The man I've been talking to for four months. The only man who's ever made me feel like this.

In my head, I have an amazing pickup line planned. There's literally no way I can mess this up. I know I look amazing so there's really nothing to worry about.

I'm right behind him now, I can see the back of his head. His tightly groomed brown hair that messes up handsomely in the front. I can see that his white dress shirt is unbuttoned and the sleeves are rolled up. I bite my tongue, ready to use my attention getter but something completely different comes out.

"You know I think it was Ralph Waldo Emerson Who said "as a cure for worrying, work is better than whiskey,"

Damn.

Why, Sophia? What are you, eighty? I bite my bottom lip to suppress a groan of self-disappointment, but I don't get to live in my self-deprecating shame for very long.

Thomas shoots his head in my direction like a bolt of lighting, and I'm almost knocked back by the beautiful blue eyes now piercing my soul. They're wrought with dark circles and his jawline has the most delectable amount of stubble peppering it. He's unlike I've ever seen him before, and it's honestly enough to make my mouth water.

"Sophia."

Thomas says my name. That's it for a moment, he just says it. I can see he's thinking and there are Wheels churning in his mind behind his azure stare.

And for a moment it looks like he's looking at a long lost lover.

Oh no. Does he know?

Chapter 5

One Dance Two Mistakes

My heart is practically in my throat as I wait for Thomas to speak. The eye contact he's making has small beads of sweat rolling down my back, and I'm trying like crazy to keep it together but I'm failing.

My fight or flight instincts have me mentally searching for all of the exits in this bar, and yet I don't think I could move if I tried.

Finally, his eyes soften, and his mouth slowly parts as he's about to respond. "Yes, well normally I'd love to throw myself into my work, but since it hasn't quite begun yet whiskey will have to do." I feel a smile pulling at my lips and my chest relaxes.

Maybe I just overreacted.

"I assume you've got the curriculum all planned for next semester then? I'm looking forward to it, Professor." The word professor rolls off of my tongue and tastes foreign to me. He's Thomas to me. My Thomas, but he doesn't know that.

"So you're taking one of my classes again this semester? I'm very..." Thomas pauses mid-sentence at about the moment his eyes leave mine, traveling downwards. I can see it was involuntary, and he is rendered just as shocked as I am.

"Pleased to hear that." He finally iinishes and I'm one more provocative gesture away from needing a new pair of panties.

He's eyeing my body up and down. Suddenly this dress feels even tighter.

I see something oddly animalistic spring to life in his eyes and shivers erupt throughout my body. He's never looked at me this way before, but in his defense, he's never seen me quite so exposed.

I try to recover, aiding the conversation along as best as I can. "I would never miss an opportunity to learn from you Professor, you just make everything so much easier to understand than say, Professor Galahad or Marsh." At my words, a big genuine smile appears on Thomas's face. He's so beautiful it hurts.

"Your words mean a lot to me but please, Sophia. At least until Monday, call me Thomas." He looks up at me once more with glossy eyes, and I can't help but think for a moment that one drink doesn't do that to a person. No, he was drinking before he got here.

What's gotten into you, Thomas?

My face involuntarily scrunches up a little as I look on at my dear professor with pained curiosity. "Sorry if I'm overstepping my bounds, but whats got you drinking whiskey alone in a bar on a Friday night... Thomas?"

Just saying his actual name sounds so intimate, but I try not to let my mind wander too far down that path.

Thomas seems to take a moment to think over his response, but eventually, he just shrugs, obviously hack peddling what he was originally going to say. "I suppose I've just got no one to drink with." He offers up as an excuse.

I know he doesn't want to actually tell me, why would he? I'm just a student. Maybe later he will be willing to consider in LiteraryLane21, but I can't wait till then to know he's going to be okay.

I desperately try to think of something to lighten the mood. I have no experience here, but Fiona does. I quickly racked my brain for what Fiona would do, and then it hits me.

"This is my favorite song." I blurt out, drawing Toms gaze back to me instead of his glass.

"What was that?" He asks, confused by my outburst.

"This is my favorite song, and you seem to be free so," I pause to lock my eyes with his "dance with me. Please?"

The amount of courage that sentence took will probably render me bedridden for the next two days, but it was worth it. I offer my hand out to Thomas and after a brief hesitation, I feel a ravenous heat ignite from my palm and spread to every inch of my body.

He grabbed my hand and now he's on his feet, towering over me. I can see the struggle on his face. He knows he shouldn't, hell I know know that he shouldn't. This has bad idea written all over it, but that doesn't seem to be enough to stop either of us.

"I suppose one dance couldn't hurt," Thomas says in an attempt to convince himself that it's true.

I start pulling him away from the bar and towards the open area where many other couples have already taken to contorting each other to the music. On my way to the dance floor, I pass by Fiona who looks like she just saw a ghost. She looks between Thomas and I clasped hands and my face in a quick double take. She mouths oh my god! And I have to bite my lips shut to keep from screeching like a deranged person.

I know right?!

I may internally scream, but on the outside, I'm as calm as can be.

I should get a freaking Oscar for this.

I weave us around couples that seem to be taking up more room than they really need and stop once I find an open area. I turn and face my dance partner who's already looking down on me with a look of nervous anticipation.

My right hand slowly rises and comes to rest on his chest, and I can swear I feel both of our breathng hitch at the same time. Thomas places his right hand on my hip and squeezes firmly, his touch a welcome burn against my body. The feeling of his strong fingers encasing my side makes me want to fall to pieces right here.

I can't believe this is happening. Is this a dream? Did I black out from being drunk, and this is just a lovely but cruel fantasy? Am I actually dancing with a mop right now?

I'm quickly pulled out of my paranoia by Thomas who has used his grip on my side to pull us so close a sheet of paper couldn't slip in between. His left hand has me by the back of my neck snugly and his head is resting on my shoulder.

"Calm down, Sophia, it's just a dance," He whisperers against my ear, and I feel my hand on his shirt spring shut, grabbing a handful of the white fabric. My other hand slowly comes up and grasps his waist just above his belt. If he didn't have such a tight hold on me I'd crumble to the floor.

I try to take deep breaths to calm my sporadic heart rate, but it's no use.

I've waited so long to feel his hard body against mine, and now that it's happening I'm in sensory overload. I'm drowning in his presence, but oh please don't let anyone rescue me.

Just a few seconds later I feel our hips swaying in perfect unison to the melodic beat that fills the drafty bar air. Thomas pulls me back slightly to peer down at me, our eyes instantly locking. His are pleading for something that I can't quite understand, but I stare back relentlessly, trying to read them.

Our gaze only stops when he takes a moment to slowly spin me, his hand coming to rest back on my hip only lower this time.

He's in ass territory now.

Blood rushes to my cheeks, and I have to stifle a breath of surprise as his hand slowly drifts lower, all the while he's staring a path through my soul.

I can faintly hear the song coming to an end over the sound of blood thumping in my ears, however, I'm completely oblivious to the fact that we've stopped moving and are now just as frozen as statues.

Seconds or hours pass by in complete rictus until like someone slowly Winding up an old toy car, Thomas starts leaning in.

Usually, red lights would be flashing in my head, and I'd be putting on the brakes but through rose tinted glasses the lights look like stars, and I'm about to make a wish on the brightest one.

My high heel clad feet move on their own as I roll up onto my toes to meet Thomas in the middle. His lips linger so close to mine that I can smell the savory liquor on his lips.

He jolts back an inch or so as though he's not quite sure but recovers the distance quickly, his strong fingers becoming lost in my long wispy hair.

Thomas squeezes both hands tight, my ass now trapped snugly between his tingers, and my hair tugging me slightly backward.

He licks his lips and lets our eyes speak to each other before using his possessive grasp to suddenly slam our lips together.

I practically moan against the feeling of his lips against mine, and I quiver as electricity courses through my bones.

Thomas groans from deep within his throat as his tongue parts my lips. I'm holding onto his shirt for dear life, hoping he never let's go.

The feeling between my thighs is complete nirvana, and I'm about to scream take me right here, but before my erotic fantasy is realized Thomas pushes us apart so hard that I almost lose my balance.

"Fuck me, what have I done?" Thomas cries as he runs two nervous hands through his hair. I feel like I've just gone skydiving and my parachute didn't open before I splattered on the ground. He sees the look of a shock and horror on my face and starts back peddling.

"No no, it's not you!" He defends "lord knows it isn't you Sophia, but not only is this illegal but I'm also seeing someone." Thomas's face screws up slightly "well more like I'm talking to someone but still, I'm so sorry this was a mistake."

I watch in complete bewilderment as Thomas rushes to the bar to pay his tab then shoots me one fleeting glance before he runs out of the building entirely.

Fiona, who has been watching the Whole thing unravel, is now sprinting over to me in her three-inch leather heels.

"Holy shit, Sophia what was that?! Who are you!? What have you done to my nervous little librarian?!" Shes practically out of breath by the time she's done screaming.

"It doesn't matter," I say bitterly, and Fiona's face falls.

"What do you mean?" She asks.

"I mean he regrets it that's what. And you know what's even more messed up? He thinks he just cheated on me."

"Wait, why?" She thinks for a few moments before realization strikes. "Ohh honey wow. Let's get you home." Fiona offers as a quick solution.

Yeah, let's.

***

Fiona is passed out on my couch with a Dorito hanging halfway out of her mouth. I check to make sure she's completely asleep before sneaking over to her bag and pulling my computer out. I tap on the keys as quietly as I can to bring up bookishespcapes.com.

Instantly, a half a dozen messages or so pop into view.

IchabodTom

8:30: Good evening, sweetheart how are you?

8:50: Is everything okay? You don't usually miss our talking times.

9:20: I really don't want to seem like an overbearing jerk so I'll say goodnight, darling. I hope all is well.

10:00: I've been thinking about somethings. I really wish we could talk.

I roll my eyes at the screen, still a bit sore from our encounter at the bar. There's the proof he had been drinking way before I ran into him. No self-respecting literature teacher would make so many errors.

IchabodTom

10:15: I think I need some air. :

12:32: We need to talk...

Suddenly my heart screeches to a halt. How is it even though I already know what Thomas wants to talk about that sentence still scares the hell out of me?

I look over at my clock and notice that it's almost two in the morning. I don't know if he's even still awake, but I type my message anyways.

LiteraryLane21

I'm so sorry, my friend dragged me out tonight. I wanted to tell you first, but she insisted I take a break from my computer. What did you want to talk about?

Part of me really wanted Thomas to be asleep, but it doesn't seem I will be so lucky tonight.

IchabodTom

You don't have to apologize to me. You have every right to live your life outside of this website. I'm happy you were able to have some fun. What I really need to say is honestly, Lane. I don't

know what we are. I know that I'm obsessed with talking to you and that there's no one in this world who I want to meet more, but other than that I don't know what to call this relationship. That being said, I went out tonight myself and had a bit too much to drink. I kissed someone. Someone I had absolutely no business kissing for many reasons, but I'm so sorry. I know this isn't a typical relationship, but I wanted you to know because I feel guilty. I'm sorry.

I sit and ponder Thomas's long message for several minutes, practically biting off all of my fingernails. If he claims to like me so much how could he kiss me? Not that we're dating so what does it matter if he kissed me? At least he told me that he kissed me instead of hiding it from me...

My head starts hurting something fierce, and I rub my temples in anguish.

Oh for heaven's sake, what the hell am I even talking about?!

I press my fingers to the keys and quickly type out my response.

LiteraryLane21

Thomas, you don't owe me any explanation. We're not technically together, and what really matters is that you felt guilty and you told me about it. Don't beat yourself up over this. It doesn't change anything between us.

Send. He responds almost instantly.

IchabodTom

I promise you on my life, Lane. I will never keep anything from you, and I will never lie to you.

My eyes stare blankly at my screen for some time before I softly whisper out loud to myself.

"I believe you."

***

Chapter 6

Thomas's POV: (Bonus Chapter!)

Gosh!

What is it about whiskey from a bar that tastes so much better?

I let the amber liquid quench these feelings in my stomach. I ran out at home and this was the closest place in walking distance.

Is this my fourth glass now or fifth? I forget. Either way, I welcome it with open arms.

I stare down at my glass as I slosh it back and forth. Am I drinking because she's not home tonight? Or am I drinking because I realize just how sad my life is?

Thirty-One, never married and living in a new town all by myself. When I took this job I figured it would be the ultimate step towards building a life I could be proud of.

So far all I've managed to do is develop an unhealthy addiction to someone online who could be a forty-year-old man for all I know and manage to convince every damn student at this school to try to sleep with me.

It's exhausting, and ironically the only one that could even stand a chance if they tried doesn't seem to be the least bit interested in

"You know I think it was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said "as a cure for worrying, work is better than whiskey,"

My head shoots up from where I'd been staring, to instantly come face to face with the most intense green stare I've ever seen.

"Sophia."

Her name almost hurts to say and I'm left speechless. This is why she's the only student in this privileged town I'd even consider...

What are you thinking, Thomas? Get your thoughts together, she's off limits for a thousand and one reasons and you're drunk.

Not a good combination.

As if her looks weren't already deadly enough, she also shares my passions.

I realize after silently berating myself, I need to think of something to say in return but it's so hard to think properly when she's looking at me like that. Her presence is so familiar somehow.

"Yes, well normally I'd love to throw myself into my work, but since it hasn't quite begun yet whiskey Will have to do." I finished with a grin.

At my words, I watch as Sophia relaxes slightly and starts to smile. Is this friendly banter or is she trying to pick me up? She's so unbelievably smart and beautiful I don't know why in hell she would ever even try.

"I assume you've got the curriculum all planned for next semester then? I'm looking forward to it, Professor." She says and I feel my jaw lock. Professor. The sound of her saying it is almost erotic, the way it rolled slowly off of her tongue.

"So you'll be taking one of my classes again this semester? I'm very..." My eyes travel down and instantly I'm punished by an unfair sight.

Whoever sold her this kind of dress can go to hell. It's like a second layer of skin that hugs her feminine body at every nook and cranny. She's much taller than usual and I notice that's thanks to a pair of strappy heels that criss-cross around her ankles.

I realize a moment too late that I've been eyeing her like she's my last meal and I feel like I've just been caught with my hand in the cookie jar.

"Pleased to hear that." I finish, my words mimicking my feelings.

Pleased.

I try to keep my gaze tamed on her eyes but even as I do I can feel an animalistic hunger building in my stomach. How long has it been since I've been with a woman? I don't even want to think about that.

"I would never miss an opportunity to learn from you Professor, you just make everything so much easier to understand than say, Professor Galahad or Marsh." She calls me professor again and it makes my whole body tense.

I know it has to be the liquor talking but I just have to hear that pretty little mouth say my name.

"Your words mean a lot to me but please, Sophia. At least until Monday call me Thomas." We make eye contact again but I notice her stature change to deep concern. I haven't seen anyone look at me like that in a long time.

"Sorry if I'm overstepping my bounds, but whats got you drinking whiskey alone in a bar on a Friday night... Thomas?" I relish for a moment in the way her soft voice says my name. I can feel my guard starting to slip. I almost want to tell her. Confide in her about every single thing I can think of.

Whiskey is poison, and I'm slowly being consumed by it.

Finally, I decide I can't do that. She's my student and that's all she will ever be.

"I suppose I've just got no one to drink with," I say as a quick excuse. I'm about to get up and remove myself from

this dangerous situation when I hear something that knocks me off of my guard.

"This is my favorite song," Sophia says very suddenly. "What was that?" I ask in return. "This is my favorite song, and you seem to be free so... dance with me. Please?" She replies, offering me her small hand.

I know I shouldn't. It's the worst idea imaginable. The smoke filled room covers self-control in a haze and alcohol breeds bad decisions. I should pay my tab and go home, but she looks so hopeful that it stops me.

I reach out and grab her delicate hand and I'm instantly filled with a jarring warmth. I stand, not releasing her hand.

"I suppose one dance couldn't hurt," I convince myself that sentence is true and let Sophia lead me onto the dance floor.

By the time she finds a place to stop and turn around that warmth has morphed into a ravenous burn. The anticipation of feeling her threatening to stop my heart.

Sophia reaches up and touches my chest and I feel my breath become ragged. How can something so simple cause such a huge reaction?

I'm going to stop thinking. It's tearing me apart. For the next four minutes, I'm just going to let this be.

I just wish Sophia would do the same.

I grab her hip and squeezeit, I oving the feeling of her body under my grasp. My other hand comes up and grabs the back of her neck, pulling her as tight as I dare without hurting her. I lean my head down to her hear and whisper.

"Calm down, Sophia, it's just a dance,"

At my words, her hand clamps shut on my shirt and she places a timid hand on my waist. She's so innocent and beautiful, it's not fucking fair.

I sway my hips and she follows. I pull us apart just enough to look down at her.

I desperately want to see the look on her face. As soon as I see it it's as if I'm under a spell. Her eyes scream please don’t stop and I don't want to. I want so much more than this dance. I need it.

I break our lusting stare to spin her and once she's come back around I grab her backside lower, daring to touch her curves.

I search her face for any trace of reluctance but there is none. My hand slides further down, feeling the full scope of her tight round ass. The sensation causes me to stop moving and shortly afterward the song ends.

I can't seem to will my eyes away from my dance partner. Everything she does makes my blood rush from my head to my masculine core.

Walk away

The little voice in my head keeps screaming but I can't comply. All control of my judgment has gone out the door with my last glass of whiskey.

After being frozen in time for several seconds I feel myself leaning in involuntarily. My body does it all on its own and to my surprise I see Sophia moving towards me as well.

I run a stand up to her hair and get lost in the silky strands.

We're so close I can smell the subtle alcohol on her breath and it causes me to jolt back just for a moment. Does she actually want this or is she too drunk to know?

Her longing stare answers for me and seconds later I'm leaning back in. My hands tighten and a wave of lust hits me hard as I grip her backside roughly and pull with undisputed control on her hair.

I can't help myself, I crash my mouth onto hers and groan as soon as I taste her sweet tongue on mine.

I deepen the kiss even further, every nerve in my body firing. I feel my pants growing tighter and am desperate for relief.

Screw her.

My body pleads but my mind comes to a screeching halt. I can't. Oh gosh, what about Lane? And my job?

I push Sophia and me apart as fast as I can, my chest rising and falling in instant regret.

"Punch me, what have I done?"

Chapter 7

I walked into classroom 219 with my head down and a sense of utter dread rushing through my veins. A week ago I was looking forward to this moment more than anything and now I'd rather stick my head in mud than be here right now.

I'm early.

I'm always early. That's just my personality but today I hate myself for it more than usual because occupying this room right now is only Dr.crane, some chubby boy Whose asleep on his desk, and myself.

I can feel the side of my head about to catch fire and I'm forced to look up at Thomas whose stare is threatening to burn a hole through my skull.

Our eyes lock and I feel a cold sweat sweep over me. He won't say it out loud but The look on his face is pleading for me to walk over.

I straighten up and sigh. Let's get this over with.

I walk up to Thomas's desk and fidget uncomfortably with the hem of my oversized sweater.

"About Friday night..." I start but Thomas stops me. "If you apologize to me right now I'm docking you 10 points." His interruption makes my head spring up from my distracted fingers to his face that is wearing a single grin.

Did he just make a joke Right now?

"Excuse me?" I ask, bewildered. "It was entirely my fault, Sophia. Don't you dare apologize. I was way out of line. We were both under the influence and I let you down as a professional figure. Please forgive me. It won't happen again"

Never in my life did I imagine I'd be getting apologized to by Thomas Crane for mouth sexing me in a bar. I know the kiss was out of like but to straight up say you regret the entire thing is a bit insensitive.

judging by the way he worded his apology you'd think it was prepared for a court case. Did he think I was going to tell on him?

What is this sour feeling in my heart?

I bite my lip and shrug. "That's fair. If you insist professor then I don't apologize. I liked it so what's there to be sorry for. Furthermore, I'll consider accepting your apology. It might just take some time for me to forget all of the... details." I give Thomas a fake grin then turn and walk to an empty seat in the second row.

I look back over at my sweet professor who looks so dumbfounded I can't help but giggle softly to myself. I'm not usually so vindictive, but there's something about someone saying they regret kissing you that, oh I don't know, pisses you off.

Slowly but surely people start pooling into the classroom, cups of coffee in their hands and bags under their eyes.

Ah, that first day feeling.

I lean down to pull a fresh black notebook from my book bag and on my way back up my head collides with that of another human being.

Ow, gosh!

My hand reaches for my bruised skull as my eyes search for the culprit. They come to rest on an unusually handsome guy with black hair, pale green eyes, and incredibly white teeth who is also gripping a portion of his own injured head

"I am so sorry," he says trying not to laugh. I shake my head and share in a small laugh with the stranger whose taken the seat beside me.

I discover he too was reaching for a notebook when life decided we both deserved a concussion.

"That's okay, I'm sure I've done something to deserve that," I joke in return. "I really doubt that," the guy says in disbelief as he gives his head one more healing rub.

"I'm Michael by the way," he says as he offers me a free hand to shake. I take it and give it a small tug.

"Sophia," I reply then let his hand go. I turn back to face the front of the room only to find that Dr. Crane has been watching this whole ordeal with a peculiar look on his face.

Not only do I notice Thomas's eyes in my direction but I also discover that Michael hasn't taken his eyes off of me yet either.

What is this? Is there some magical Chinese lady that I pissed off that's decided my love life isn't already complex enough?

I turn back to Michael who blushes ever so slightly when I catch him staring. "Is there something wrong with my face?" I ask.

"Quite the opposite actually. You're..."

"Alright class, welcome to your first day of Shakespearean literature." Dr. Crane interrupts and I can't help but think that he just cockblocked Michael on purpose, or am I imagining things?

With a heavy sigh, Michael turns towards the front of the class to listen to our instructor.

"This is a 400 level English class. You are all here because you value the written word so I expect nothing but the absolute best from you all this semester. I'll pass around some papers now that would beneiit you to hold on to."

Many papers start circulating through the body of students. When they reach me I take one of each and look down at them individually.

No way!

I gawk at one of the papers that is an informative flyer about an upcoming trip to New York to view "A Midsummer Nights Dream" live on Broadway.

I about fall out of my seat in disbelief.

"You should now all have a copy of the syllabus, a special accommodations pamphlet, and a flier for the English department field trip. Since I know it‘s the most exciting piece of information I've given you, I'll go over the field trip iirst. It's in one month in New York and we will be traveling by plane. Usually, a trip such as this would be bank breaking but due to the generosity of the school, it will only cost you three-hundred dollars for everything. That includes the plane ticket, play ticket, and overnight hotel stay."

My heart is racing as I listen to Dr. Crane. I never dreamed I'd get an opportunity like this so there's no way I'm missing it.

"Further more were all adults here. What you do is none of anyone's concern so I will be the only chaperone present. This trip is only offered to 400 level students so I'm anticipating approximately 20-30 students will be in attendance. If you miss the flight back it's on yourself to get back home and if you choose to misbehave at the play or in the hotel it is not the responsibility of the school to bail you out of jail. Any questions?"

I can't believe how amazing this is.

Chapter 8

As much as I'd like to stay frustrated at Thomas it's impossible for me when I hear him speak. The passion in his deep voice when he talks about plays, books, and poetry makes me fall for him even more. His mind is so enticing that I Iind myself unable to blink or breathe when I get even a glimpse of how smart he is.

Being smart turns me on so much more than being handsome, or having a huge dick though of course, those aren't a bad thing either.

I wonder if Thomas has a huge...

I spend all class fantasizing about my professor and hardly even notice the looks I keep receiving from Michael.

What's his deal?

"That will conclude today's lesson; I expect your written opinions of sonnet 18 next class period printed and stapled with your names in the upper right corner. "

Thomas's eyes fall on me as he starts packing up his black leather briefcase. Does he want to talk again?

Too bad. I've had enough excitement for one morning.

How can I face him when I've just spent an hour thinking about him naked?

Everyone starts packing up their things to head on to whatever else life has I store for them, but my packing is halted by Michael.

"Hey Sophia, when is your next class?" He asks me as he throws his backpack over one shoulder. "It's in an hour in the foreign language building, why?" I can feel my heartbeat quicken because I'm not an idiot.

I know why.

"Let me buy you a cup of coffee?" Michael asks, his voice full of confidence.

I feel an immediate inclination to say no, regardless of how otherworldly hot he is.

Coffee leads to dinner, and dinner leads to drinks, and drinks lead to sex.

Or at least it usually does. Not in my case so far but whatever.

I'm not bitter, I swear.

All joking aside, I'm just not sure that I'm in the right place emotionally to go on a pre-date with anyone. My heart belongs to Thomas and I can't "cheat" on him. I know he wouldn't do that to me... sober at least.

"I'm sorry Michael, I'm going to have to say no. I've just got a lot of stuff going on right now. Maybe later though," I say as sweetly as possible, collecting the rest of my belongings.

I make a run for the door and leave Michael standing there looking dumbfounded. He's not used to rejection, that's obvious.

I make sure not to look back at either him nor Thomas as I run out of the building and into the refreshing cold winter air.

I know Thomas was watching that whole exchange and for some reason, I was too afraid to see the look on his face, so I didn't.

Ugh, I could really use a cup of coffee right about now.

***

I walk into the cozy little coffee shop and am instantly greeted with the mouth-watering smell of mocha and cinnamon.

I walk over to the counter where a lonely dark haired barista is busying herself with restocking cups and other such accessories that go into coffee making.

"Hey, Clara," I say with a warm smile to get her attention. "I'll be right with you.." she starts, turning her head to glance and acknowledge the customer.

Her entire persona changes as soon as she sees that it's me. "Oh, Sophia! Hi!" She responds in a much more chipper tone than before.

Clara puts down what she was doing just to come and talk to me. I can see how much she cares and I can see the longing in her chocolate eyes every time we talk. Honestly, she makes me wish I were at least bisexual because I don't want her to have wasted her time on me.

That would make life so much easier, wouldn't it? If it were a choice. I could kiss Thomas goodbye and date a normally aged person. It's not though and unfortunately for Clara, I can't return her interest.

"Want your usual?" She asks, circling her finger around a small coffee stain on the counter. "That would be lovely, thank you," I reply and hand her cash for the drink. "Keep the change, of course." She bites her bottom lip "Thank you very much."

I go and take a seat at an empty table and pull my laptop out. I have about a million things I could be working on right now and I can't really decide which one to prioritize. I could do my response for Thomas's class, or I could work on one of the trillion stories I have in progress saved to my hard drive.

I run any thin fingers through my hair, brushing off any melted snow still clinging to the strands.

"Hot and delicious, just like you." Clara instantly freaks out and stutters "I mean for you. Just for you.." she almost dies of embarrassment as she sets my drink down in front of me.

"Thanks, Clara. No worries. We all make mistakes." I take a drink of my warm beverage and give Clara some time to recover from her traumatic error.

Her interest in me doesn't bother me one bit, honestly, it's very flattering. I've thought about the "just try it, this is college" thing but I don't want to use her like that.

"So, uhm, can I read that story now?" She asks me in a shy sort of whisper. "Oh yeah! I'd almost forgotten."

I pull up the save file for the storyI started a few days ago at this cafe and turn the screen to face Clara.

She sits opposite me and I can see her eyes as they travel across the page. "Oh, this is steamy!" She says, shocked.

"Yeah, a bit. I thought I'd try my hand at a bit of smut. I'm sorry if that bothers you since the girl is based on you."

"No no no, I like it. Use me however you want!" At that last outburst, I see Clara almost gi pale. "You know what?" She says, using her hands to lift herself off the chair "I'm going to go eat a peanut butter cookie."

"Okaaay, have fun?" I reply, confused. She's halfway back to the register when she turns back towards me.

"I'm allergic to peanut butter."

***

Chapter 9

Mature Chapter

I settle into my couch and turn on the tv. My damp hair trickles little droplets of water onto my cozy sweater, leaving discolored marks all over my shoulders.

After my shower, I didn't bother with pants, a beautiful perk of living on my own.

I got home from the library around an hour ago and now all I want to do is relax and watch my shows.

I bring my mug of tea up to my lips and sigh happily as the warm fluid heats me from the inside. The clock tells me it's 9:00 pm and I decide it's a good time to see if Thomas wants to talk.

I pull my computer onto my bare legs and sign on to bookish-escapes.com. I notice Thomas is already online and a message from him pops up almost immediately.

IchabodTom

Hello, Darling.

There's something so mature about the way he calls me darling. It speaks levels about his character and values. Older men always know how to speak to a lady better than the ones my age, at least so far.

LiteraryLane21

Hello Thomas, I missed you. What are you doing tonight?

We message back and forth about various things. He tells me about the classes he taught and about the trip to New York next month. We talk about What we had for dinner and what show I'm watching, but as time ticks on the conversations get deeper, as it usually does.

IchabodTom

Have dinner with me on Friday. I've had enough of this silly messaging game, Lane. I want you and I know you feel the same.

I cringe quietly to myself. I know he's getting sick and tired of this game but I'm not ready to quit him yet. I'm not ready to let go and there's no way I'm going to confess my identity to him.

I try to think of something to say that will be a good enough excuse after almost five months of stringing him along but honestly there is no excuse.

LiteraryLane21

I told you, Tom, I'm so shy. I don't want you to grow tired of me but the thought of meeting makes me have a panic attack. I hope you can understand.

Welp, it's official. I'm a lying piece of rock.

I groan loudly and throw my wet head back, running both hands through the damp tresses. Why did I get myself into this situation? Why did I peek at his computer that day in class? I had no right to do that.

Because you never imagined it would actually work, you dumb bitch. Now, look at you? You're all messed up.

Yeah, that sounds about right.

My computer chimes and I look down nervously at my screen.

IchabodTom

If I can't see you then I have a compromise.

My eyebrow raises in genuine interest.

LiteraryLane21

What is your compromise?

I hit send and stare unblinkingly at my computer until his message pops up.

IchabodTom

Let me call you.

I lean back, eyes wide and brain on overdrive.

I know that the phone changes your voice a little but would that be enough? I could alter my voice a little bit maybe and make it work.

I start saying random sentences and words in different voices. I lower my voice but I sound like a guy. I make my voice higher and I sound like a child.

This is ridiculous.

Finally, I speak more slowly and lower my tone just a little bit and I think it might work. I sound more womanly this way and I should sound different enough that he can't tell.

Holding my breath, I send him my phone number.

Seconds later my cell phone lights up and my ringtone fills the stagnant air of my apartment.

Holy crap I'm so nervous!

Lifting the phone to my ear, I take a deep breath and ready my sexy other woman voice.

"Hello?" I say softly and I hear a familiar chuckle sound from the other side of the line. "Thank god, you're not a man!" Thomas says and I bust out laughing.

Oh my goodness I never considered he may be worried about that!

"I'm definitely not a man," I say through laughing breaths. "Hey, I wasn't sure Lane. I'm not really a fighter but I'd have kicked your ass if you were."

This simple banter continues for a few minutes then it gets silent and a little awkward. It's so much easier to say something witty when it's via computer message.

I wasn't kidding when I told Fiona that I can't talk to him.

"You sound so sexy, Lane," Thomas says Iinally, his own voice seeming to get deeper.

"And you sound incredibly handsome." I offer in return.

"Do you want me?" Thomas replies, his voice slow and silky in my ear.

Then something happens that I never thought would.

"Yes, so much." I'm not going to lie. I would never get away with it if I tried.

"I want you too. So so much. If you were here with me I'd show you just how much."

My voice sticks in my throat as I try to form words. His flirting has already ignited my core and I can feel a slickness forming between my legs.

He can make me come undone so easily.

"Tell me, Thomas. Tell me What you'd do to me."

I can't believe my own mouth as those words slip out but they do. I want to know. I want a peek into that part of his mind. The barely explored perversions that haunt him at night.

"I'll tell you Lane, but you have to promise that you won't hold back. If what I say makes you horny I want you to touch yourself, and every time you want to moan it better be loud enough for me to hear, do you understand?"

My mouth goes completely dry and I clamp my thighs shut for a subtle release. "Yes, please. I'll do it. I promise." I moan back softly.

"Good girl." Thomas compliments me but it's the possessive kind and I love it.

I move my computer off of my lap completely and lay down on my back against the plush surface of my couch.

"If you were with me I'd be devouring your lips, and tangling my tongue with your own. I'd trap you beneath me and press my knee between your legs, rubbing your clit through your pants while my mouth moved down your jawline and your neck."

I can feel my breathing slip into some sort of jagged and unstable pattern.

"Tell me to keep going." Thomas demands and I don't even hesitate.

"Please don't stop," I cry out with anticipation and my hand slowly crawls under my panties. I can't hold back as I imagine every word coming from Thomas's perfect mouth.

What he doesn't know is that I've tasted those lips and I'm desperate to do so again.

"I'd rip the shirt off of your body and kiss your breasts, taking your nipple in my mouth and toying with the swollen peak until you moan my name."

Gosh, I love having an overactive imagination!

I moan sharply into the receiver as my hand explores my hot wet center. I use my middle finger to draw small circles over my clit as I dance teasingly around my own opening.

"More, Thomas, more!" I beg and I can hear Thomas curse on the other end.

I hope he's touching himself too.

"I'd pull your pants and panties around your ankles and press my wet mouth against your folds, sucking and nibbling until you come. Until you beg me to fuck you."

I can't be certain but I think Thomas has begun stroking himself as he listens to me fall apart.

His words are staggered and slow and he's groaning between them. Either he's jacking off or he's going sit-ups.

The thought makes me so horny I can hardly bare it.

I slip my middle finger inside myself and start moving in and out ever so slowly, resurfacing to rub my swollen button With sticky wet fingers I moan harder and I can feel my legs tremble With pleasurable delight.

Chapter 10

"How, How would you pleasure me?" I ask desperately on the edge of my own climax.

"I'd thrust inside of you completely raw and fuck you hard and fast with my throbbing hard cock, not stopping until I come all over your beautiful breasts."

And that's all it takes.

I feel myself climax, my panties soaking wet. I moan and cry into the receiver that I can barely keep to my ear as my fingers move furiously over my tender burning core.

On the other end of the line, I can hear Thomas groan louder and louder until it stops and he's just left breathing hard and cursing.

"Did you come too?" I ask when I can fmally speak again.

Thomas chuckles softly before he answers "With that dirty mouth of yours how could I not?"

***

"So what did you do last night?" Fiona asks me as she shovels a fork full of Caesar salad into her mouth.

We met up in the school cafeteria for a bite to eat since none of our classes overlap this year. Fiona is an art major and we've both already completed all of our electives.

"Oh, nothing much," I reply with a shrug as I move my own lunch around nonchalantly on my plate.

"Oh wait, there was one thing. Thomas and I had phone sex."

At my admission, Fiona almost chokes to death on her food. She coughing and trying to talk but it's coming out in deranged screeches. She downs her bottle of water then stares at me blankly With disbelieving eyes.

"The crap did you just say to me?!" She yells and people start staring at us.

"Keep your voice down, jeez," I warn her and she rolls her eyes. "Fine, but details! How did that happen?"

"Well he was talking about meeting again and of course I had to try to get out of it. Well, he offered a solution. He asked if we could talk on the phone" I take a bite of my noodles and quickly chew and swallow it.

"It started super innocent. We were talking about the most basic things then the next thing I know he's telling me how he'd fuck me and I'm touching myself on my couch to the sounds of him groaning and the property brothers remodeling a house in the background."

"And he still doesn't know it's you?! Not even a little bit?" Fiona asks in disbelief.

"As far as I know, no. He doesn't have a clue."

"Hey there Sophia," a familiar voice suddenly pulls Fiona and I out of our conversation. I look up to see Michaels disturbingly handsome face smiling back down at me.

"Hey Michael, it's nice to see you again." My reply is simple but I can already feel the tension radiating off of Him. I hope Fiona doesn't feel it too because she will probably never let me live this lunch down,

"You too. Hi, I'm Michael. I have Shakespearean Literature with Sophia." Michael directs his words to Fiona who smiles with exaggeration at Michael. "Oh really! That's interesting, Sophia, isn't that interesting?"

I cringe and ignore Fiona.

"This is my best friend, Fiona." I introduce her since she's too rude to do it herself.

"Why don't you join us for lunch Michael, we have plenty of room." Fiona invites him to join us and I can feel the walls closing in.

Is she trying to kill me?!

"I'd love to, That is if it's cool with you?" This time Michael's words are meant for me.

I nod in agreement and smile, scooting over on my side of the booth to make room for him.

He sits down beside me and I can instantly feel his body heat. I have to admit that it feels really nice.

"So Mikey, what's your major?" Fiona asks so innocently but I know what she's doing.

"I'm an English major, I want to be a teacher one day actually, that is if football doesn't work out."

"Oh, so you're on the football team? You hear that Sophia he plays football."

Yes, I hear that girl, I'm not deaf!

I want to scream over the table but obviously, I can't do that so I just smile.

"Yes, that's really awesome. It's impressive when a man can be both masculine and smart."

And I really mean that. It's super impressive but my heart is already spoken for.

K, thanks. Bye.

"You know Michael, Sophia here is an English major too. She wants to write books though. What kind of books do you write again Soph?"

Okay, now she's crossing the line. She can't seriously be trying to get me to tell him I write dirty romance novels can she?!

"Good books! I write good books! Anyways, Michael don't you need to get to class? It's getting late."

Michael grins at me. He's obviously not ignorant to what Fiona is up to. "Yeah I should get going," he says and I'm thankful for his compliance.

I almost take a sweet breath of relief before Fiona ruins my day even further. "Oh hey, Michael! Sophia and I were gonna see a movie this Friday. Do you want to come? If not poor Sophia here will be the third wheel."

Third wheel? Movie? How much is this girl about to lie?

"I'd love to come if Sophia would like to have me." Michael looks to me for answers and I feel like I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place. "I'd love for you to come," I he very convincingly.

"Awesome! I'll get your number tomorrow in class, okay?" We say our goodbyes then I shoot dagger eyes at Fiona who is practically giving herself a high live.

"That is the most beautiful man I've ever seen! What the heck is wrong with you?!" She questions and I just hang my head on the lunch table. "I want Thomas, not him."

"Well this guy is our age and so much hotter it's not even funny. Just give him a chance." She begs.

"I don't have much of a choice do I?!" I lift my head and fire back.

"Nope." She smirks and I want to throw food at her stupid face.

"So who are you bringing on the date, Cupid?" I ask cockily.

"I dunno, maybe I'll see if your mom is free."

This girl.

Chapter 11

I walk into room 219 with my expertly written response to sonnet 18 already in my hand. I saunter up to the front desk where Thomas is busy marking up some noticeably long winded papers with a stereotypical red pen.

I hate those essays. You know, the kind that are like "I think sonnet 18 is really good because it shows how much the guy loves her. It is good because you don't see that much anymore. I love the way it is written, and I think old English is really cool..."

It's enough to make me throw up my breakfast just thinking about such disrespect to the written word.

"Hot off the press, Professor," I say with a smirk as I lay my work down on a bare spot amidst the clutter. It's the third day of class and Thomas is already a disheveled mess.

That must be a huge down side of being an English teacher. There's no grading rubric or cheat sheet. You have to sit and grade every single paper word for word as it's handed to you, no matter how garbage it may be.

My poor, sweet, Professor.

"Good morning Sophia." Thomas says as he leans back in his seat to take a break. "I look forward to reading this, honestly I could use a break from all of my less... able students," Thomas compliments me with a cheeky grin and I try to subdue the pink forming on my cheeks.

He looks up with me with those smoldering blue eyes and I feel my knees grow wobbly. I brace myself as nonchalantly as possible against his sturdy wooden desk to keep from toppling over.

He eyed me for a moment and I wonder if he's remembering our kiss. I'm remembering something much more erotic on my end.

I scan his entire beautiful form with hungry eyes, not having forgotten what happened two days ago.

If he only knew.

I devour the suit clad form in front of me. His hair is styled with a flexible but rigid sense of maturity and he smells strongly of aftershave. If I were a braver woman I'd demand he cancel class and take me right here in his desk.

Unfortunately, I am not brave. I lean off of the desk and pull the sleeves of my hoodie over my hands almost as a subtle form of self defense.

"I took my time with it, I expect nothing less than an A+," I joke with a simple smile that's returned immediately by Thomas.

"And I'm certain you Will receive your A+, Sophia."

Is it just me or is he in a really good mood?

I go and take the same seat as Monday and wrap my arms around myself in lonely contemplation.

I have these urges that I keep locked away deep inside. They manifest when I'm writing but usually never anytime else. I pour my lustful ambitions onto blank white pages because I know that if I didn't I would do something incredibly immoral.

Like masturbating to your professors voice?

I silently berate myself and can feel my face contort in delayed embarrassment.

My body has always ached for something beyond that of a simple young mans touch. I ache for knowledge and experience. I yearn for wisdom and maturity that I haven't found in anyone but Professor Thomas Crane in all of my years of searching.

I look over at him again as he's steady grading papers, oblivious to my internal turmoil. I remember the first time I saw him a year ago. He had fresh eyes and shorter hair than he does now. I walked into his classroom and felt my heart skid to a stop behind my tender rib cage.

He was a vision of perfection and I knew from that moment on I'd never recover. I was early of course and he greeted me, shaking my small hand. I could hardly speak and I remember I just started rambling off facts about Edgar Allen Poe that no one would ever care to know because I saw a poster on the wall.

As if my heart hadn't already been torn asunder, Thomas did care. In fact we ended up having a long talk about "The Raven" and it's deeper meanings. I could tell in those short moments that he could understand me where others seldom could.

The tapping of shoes on hard wood pulls me out of my flash back as students start meandering their way to their seats.

I absentmindedly twirl a piece of hair between my fingers until my attentions are pulled to a very tall and masculine figure walking towards me.

"Good morning, Sophia." Michael greets me with a dashing white smile, almost making my body swoon.

Almost.

"Good morning, Mikey, "I say, mocking Fiona from the day before.

Michael scrunches his face up as he takes the seat to my left.

"Fiona is a bit weird, isn't she?" He asks.

You have no idea! I want to respond but that would be rude so I just shrug. "Let's just say she's an acquired taste." Like pickles and chocolate, I joke to myself.

"Look, I know she was obviously trying to force you to go out with me but if you don't want to I understand," Michael looks at me with sincere green eyes and I can feel something inside of me soften.

"You said you have a lot going on right now and I want to respect -"

"No," I interrupt suddenly. "It's fine, I'd love for you to come.“

Something aches in the back of my head but I ignore it.

This isn't wrong, I'm aloud to see movies with friends. That's all this is.

A huge smile appears on Michaels lips and he nods softly, trying to hide his adorable boyish excitement. "Then I can't wait," he manages to reply before the sickeningly handsome voice of Thomas Crane cuts our conversation short.

"Good morning class, you may now pass your completed responses Forward."

***

Chapter 12

I write my number on a piece of notebook paper and hand it to Michael who shoves it gingerly into his tight denim jean pocket.

"I'll text you when I get out of practice tonight if that's Alright?" He asks me and I tind myself picturing him in those super form fitting football uniform pants.

Oh wow what's happening?"

"Yeah, that sounds good. I hope you do really well," I say, only half paying attention because I'm too busy wondering why the hell I had that thought about him.

"Well, I should do well. I'm the QB after all."

Wait, what did he just say?

"You're the quarterback?" I ask in disbelief.

"Yeah, I'm surprised you didn't already know," he adds with a cocky grin as though he already knows he's a big deal.

"Apparently I'm too lame to even recognize school royalty, I apologize," I say in an attempt to recover my image.

"Don't worry Sophia, It's not your football knowledge that I'm interested in."

Michael winks and walks out of the class room with a confident swagger that I can't help but notice.

I scold myself for momentarily falling for the stereotypical masculine male persona.

You're better than this!

I try to convince myself that my thought is true but before I know it I've been standing awkwardly in front of my desk for about five minutes. The whole room is now empty except for a certain beautiful professor whose hard eyes are looking over at me with distaste.

"I'm sorry, Professor, can I help you?" I ask as I ready myself to walk out.

I see Thomas lock his jaw and squeeze his grip on the edge of his desk even tighter.

"No I'm afraid you can't Sophia." He spits bitterly and I can feel the blood drain from my face. What happened to the chipper man I spoke to an hour ago?

I look on at Thomas with pain etched on my face as he starts walking over to me. He keeps walking right through the distance typical for conversation until his breath is hot in my ear, and his hand is holding me possessively close by my backpack strap.

"I may be helpless Sophia, but I know a bad decision when I see one. And you're making a typical mistake. I thought you were different than them. "

He hisses his words and his breath causes goose bumps to erupt all over my skin.

Them being who? Other girls?

My eyebrows scrunch together and I feel red hot anger building in my lungs.

"Don't talk to me about bad decisions, Thomas." I throw back, saying his name much louder than the rest of my sentence.

As soon as I've spoken I feel Thomas grab my hips and slam my ass into the front of a desk, his hands trapping me on either side.

My heart is beating so loud it's audible and I can't read this look in his eyes.

Why is he acting this way?

He's seems to be barely even human as he presses his strong body against mine. .

Thomas takes his right hand and grabs my face so that I can't look away. I feel helpless as the most intimate eye contact I've ever experienced is forced upon me. He stares at me for several seconds as though he's about to kiss me.

I can see a savage desire about to erupt behind his irises but this time he's sober. His actions are all his own.

He gets so close that I can almost taste him and our lips brush ever so slightly but then he leans back and rubs his chin in aggravated thought.

"You should go." He says with regret and anger lacing his words.

Without looking back I push My way past Thomas and exit his class room.

Maybe I am ready for a date.

***

"Yeah, and then he told me to leave, can you believe that?" I speak into the receiving end of my cell phone while I stand in line for coffee.

Fiona is on the other end just as livid as I am. "You know what he is? A big jealous man child. You don't need that, Soph. We're gonna go on this date and Mikey is going to sweep you off of your feet, I just know it."

I roll my eyes even though she can't see me. Thomas may be acting a bit obscure but it's not enough to throw in the towel just yet.

I ignore her suggestion and change the subject.

"Speaking of our date. Who are you going to bring?" I ask.

She groans on her end.

"I don't even know. I haven't really been talking to anyone lately because I've been too busy. I suppose I could just pick some random person off the street like a prostitute or something." I laugh at Fiona as I step up to the register, Clara grinning bright at me.

Then I get an idea.

"Hey Fiona, I'm about to order coffee so I'll call you back, okay?" We say goodbye and hang up and I turn my attention to Clara whose sporting a big friendly smile.

"One soy milk with two sugars coming right up, I already know." Her flirting is rather cheeky today and almost refreshing compared to being shoved into a hard old wooden writing desk.

"Sounds wonderful Clara," I say as a normal response then I try to get out the hard part. "Hey, so I was wondering what you were doing this Friday?" I say a little too quickly, my rushed voice and nervousness working against me because I see Clara's eyes light up with pure excitement.

Oh no she thinks I just asked her on a date because that's exactly What that sounded like.

"I'm sorry," I say trying to correct myself "it's not a date, or well at least not with me."

I pull my phone out and bring up a picture of Fiona to show to Clara.

"I'm technically going with this football player guy but my best friend is also going and I think you'd really enjoy her company." I show Clara the picture of Fiona and although she seems dejected I can tell she not completely against the idea.

"Yeah I'd love to go, you're friend is really pretty. Thank you for thinking of me."

I give Clara my phone number then go wait for my coffee. Moments later she's dropping off my warm, delicious, life giving bean water.

"I can't wait to spend time with you.. and your friend." She adds as an after thought. It almost seems like there is more to her words than meets the eye but I don't read into too much.

I pull my phone back out and send Fiona a text.

"I hope you still like girls because I got you a date."

Chapter 13

"Jeeze I haven't been out with a girl in sooo long, I don't even know how to act anymore!" Fiona admits while rifling through her entire wardrobe.

"I mean, honestly what do I wear? Boobs or no boobs?" Fiona holds a black sweater to her chest then a red low cut blouse.

"To be fair, Fiona, I'm pretty sure Clara still likes boobs. It's kinda the main appeal of being a lesbian"

I'm sitting on Fiona's bed, already completely dressed and messing around on my phone.

Before coming over I opted for a pair of tight black paints and a striped slightly cropped sweater.

I look good if I do say so myself while also being pretty comfortable.

"Yeah but with great boobs comes great responsibility. They can be intimidating," Fiona reasons in her defense.

I heave myself up and walk over to her dimly lit mess of a closet. Once I get my bearings I start rummaging around for anything that's not just blatantly slutty .

"What about this? It says 'hey I may have huge lady lumps but you better buy me dinner first'"

Fiona grabs the top and tries to visualize the perfect outfit with it. "You know with a cute statement skirt this could work." I nod in agreement "but if Clara is even half as hot as you say, dinner isn't necessary to see these." Fiona wiggles her eyebrows at me and grabs her chest. I almost choke on my own abrupt laughter.

From the bed where I left it, my phone lights up and rings indicating a new message from Thomas.

"Are you guys still talking? You'd think a man in his thirties wouldn't text so much." Fiona prods as I go to check my notifications.

"I think he's really happy that we don't have to wait until one of us is online to talk anymore," I reply.

"And you aren't mad about him loosing his shit on you the other day?"

"Sophia is a little mad but LiteraryLane21 doesn't have a reason to be so I'm just going to get over it. Besides, it was still really hot."

Fiona rolls her eyes at me and I cringe. Yeahyeah I know I 'm stupid.

"Does he know that Lane is going on a date with a gorgeous football player tonight?" She teases and I feel guilt creeping in.

"Well, no." I whisper.

"Hmmm then maybe it's you that's a piece of shit this time."

Should I feel bad about this? The moment Thomas did anything promiscuous with someone he told me about it, but here I am about to go on a date.

Part of me, the part that Thomas was an ass-hat to, doesn't feel very bad at all, but the part of me that is kind of his digital lover feels awful.

I tell myself that there's no way I could ever fall for Michael anyways and leave it at that.

Besides, Thomas almost kissed me again and didn't bother mentioning it so who cares?

I know Thomas only kissed me the first time because he was drunk. He would never really risk loosing his doctorate or jail time over some student, would he?

"Anyways, what do you think?"

Fiona asks as she twirls about in her ensemble. "You look beautiful Fi, now lets get going before we miss the movie."

I hope beyond all reason that this night is at least a distraction from my self inflicted hard ships.

***

Fiona and I stand outside of the theater with our coats pulled around us like we've decided to take a day trip to Alaska.

"Why did I wear a skirt? I'm so stupid!" Fiona cries and I wrap my arms around her. "There there. It's okay, you're just thirsty is all." I rub her head condescendingly.

"If you weren't making me warmer I'd push you off right now."

The vibrations from our laughter help warm us just a little bit more.

Did I tell you I'm always early?

Yes, well now I've caused us both to be early for our movie date out of a crippling fear of being late.

I internally giggle at my accidental rhyme.

The theater is one of those cute ones where you order your tickets outside and it's modeled after an old fashioned cinema.

The theater is also nuzzled between an enormous book store and an ice cream parlor on this busy shopping strip in town. The street lights have started to flicker on as the sun sets on this bleak winter day.

People are hustling and bustling around, going into shops and blowing all of their money on things they don't need.

I start eyeing the book store and my mouth practically waters.

I start thinking of all of the new fiction titles I have yet to add to my collection and the beautiful high of buying books.

The bookstore cafe has probably filled the air with the delectable smell of java by now and I feel my caffeine addiction taking hold.

What I wouldn't give to ditch this whole thing and go and read and drink coffee all night instead.

These thoughts almost relax me until I'm pulled back to reality by a troubling sight.

Thomas walks out of the book store surrounded by a troupe of young women. I recognize some of them from classes at school but some of them are new to me. He's smiling down at them as they loiter outside of the shop.

I know the female population of this town can't get enough of him.

He's suave, well mannered, and tall. He's absolutely beautiful with the most jarring blue eyes anyone has ever seen.

I know all of these things are true so what is this bitter feeling in my chest?

It hurts so much. I'm not a jealous girl so that can't be it, can it?

I'm still holding Fiona for warmth so her head is facing the opposite direction and she can't see what I see.

My mind starts to betray me as damning thoughts spread like a virus through my head.

Am I the only student that he's kissed? Is Lane the only woman that he talks to? Is he even single? What do I really even know about this man?

"Hey are you okay? Your heart rate is through the roof!" Fiona informs me, drawing me back to the present.

"Yeah I'm tine," I lie. "I'm just nervous."

This seems to appease Fiona and she pulls back from our huddle for warmth to look at me.

"There's nothing to be nervous about, you are sexy and smart and kind. There's no one in this world who could ever resist your charms!" Piona's pep talk goes in one ear and out the other as this sickening anger burrows in my stomach.

"And speak of the devil, here he comes." Fiona announces and I look over to where she's looking. Michael is walking over with his hands shoved in his pockets for protection from the cold. His dark hair is perfectly styled and his broad chest is covered with a leather jacket.

He's the stereotypical living depiction of every girls dream, just not usually mine.

I'm not jealous of Thomas.

I tell myself as I start to walk towards Michael.

I'm not jealous. I repeat as I'm nearing him. I'm not jealous.

I think as I wrap my arms around his neck and pull him into an intimate hug.

"I'm so glad you finally made it," I say in a sickeningly sweet tone.

Michael returns my hug with strong arms that clasp around my waist.

No, I'm not jealous at all.

The feeling of his arms are foreign but not entirely unwelcome. "Finally?" Michael laughs "I'm pretty sure I'm right on time,"

"Oh, yeah, my bad," I give a nervous laugh and push some hair behind my ear in discomfort.

"Hey Mikey," Fiona says with a cheeky grin and he waves back. "Good to see you again Fiona, where's this date of yours?"

As soon as Michael finishes his sentence a familiar feminine voice sounds from behind him.

"I think that‘s supposed to be me,“ Clara says as she walks into view.

The look on Fiona‘s face is priceless as she takes in the full view of Clara. Long and lean with tanned skin that most women would kill for, she's definitely a beautiful girl.

"Hey Clara, this is Fiona," I say as I introduce my two friends.

"Nice to finally meet you, you look beautiful." Clara says to Fiona and I can't help but internally scream.

This is going well!

We buy our tickets and engage in small talk.

Michale puts his hand on my lower back to guide me into the building where it's warm but about the time that he does I feel a familiar burning sensation on the back of my head.

I turn around and Thomas's eyes are staring straight through me.

We lock eyes for a brief moment before I disappear inside.

***

Chapter 14

This movie isn't very good. We all decided on a typical rom-com for this date thinking it was the logical choice, but the plot and acting are so bad I want my money back not that Michael let me pay for myself anyways.

In fact he has been a complete gentleman. He bought my ticket and even splurged for the large popcorn which was probably like 80$ because movie theaters are rip offs.

I started shivering as soon as we sat down so he gave me his jacket even though I know he must be cold.

If I had to guess I'd say the movie as at about it's half way point and Fiona and Clara have completely checked out. They've been making out for fifteen minutes straight and it's a wonder neither of them have suffocated yet.

"Can you guys cut it out, that sound is driving me insane!" I whisper scream at Fiona who Iinally breaks her sucker fish lips off of Clara. They're all red and any traces of lipstick have long since vanished.

"You're right, lets go to my car Clara." Fiona offers and before I know it the two of them are running up the aisle like little school girls.

I look back at them in disbelief and Clara looks back at me with a rather peculiar look on her face. She's breathing heavy and her eye brow is cocked. She's biting her bottom lip and eyeing me all over.

What's that about?

I ask myself before my attention is pulled to Michael.

"Well it seems their date is going well," he whispers in my ear.

Chills erupt all over my skin from the feeling of his breath on my neck.

"Yeah, I guess you could say that," we both laugh softly and pretend to go back to the movie.

Then something unexpected happens.

Michael's finger tips start slowly moving up thigh.

I turn my head towards him in shock but his eyes are trained on the movie screen.

His hand travels further up my leg and I have a sudden thought to stop him but as soon as it appears it vanishes.

I think of Thomas surrounded by a troupe of beautiful women and suddenly I don't care where Michaels hand goes.

He gets to the top of my thigh and his strong hand squeezes it. I let out a soft gasp that causes him to look over at me with a handsome smirk on his face.

"I can stop." He offers in a throaty whisper.

Unable to speak as his fingers gently graze between my legs I just shake my head no.

It's only outside of my pants but Michaels fingers are rubbing my most tender spots and I'm chewing on my tongue to keep from moaning.

He pushes the denim of my jeans against my clit and I gasp like a weirdo in the quiet theater.

I can see Michael shifting in his chair and adjusting his jeans, a sign to me that says they've grown a little tight.

He applies more pressure and I notice my legs instinctively open wider. My panties are quickly becoming soaked through and my mind is turning to mush.

I bite into my lips to try and keep quiet and Michael looks over, watching me fall apart.

I don't know how long it's been but I can feel my release inching closer and closer, but I know I can't let myself have an orgasm in a dirty movie theater.

As soon as I'm about to explode I grab Michaels hand and pull it off of me, my breathing erratic.

My lonely core desperately begs me to let him finish but my resolve holds out.

"But you were so close," Michael whispers in a lust fueled growl, a look of utter satisfaction in those green eyes.

***

I can see Fiona's foggy car from the entrance of the theater.

Ew gross.

"They seem busy, why don't you let me take you home?" Michael asks. We haven't had a chance to talk about what happened in there and honestly I don't think I want to.

A thought keeps running through my mind that's threatening to rip my heart out of my chest.

"Look, Michael I'm not looking for anything."

I start but he cuts in "serious?" Michael gives a knowing smile and I can't help but look at the dimples on his cheeks as he does.

"Yeah." I respond quietly.

"Well I just want to be whatever it is you are looking for," he responds and I feel my chest tighten.

"I'm willing to wait," Michael adds as he takes a step closer to me.

The cold air is electric as he places his finger under my chin and lifts my head to meet his gaze.

I don't know if I can handle a kiss right now but I let it happen anyways.

Our lips come together in a slow and cautious kiss that I have to admit feels wonderful.

My heart aches again and I pull back.

"I'll see you Monday, Yeah?" I ask as I start inching towards Fiona's car. "Wouldn't miss it for anything." Michael responds and waves a goodbye to Fiona who is now standing outside of her car kissing Clara goodbye.

Once i get to her little red Honda I almost robotically say goodbye to Clara and climb into the front seat.

Fiona gets it next and immediately starts dancing around. "Ohhh my god, Sophia thank you!" She yells but I just sit there staring blankly ahead.

Finally she notices my lack of excitement and quickly goes into protective friend mode. "What's wrong? Did he hurt you?" Fiona asks, a deadly expression on her face.

"No." I say softly. "Can we go home?" I ask.

"Yeah of course, we can talk there over some tea and snacks."

"No I mean home." I emphasize and Fiona looks shocked. "All the way back to Charlotte? But that's two hours away, what's going on?"

"I need to get away Fiona." I say as tears start rolling down my cheeks.

"I think it's time to kill Lane."

***

Chapter 15

Fiona didn't bombard me with a million questions. She didn't try to control the radio. She didn't need an explanation or a reason, all she needed was to see me crying and she knew it was serious.

In the eight years that I've known Fiona she's cried a thousand times.

She's cried at movies and weddings. She's cried at kittens and puppies. She's very emotionally strong. She lets it out. She's in touch with the human side of herself but I'm not like that.

Fiona has only seen me cry once since

we've been friends and that was when my grandma died. I didn't sob, I didn't fall to pieces, but I quietly cried in the pew next to my parents.

Fiona had tagged along for emotional support and she said it was the most haunting sight she'd ever seen, and that I must have really loved my grandmother to invoke such a strong response to her passing.

My grandmother always told me that it doesn't matter if other people like you, or if other people validate you. It doesn't matter if you're first or if you're last so long as you're still proud of yourself in the end.

I am not proud of myself.

Looking back on the day that I invaded my professors privacy makes me want to vomit. What was I thinking? That we could just be friends and that I would be satisfied with that?

You can't talk to someone every day and not expect to have feelings for them.

You can't call them pet names and think that it's harmless.

You can't pour your heart and soul out to them, and expect not to lose a part of both in the process.

I had a crush on Thomas when this started, that I know for certain.

But an even stronger certainty now is that I'm in love with him. I'm so in love with him it hurts but what's worse is that he can never know the truth.

On the off chance that he did return my feelings and wasn't absolutely livid that I lied, we still couldn't be together. The rules at Duke clearly state that student/ teacher relationships are forbidden.

Trust me I've checked a hundred times.

I know that he's kissed me and I'm so grateful to have experienced that at least once.

I know that he has real human feelings for Lane but I have to trust that he can move on.

"How far out are we?" I ask with weakness in my voice.

"About twenty-five minutes or so," Fiona responds with a yawn. I know she's tired and I could never tell her how thankful I am for doing this, for our entire friendship.

"Did you want to call your mom before we arrive?"

The clock on the dash reads midnight.

"I don't think she'd be awake, let's try to sneak in like old times."

"Just like old times," Fiona responds with a reminiscent smile. "But if your dad shoots and kills me clear my browser history."

***

My bedroom is exactly how I left it before I moved to campus three years ago. I've visited since then of course and every time I walk through the door my mother makes sure to say "I left everything just how you like it."

She prides herself on her ability to be a perfect tv mom.

"I can't believe they didn't wake up, what if we were axe murderers?" Fiona whispers as we settle ourselves in my bedroom.

"Well I guess they'd die," I say with a smirk on my face.

The walls are a horrid pale pink that I picked out as a freshmen in high school and there's this awful trim about a fourth of the way up that's silver glitter. It goes around the entire room like a gaudy tutu.

"Man I remember your Kawaii phase, it was hard to love you through it I'll be honest," Fiona says and she touches some of the scratchy glitter decoration.

"Well I put up with your trip pant phase so I'd say we're even."

We both laugh quietly for a moment before I can see the questions forming in Fiona's eyes.

"Why do you want to stop talking to him?" Her voice is like velvet as she tries to be sensitive.

"Because if I don't I'm just delaying the inevitable." I say, not making eye contact.

"Tonight in the theater stuff... stuff happened between Michael and I and it made me realize my true feelings. I love Thomas and if I love him I cant keep doing this to him. I can't keep making him wait on a girl that doesn't exist."

I can feel warm wet tears threaten to seep out once more.

Fiona gets up from where she's sitting and kneels in front of me, her face holding a comforting softness.

"I've never heard you say you loved.. well, anything before besides coffee and me. If you love him Sophia then don't give up on him. I agree that Lane should be dead but only because you should tell him the truth. Let him decide what's worth it or not."

I shake my head in disagreement.

"I can't, Fiona. It's completely illogical for us to be together. Even if you take away the fact that he's my professor we are still ten years apart in age. He's probably ready to start a family where as I've only been able to drink for three months."

Fiona bites her plump bottom lip. "I'll support you, whatever you choose, and for what it's worth I think Michael could be a good option for you." I nod in acknowledgement and let my head fall back on my pillow. Fiona crawls in beside me and it doesn't take long before the days events lull us off to sleep.

***

"For the love of all that is holy! I almost shot Sophia!" I can hear my dads voice cutting through my dreams.

"What? Sophia's here?" My moms voice adds from a distance.

I open my sleep crusted eyes to see my dad standing in the door way holding a shot gun.

"Hi dad," I say groggily. "Thanks for not killing me and all."

My mom pushes past my shocked dad and runs to give me a hug. "sweet heart what are you and Fiona doing here?" She asks once we break apart.

Fiona slowly leans up looking like a walk of shame hot mess. "Did someone say Diane's world famous pancakes?" She grins sleepily and both of my parents laugh. My dad walks over and plants a kiss on my forehead.

"I'll make pancakes, but after that I assume we need to talk?" My Mom inquires with a raised eyebrow. "Yeah," I nod. "A girls only talk."

I look at my dad with dagger eyes and he backs away with his hands up. "I'm fine with being kept out of things as long as you're not pregnant, boo bear,"

"No! Dad!" I shriek and throw a decorative pillow at him.

My mom and Fiona laugh while I sit in horror at my dads assumption.

"Anyways, don't mind me. I'm just gonna go put the gun away and thank the lord that I'm not on my way to jail."

"Howard! " My Mom cries.

"Oh and that you aren't dead, sweetheart. Of course."

Family.

***

My mom has hardly touched her pancakes but Fiona is on her third plate. I've been poking around at mine for the last thirty minutes as I confide in my mother about what I've been doing these last few months.

"So... you love this man?" She asks.

I nod.

"And he's your... professor?"

I nod again.

"And you've been dog hunting him?"

"Cat fishing, Diane, but close," Fiona corrects and my mom makes an Ahh noise.

"And now you're gonna end it because you have only just recently realized you love him?"

One last nod.

"0hh.. oh my poor dear, are you that stupid?"

Fiona is practically choking to death on a fork full of pancakes as my mother roasts me but I just stare at her in awe.

"If you love this man then to hell with the consequences!" My mother slams her fork on the table to emphasize her point and Fiona raises hers in a salute. "That's what I said!"

I look between the both of them like they've lost their damn minds.

"He could get tired!" I defend.

"Boo hoo he's an English professor, can't he just write books or something?"

I contemplate slapping my mother for belittling my future profession but that's probably not a good idea.

"He could go to jail!"I emphasize but she just shrugs.

"I'm sure your father and I can cover it." I slam my head on the kitchen table and groan.

"I'm not looking for permission I'm looking for support to do what's right. You're all a bunch of lunatics."

After seeing my outburst my mother stands up and places a loving hand on my back.

"Sweetie, it warms my heart to know that you're willing to put this mans well being above your own, and I couldn't be more proud of you for deciding to do the right thing. If you're supposed to be with this man then it will be." I look up in to my mothers brown eyes and smile. "But I'm not too sure about this Michael guy so take it slow."

She sits back down and finally starts eating.

I'll take it slow all right, snails pace even.

***

After a beautiful and therapeutic day with my parents, Fiona and I climb back into her car for the long drive home. My entire body is filled with fear and dread as we burl down the highway at seventy miles per hour.

What if this is a mistake?

I have to reassure myself that it isn't. This is what's best for both of us. I'm sure Thomas's feelings for me aren't even all that strong.

How can you really fall in love with someone you think you've never met anyways?

Chapter 16

Thomas's POV:

It's such a quiet Saturday night.

After trying to shake off that pack of ravenous girls yesterday I figured a restful night in could do me a lot of good.

"Come on Professor no one has to know"

"Please, Dr. Crane, we have so much in common"

The memories make me want to drink.

How can young girls be so vulgar now a days?

I pour myself a single glass of whiskey and sit down.

I'm not an alcoholic, I just love my drink. Then again, maybe I am an alcoholic because they never admit it.

I haven't talked to Lane in twenty four hours, and usually that wouldn't matter, but lately we've hardly gone five minutes without talking in some form or another.

I'm hopelessly addicted to talking to her.

This flirtatious communication makes me feel like I'm a younger man. It gives me that new love kind of butterfly feeling that typically dissipates once you turn thirty. That's how Lane makes me feel. Like a brand new man.

As much as I'd love to meet her, and I'd jump at the chance, there's something freeing about this kind of relationship.

There are no expectations or rules.

I don't have to remember to put the toilet seat down and she doesn't have to meet my parents, not that that is a possibility anyways.

I don't have to put off grading papers because we agreed to have dinner with her co-workers, and she doesn't have to put up with my hatred for doing dishes.

It's a win-win.

The only down side is the obvious one I can't hold her. I can't touch her whenever I want to. I can't kiss her lips or smell her scent on my pillows.

I can't love her.

Maybe that's why I've clung to Sophia. She's the physical manifestation of what my perfect woman looks like.

Emerald green eyes that haunt your dreams, and legs that seem to never end. Cherry brown hair that's always flawless and magnetic full lips that I've already tasted. She's deadly smart and it's obvious she doesn't need anyone to take care of her. Shes strong and beautiful and for some reason I can't get her out of my head.

I think It's because Lane holds my heart but Sophia has taken hold of my desires.

Unfortunately, girls as perfect as Sophia only get with guys like Michael Taylor.

Ive always thought Sophia was as smart as they come, but if she were she'd have done her research on Michael before going out with him.

He's bad news.

My phone lights up with an e-mail that provides the official list of the students going on the field trip to New York in three weeks.

A whopping 18 students will be in attendance.

My eyes scan the list until I find her name.

Of course Sophia is going. This is probably a dream come true for her. I also notice that Michael has signed up too and my stomach lurches.

The thought of them in a hotel room together makes me painfully unhappy.

It's none of my business. She's a student, nothing more. Just a perverted fantasy that I keep locked in the depths of my mind.

I have Lane, I don't need Sophia.

I close the e-mail and continue grading some papers. There are some good writers this year, but there are also some terrible ones.

I figured everyone had at least heard of sonnets before taking an upper level English course but I guess not.

The softness of my music playing out from my computer speakers creates this perfectly comfortable environment in my apartment.

I'm sitting at my dining room table, the remains of take away Chinese still lingering nearby.

I take a small drink from my glass and smile softly to myself as I peer out my dining room window. All of the snow has melted away, leaving behind an ugly, bitter cold.

February is my least favorite month of the year. It's freezing, New Years and Christmas have come and passed. There's nothing to look forward to for months unless you count Valentine's Day, which I don't.

I look at my calendar that's hanging nearby. There's only one week until that pointless holiday shows up to make single people everywhere feel like hell.

I sigh and look back down at the heaping stack of papers I still have left to grade. I might as well finish them tonight.

Time ticks by and I'm so entranced by what I'm doing that I barely notice my phone light up and buzz on the table near my computer.

I excitedly pick it up and open the notification.

It's a text from Lane but as I read it excitement turns to despair.

Lane

Hello Thomas, I know it's late but I have some things I have to get off of my chest. First of all I want to say that you didn't do anything wrong. I've thought long and hard about this and I just think it's for the best. I don't think we should talk to each other anymore. It can never go beyond messaging because I'm unwilling to meet you. We are both just wasting our time so I think that it's best we say goodbye. I know you'll try to argue with me, you're stubborn like that, but please just let me go. I hope you find happiness someday with someone truly special. I don't regret a moment we've spent talking, and I'll remember you fondly.

Love, Lane.

I lean back in my chair and just stare, mouth open, at the wall.

What just happened?

This can't be real. I want to text her back but I don't know what to say.

I feel my throat constrict so I reach for my glass of whiskey and chug it then slam it down on the table.

"What the heck!" I yell aloud and jolt to my feet, pacing.

I run my hands over my face and groan. I can't remember the last time I've felt such a strong feeling of dread.

The churning in my stomach causes me to double over.

I've put so much time and effort into this relationship and she's just going to blow me off with a random text?

I stumble over to my liquor cabinet and pull the bottle of whiskey out, throwing the cap down on the floor.

I press the bottle directly to my lips take big swallows. I gasp as for air as I finally break away.

Throat on fire, I wobble back over to my phone and punch in my reply.

Thomas

How can you even say that? After everything we've talked about? After nearly five months of confiding in each other? I thought you wanted me, Lane.

I send my message and take another long gulp straight from the bottle.

How could I be so wrong about someone? I thought one day she'd finally meet with me and we could start a real relationship but I'm just a fool.

I should have backed out months ago.

My phone lights up and I bring it to my face, my vision blurring as I do.

Lane

I'm sorry Thomas, this hurts me too but it has to happen.

"No, it doesn't!" I yell at my phone. I'm almost too angry to type as my large fingers struggle with the touch screen buttons.

Thomas Is there someone else?

Seconds feel like hours as I wait for a reply

Lane Yes, I'm sorry. Goodbye.

I've been in tights. I've had a black eye.

I've crashed my motorcycle and scrapped my face across the pavement.

I've lost a loved one.

I've lost a lover.

But I've never felt a pain like this.

To be told that my soul isn't good enough is complete agony.

Lane never saw my face, she only saw my heart, and now she's told me that it's a worthless burden.

How could someone have snatched her away from me when we talk a thousand times a day? Who has earned her physical touch where as I barely earned her voice?

I can feel my insides start to churn and I have to run to my trash can before I vomit into it.

The unbearable hum of alcohol as it comes back up is practically a walk in the park compared to the stinging in my chest.

I lean back and slump onto my kitchen floor, landing with a hard thud against the cabinets.

I wipe my mouth on my sleeve and stare up at the ceiling.

This is rock bottom.

Right here on this white linoleum.

I moved fifteen and a half hours away for this job. I said goodbye to my family and friends in hopes of a life I could be proud of, but that dream is far from reality.

The only person who kept me grounded in this lonely college town was Lane and now even thinking about her makes me feel sick.

I crawl to my feet and stumble my way to the front door. I yank my coat off of the rack, knocking it over in the process.

Putting my arms through my coat sleeves makes it feel more like a straight jacket as I struggle against the thick fabric.

Once it's on I pull my front door open and gasp as the freezing air hits me in the face.

I need to get out of here. The walls are closing in around me, no matter what temperature it is outside it's far preferable than this drafty prison that holds so many memories of her.

Checking that I have my keys, I walk down the stairs and towards the street that connects to my apartment building.

I walk and I walk. It seems like miles as I pass bustling bars and closed eateries. I pass happy couples as they hold hands and laugh with each other. I pass homeless men begging for change.

My hands stay shoved in my pockets, and something smooth hits my palm. I pull it out and see that it's a packet of gum.

"Probably for the best," I mumble to myself and rip a piece from the foil. I start to chew it haphazardly as my thoughts ravish my mind.

I don't stop until I come to a quaint little park near campus. It's deathly quiet all for the far off sound of a swing as it slowly creaks.

I look off in the distance towards the noise and my jaw goes slack out of shock.

There, sitting alone on the swing, is Sophia.

Chapter 17

Sophia's POV:

I had told Fiona that I just wanted to be alone, but I realized almost immediately that was a mistake.

Never before had I felt so unwelcome in my own home. It's as if the walls themselves were mocking me for my disgusting lie.

There is no one else, but that's what you're supposed to say right? That's the end all admission if you want to get someone to give up on you.

Or to hate you.

I can usually keep it together but I 'm realizing that in order to be strong I need someone to be strong for. When I'm alone I have no reason to put on a face, so I left.

I didn't even think about the fact that it's thirty-five degrees outside. I didn't think about the fact that I'm a woman alone at night.

I ran out and heaved breaths of cold air into my lungs, the air in my apartment had become so sickly and volatile that I was suffocating trying to breathe it.

My shoeless feet pattered on the cold concrete as I ran far from my thoughts, my feelings, my pain.

The waffle patterned sweater on my torso did nothing to stop the cold winter air from whipping through to my burning skin.

Why do artists always have to be so dramatic?

I ran to the park near my apartment and walked around until I found the swings.

The metal chains were terribly cold but I grasped them with shaky hands anyways.

Now I sit here, second guessng so many aspects of my life. Should I transfer to a different school? Should I just go home? Do I deserve to have romantic love at all?

As I sit here and swing ever so softly I can feel the cold creeping in.

Why didn't I at least wear shoes?

The soft crunch of approaching feet on leaves causes my head to snap in the direction of the sounds.

Are you kidding me right now?!

I want to curse the skies and all of the deities of the world for this moment. Can't I just suffer in peace?

Thomas fucking Crane is walking towards me with his hands in his coat pockets. He's staring at me with worrying eyes that I can't help but notice are also red and puffy.

Is that because of me?

I suddenly realize I have to put on a face so I straighten up and try to smile.

If he realized the blatant irony of us both being sad at the same time, along with a few other clues, he'd surely figure out that I am.. was Lane.

"Fancy seeing you here," I say once he's in ear shot and he smirks back at me.

He opens his mouth to speak but nothing comes out at first, he has to clear his throat.

"Aren't you cold?" He says eventually and I just shrug.

"Why would I be?" I respond, having completely forgotten that I'm basically wearing pajamas on a swing in the dead of winter with no shoes or socks on.

"You do know you're barefoot and coat-less? Right? Or is this a drug trip and I need to take you to the hospital?"

I look down at my ensemble and groan.

"I'm not on drugs Professor, I just... really love the cold," I lie.

That's a fucking lie. I 'm a damn dirty liar!

"Well, like it or not you're going to get sick."

With his words, Thomas takes his coat off and drapes it over my shoulders. I gawk at him for a moment. I've never seen him look so beautifully casual before.

A black long sleeve shirt covers his arms and a pair of dark wash denim pants cling to his legs.

And he even remembered to put on shoes.

I didn't know he owned anything other than suits and slacks but my eyes are pleasantly surprised as I take in this new sight of him.

"But now won't you get sick, Professor?" I ask softly, the smell of him on this jacket driving my senses wild.

"Better me than you, I'm a big strong man, I can handle it." He replies with a distant smile as he sits on the swing beside me.

I laugh until the tension builds too far.

"Why are you here?" I finally ask and

he turns his head to look at me. I can see he's deciding if he will tell me the truth or not. Part of me wants him to lie. I don't want to know that I did this to him.

"Well, Sophia. I." His voice breaks and his head hangs. "I'm heart broken."

A horrible chill erupts through my body and the breath is knocked from my lungs.

"What happened?" I ask, even though I really shouldn't.

Thomas rubs his chin with one hand as the other grips the swing chain a little too tight.

"I got.. dumped." Well that is one way to word that.

"I'm so sorry to hear that," I say gingerly "did you love her?"

This is sneaky but I need to know.

Thomas sighs and thinks for a few moments.

"I think I did? I'm not so sure. It's hard to tell but I know that I cared for her a great deal. I knew that I could love her if she gave me the chance to."

Don't cry. Don't cry. Don't cry.

I want to ball my eyes out right now but I can't so I just look away from him and run my fingers through my stiff and wind blown hair.

"Well maybe you're better off," I say as I pretend to be looking at a tree somewhere off in the distance. "If she left you then she obviously didn't care enough about you. You deserve better, Professor,"

"Why does it sound so wrong when you call me professor?" The sudden question makes me turn back to look at Thomas whose already looking at me with bright blue eyes.

"What do you mean?" I ask, feeling nervous.

"It feels like you're not supposed to call me that. It seems so awkward and misplaced."

"What else would I call you?"

"Say my name."

My heart pangs violently in my chest. "What?"

"I just want to see if it sounds better, say my name Sophia,"

I know he can't possibly mean it the way that it sounds, but I can't help but picture erotic fantasies with those exact words coming from his mouth.

"Thomas." I finally say, blushing slightly. He smiles back at me and I feel even more embarrassed.

"What?" I ask when he's taken a while to reply.

"That is so much better," he admits. "It feels... right."

The air is thick with something magnetic as we sit in silence for several moments just staring at each other.

I can feel my emotions getting the best of me so finally I decide I should go home.

I rise to my feet and start taking Thomas's coat off. "Thank you so much for your coat, but I think it's time to head home."

Thomas puts his hand on my arm to stop me from removing the garment.

"I'm not about to let you walk home alone, how far do you have to go?"

"It's no trouble really, it's only two blocks." I defend.

"Sophia, there's no way in hell as a teacher or as a man that I'm letting a young woman walk around a college campus alone at one in the morning."

I bite my lip and nod. "Yeah okay, when you put it like that."

I slip the coat back on completely and start walking towards my apartment. Thomas matches my pace and for a while we're both silent.

"So, I'm excited for the trip to New York," I say in an attempt to make small talk.

"It should be a wonderful experience, I'm looking forward to it too." Thomas responds as he wraps his arms around his shoulders. I feel bad that he's cold because of me.

I feel bad because he's also here in the first place because of me.

"How many people signed up?"

"Eighteen, Which is surprisingly low but I'm not complaining,"

I shrug slightly "It is pretty expensive for a lot of students, tuition here alone is bad enoug.

Thomas grins "So are you one of those spoiled rich girls then?"

"You could say that," I admit. "I was spoiled beyond compare, but all I ever wanted to do was write. I used to write my own plays that I'd later act out with my stuffed animals."

Thomas started laughing and I relished the sound of his masculine laugh.

I'm standing so close to the man I love and for a moment everything is okay.

I know tomorrow when I don't have a good morning text from him it will hurt all over again, but right now I'm happy.

"Was it good?" He asks and I smile. "Of course, my mom gave it live stars and my dad labeled it the must watch play of the year."

We rounded a corner and my apartment building was visible in the distance.

"I'm disappointed I didn't get to see that," he joked but I had a quick response. "I still have the script, maybe I'll turn it in for extra credit sometime."

We talked and talked until before I knew it we were standing in front of my apartment door.

"You live on your own?" He asked as I was digging my key out of my pocket. "Yeah, my parents pay the rent but I work at the library on campus for my own leisure money."

"Wow you really are spoiled, aren't you?"

"Only in the best way," I smile, my key now in my hand. "I like to think I wear it well."

"Absolutely, you're a very lovely and humble person," we both do that sort of awkward slow laugh then the air in filled with tension and silence.

"Thank you for walking me home," I say honestly. "And I'm so sorry that you're in a tough place right now. I hope it works out in the end."

Thomas looks at me with endearing eyes and grins. "I feel better already, and I'm sure that it will. Life has a funny way of making sense in the end."

I can tell neither of us wants to break away and it's so sickeningly bitter sweet. "I guess I should get going now," Thomas says as he turns to leave.

My heart is like thunder as I grab I his arm to stop him.

"Wait," I say suddenly, my mind in over drive.

He turns to look at me with shock in his features.

"Kiss me."

Thomas stares at me, bewildered. "What did you just say?"

"Kiss me."

I repeat, already breathless.

Without skipping a beat Thomas's hands clasp around my neck and waist and I feel my back hit my front door. His lips crash into mine like a wave on the shore and I melt against him. It's deep and slow, and heart breaking.

I needed this, just once. No witnesses and no regrets.

Thomas pulls away with stars in his eyes. "We can't.."

"I know." I respond in a whisper. "It will be our secret."

I just wanted a kiss goodbye.

Chapter 18

Thomas canceled class that following Monday because he was ill. I wasn't exactly surprised though since I doubt he lives any where near that park.

I shouldn't have made him walk home. I should have invited him inside and told him the truth.

I should have taken that kiss inside and turned it into more.

I should have laid everything bare out on the table but I didn't, and now I'm sitting in a heap of self pity as I shovel cereal into my mouth and watch chick flicks.

"Maria, you are my everything. I would never lie to you and say that there was someone else when there wasn't!"

"Oh Enrique! "

Is it me or is this movie strangely specific?

I wipe my mouth on the back of my hand then check the time on my phone.

It's five thirty pm and Valentine's Day.

What a sad existence my life is.

Fiona is on a date with Clara and my only date is a cup of coffee and Netflix.

I turn this garbage movie off and throw my head back onto my pillow.

It's been seven days since I ended things with Thomas and seven days since we've kissed. It was absolutely phenomenal but also forbidden.

We've kept up appearances in class. We pretty much pretend it didn't happen, but every once in a while he glances my way with this far off look like he's reliving it over and over in his mind.

The thoughts make my knees weak but I know I have to get over him.

I thought I would have to block his number, but he never responded after I said there was someone else. At least he has his pride, he's not a beggar.

I get up to pour myself another cup of coffee but a knock on my door stops me in my tracks.

Could it be Thomas? He knows where I live now, but why would he be here?

I look down at what I'm wearing and cringe.

A night shirt and sweat pants.

I begrudgingly go to my door to confront the intruder, and I'm met with a huge bouquet of at least three-dozen roses.

"Holy crap!" I yell, and the delivery guy maneuvers the flowers so that he can see me.

"Delivery for Sophia?"

"Yeah, that's me."

The guy hands me my flowers and the attached card then goes on his merry way.

I struggle to bring the roses inside but when I do I set them on my coffee table. They're beautiful but also obnoxious. What am I supposed to do with 36 roses?

I open the card and my eyes almost bug out of my head.

"Happy Valentine's Day, beautiful. I'm picking you up at seven, wear something nice and be prepared to be wooed.

-Love Michael

Ps: I know you aren't busy, I checked with Fiona first.

I have an hour and a half to go from looking like table crumbs to a snack? What fresh hell is this?

I don't really even feel like going out but what choice do I have? He already knows I'm sitting at home like a lonely old spinster.

I throw my face into my hands and groan.

Fine, I'll go on this date but if he thinks he's getting any he's in for a rude awakening.

I run to my bathroom and strip out of my pajamas. I wash all over and shave away and single girl prickly hairs that I've been neglecting, and I even wash my hair.

I moisturize my dry winter skin with about five layers of lotion then set about to drying my hair.

After twenty minutes, sacrificing a sheep, and a virgin, my hair is dry.

I curl it with a wide barrel wand, burning myself twice.

Once on the ear and once on my thumb.

Awesome!

Being a girl is too hard, no wonder everyone is switching sides lately.

Next I run to my closet and dig around for something red. My eyes stop on a skimpy little number with an exposed back that I've only worn once.

I shouldn't wear it, it's too provocative.

It does make me look good though. Then again Michael might get the wrong impression.

Cut it, I'll wear it. He's touched my vagina, he already has the wrong impression.

I step into my dress and do a dramatic spin in front of my mirror. There's something about red against my skin that makes me feel alive and flery.

I check the clock on my wall and it tells me I only have twenty minutes left so I run to the bathroom to throw on some make up. It doesn't take me too long to add some color and life back into my pale face.

I finish with some closed toed pumps and give myself a rewarding pat on the back for being my own fairy godmother.

I sit around until seven-thirty comes and goes.

I stare angrily at my door thinking that I just got played until there's finally a knock from the other side.

Seven forty eight? Really? I know he's not all that late, but to someone who prides them self on being early he might as well not show up at all.

I open the door with a scowl on my face but it quickly changes to awe as I eat my words.

Michael is standing there in a full suit that hugs his body like a Spanish grandmother who hasn't seen you in a while.

He looks so handsome and imposing that I almost have to swallow back a whimper.

I know I'm heart broken and I know that Michael isn't really a good fit for me but I'll be damned if I don't give that boy his props.

"Holy hell you look gorgeous," Michael gazes at me with hungry eyes. I feel like a lowly peasant standing in front of him, but I accept his compliment anyways. "Thank you, you look very handsome." I admit.

"Are you ready to go? I have something nice planned."

"Yeah, just let me grab my jacket."

I pull my black leather jacket over my shoulders then walk out of the door.

Michael puts his hand on my lower back to guide me down the stairs in that possessive way he seems to like to do.

"I can't wait to show you off, you're the sexiest girl at this school, and it isn't even close."

***

We arrive at what I assume came up when Michael googled the most expensive restaurant in town.

There's a valet, the name is French, and you need a reservation.

"Yes, the reservation is under Taylor, Michael Taylor."

The concierge checks his books then smiles at Michael.

"Ahh Yes, Mr. Taylor. Right this way please."

"Are you sure about this, Michael?

It seems way to expensive." Michael gives me a cocky grin and weaves our arms together. "I have to impress you somehow, don't I?"

We follow this old bald man in a suit to a corner table with candles and a rose in the center.

More roses, yay.

"Can I interest you in a bottle of our 2006 Jasper Hill Emily's Paddock Shiraz?" The waiter asks and Michael doesn't even hesitate. "That would be lovely, thank you."

"Do you know how much that costs?" I ask him with my mouth hanging open. He just shrugs "stop worrying about money Sophia, and just let me spoil you."

This date already challenges my feminine sensibilities enough and I hate being doted on, especially in public.

"I'm just not... used to this," I say honestly. "I don't know why you're trying so hard with me anyways."

"Because I knew you were special the moment I laid eyes on you. At first I thought I dreamed you because I was pretty sure I had a concussion." I can't help but blush and laugh as I listen to Michael speak.

"I couldn't look away. All I knew was that I needed to see more of this girl, and thanks to your very intrusive friend I am now on my second date with her, on Valentine's Day to boot."

I'm about to respond but the waiter returns with our bottle of expensive wine. I take a small sip of the rich liquid and sigh as it washes over my taste buds

"This is so good," I mouth with my tongue still pressed to the glass. When I pull away I even lick the remains off of my cherry colored lips.

Michael bites his lip and looks away, grinning.

"What?" I ask innocently.

"The best part is that you didn't even do it on purpose, Sophia. You're just naturally that sexy.

I review my actions over the last minute in my head then blush. "I'm sorry, it's just that good."

"There's more of that and so much more that I could provide for you if you'd be mine," I can see the hope in Michael's stare as he goes out on a limb. My blood gets hot and I internally shrink in my chair.

"You're great Michael, I'm just not sure if-"

He throws his hands up defensively "say no more, just thought I'd throw it out there, but I'm coming for you sweet heart. I won't make it easy for you to say no forever."

Part of me wishes Michael would just give up on me because I'm pretty sure I'm a lost cause at this point. He undoubtably has a lot to offer a woman and I don't think I could ever satisfy him the way he deserves.

I'm... complicated.

"You're not used to being told no are you?" I ask and Michael takes a slow sip of his glass of wine. "I wouldn't know, no one has ever been able to, until you."

I suddenly feet hot in my own skin at his admission. "And how does it make you feel so far? To be told no?"

"Honestly? It's exciting"

The atmosphere has turned to this sticky sexual tension so I'm unbelievably happy when the waiter comes to take our order.

"Have we decided what we would like to eat this evening?"

I realize that I haven't gotten a chance to look over the menu but Michael speaks up anyways. "Yes, the lady will have the lamb salad with fregola and I will have the island duck with mulberry mustard."

Michael collects my menu to hand to the waiter then winks at me.

"And what if I don't like lamb salad With... whatever you said?"

"Trust me, you'll love it."

We make typical date small talk for a while as I completely destroy this delicious bottle of wine.

When our food arrives I have to admit the salad looks amazing, even though I wasn't to keen on being ordered for.

"Tell me you love it," Michael prods as I take my first bite.

"Yeah, okay, it's amazing." I willingly admit.

The rest of the evening is rather enjoyable if I'm being honest and after he covers the check, that he would not let me see, we walk back to his car.

"See, this is where you tell me you had a wonderful night and you don't want it to end so soon." Michael jokes and I laugh a bit harder than I should.

I'm What they would call wine drunk and boy is it freeing.

I playfully slap Michaels chest and keep giggling. "You're just too much," I run my hand through my hair and tostle the messy waves. "As a matter of factI did have a wonderful night. Thank you for getting me out of the house on this terrible holiday."

"It was my Pleasure, sweet heart."

The drive back to my apartment is filled with dancing and singing as boys to men blares over the speakers of his way too nice car.

"How do you afford all of this stuff?" I ask as I unbuckle my seatbelt and climb out of his Chrysler.

"Ahh, she finally asks! I was waiting for this question." Michaels gets out and starts walking up the stairs towards my door.

"I'm kind of... the only son of a fabulously wealthy business tycoon.“

I nod my head in fake understanding, not entirely present in the conversation right now.

"So when I said I could give you Whatever you wanted, I meant it."

We arrive outside of my door and Michael is look down at me with the same hungry expression as when he picked me up, and I can't tell if I'm drunk off of the wine, or just on his perfectly chiseled face.

"I don't need anything," I argue in return.

"I said.. want." He corrects with a well timed step towards me.

I feel the tension erupting again and I don't know how to reel it back in.

Michael puts his linger under my chin so that I'm staring up at him.

I feel almost hypnotized as his eyes capture mine and he starts leaning in as slow and direct as possible.

I'm feeling so many feelings at once and it's so hard to sort them out. My body is craving the love and attention from a man but my heart is pulling me away.

Eventually Michaels lips hit mine and my heart is suddenly thrown from the equation.

The desperate aching in my core smothers the doubts in my head as Michael slips his tongue into my mouth. I practically moan as the the taste of him mixes with my own.

Forgive me, mother.

The kiss deepens as he devours me, his hands on my hips in a possessive and strong embrace.

I loose my hands in the back of his hail and start to tremble as his thigh rubs between my legs.

"Open the crap door." Michael groans and suddenly I'm rummaging through my purse for my keys. His lips stay pressed against any part of my neck and shoulder he can reach, and we practically fall through the threshold.

It's dark in the apartment so I run for my bedroom to turn on my lap, but Michael isn't used to my furniture and I hear something crash followed by a loud "My bad."

Eventually we make it to my partially lit bedroom and he's positioned perfectly between my thighs, my dress hiked all the way up to my belly button.

His shirt is unbuttoned and his jacket is no where to be seen.

I gawk at his unbelievable abs and can feel an ravaging fever building between my legs.

I run my iingers down each individual cut in his stomach and whimper as I imagine what other surprises he has in store.

Michael grinds against me, his hands exploring every inch of my body.

His left hand is under my panties, gripping my ass and his other hand goes to grab my neck. He leans into my ear and whispers "Calm down, Sophia, it's just a little teasing."

And suddenly the fucking brakes slam and I'm pushing him off.

"Calm down, Sophia, it's just a dance. "

Suddenly all I can picture is Thomas and I feel like I'm about to have a break down.

"Woah, what's wrong?" Michael says as he studies my panicked look.

"We can't do this!" I insist as I start pulling my dress back down over my ass.

"And why not? You didn't seem to think so thirty seconds ago."

I know I seem like the worlds worst cock tease right now so I start spinning off excuses.

"Michael I'm obviously drunk, and this is only our second date. I have morals. I'm not like other girls. Besides, I don't think you're hiding a condom in those tight pants of yours, your dick hardly fits in to begin with." That last one doesn't matter, I've been taking the pill for hormonal reasons for four years, but he doesn't know that.

"Well those are all fantastic points." He sighs and I can see the disappointment in his eyes.

"I'm really sorry," I say awkwardly but Michael just starts getting dressed then comes and kisses my forehead.

"Don't worry, I didn't think it would be this easy anyhow. It's sexy that you know your worth."

I follow Michael to the front door and he kisses me goodbye, ensuring me about a thousand more times that it's okay that I caused his blue balls.

As soon as he's gone I beat my head against the door.

Stupid. Stupid. Stupid!

Chapter 19

So apparently, when you almost screw a guy, they become really attached to you.

The following week at school I seemed to Iind Michael everywhere. He appeared every time Fiona and I had lunch, he came by the library when I was working, and he showed up randomly at my home with food or more flowers even though my Valentine's Day roses hadn't even died yet.

I was flattered, don't get me wrong, but all together it's a bit much. The only real time I can breathe freely in when I know he has football practice.

The trip is one week away and I'm looking forward to it less knowing that he's going.

Fiona isn't allowed to go and with the temptation of Thomas lingering over me I can tell it's going to test my self control. We each get our own room with one bed, and judging by who all is going I'm sure plenty of those beds will be empty.

But not mine.

I'll have to remember not to drink anything so that I don't have a weak moment like on Valentine's Day.

I walk into my English class early again like always and see Thomas writing questions on the dry erase board. He has one hand in his suit pocket and the other is expertly scribbling away in blue marker.

I haven't had a legitimate conversation with him in so long, as Sophia or Lane, and I'm on my last leg. I miss him so much that it keeps me up at night. Every time I add more to my romance novel I picture him as the male lead just so I can imagine kissing him again.

I walk up to him, desperate for his acknowledgement.

"Hello, Thomas," I say, taking a risk. No one else is in class yet and he said he preferred his name over Professor.

I see his body stiffen and after several breaths he turns to look at me.

His face stays frozen in a look of torture and I feel my confidence shrink under his stare.

"Sophia." He replies. I twirl my thumbs out of nervous habit while my brain searches frantically for something to say.

"How are you? Are you feeling better?"

Thomas rubs the back of his neck as he tries to find his own voice.

"No, Not really," He gives a cynical laugh that cuts right through me.

"I'll be okay, it's nothing you should worry yourself with anyhow."

Oh but it is, my sweet Professor.

"I just wanted to check on you. You know, after What happened and

"I'm fine, really." He insists but his eyes give away just how much pain he's really in.

"Now you might want to take a seat before your boyfriend gets the wrong idea," Thomas nods behind me to where Michael has started walking in with a peculiar look on his face.

I want to argue that he's not my boyfriend but before I have a chance Michael is walking up and putting his firm hand on my lower back.

"Good morning, Professor." Michael says in a domineering tone before leading us to our seats.

Thomas gives him a stiff nod, but his eyes are holding pure malice.

What just happened?

"What was that just now?" I ask Michael with my eyebrows raised.

"What?" He responds, oblivious.

"You're tone, and forcing me to my seat?" I reply, my voice hinting at my irritation.

"I don't like the way he looks at you, sweet heart," Michael finally admits and I scowl.

"Are you kidding me? You just pulled me away from our professor!" I say very loudly, and Thomas turns around to watch the Whole ordeal unfold.

"You just got jealous over someone whose not even allowed to date me? Seriously?"

Yeah I want to sleep with this professor, but that's none of Michael's business.

"You're not my boyfriend, and even if you were you have no right to do that!"

Michael looks like he's been slapped across the face but I don't care. I throw my back pack back on and storm to the door.

I glance over at Thomas who looks like he's suppressing a grin.

Great, he's an asshole too.

"And don't you dare follow me!" I iinish, and speed out.

How dare he think he has control over me!

I pull my phone out and dial Fiona's number.

"Ditch class, were getting coffee."

***

Fiona, Clara, and myself are sitting at a little corner table in the cafe that Clara works at.

Business is slow enough that Clara can visit for a while before having to pretend to look busy so i start explaining everything from the way he ordered for me, the way he puts his hand on my lower back, showing up everywhere, and already being jealous.

"Wow That is crazy behavior!" Clara speaks up first. "Cut him off right now before you end up tied up in his basement!"

"Don't be so dramatic, Clara." Fiona says as she rolls her eyes. "So this boy is crazy about you, that's kind of a good thing don't you think?"

I stare between my two friends in amazement. Their opinions are so polarizing that I don't know what to do.

"He's not crazy about her so much as he's just crazy, don't encourage Sophia to stay with a guy like that." Clara defends. "He got jealous over some Professor!"

"Well maybe he had a reason, I don't know Sophia, were you giving him a reason?" Fiona asks, trying to be subtle about my illicit activities with Professor Thomas Crane while also blaming me.

"We are just talking." I say through gritted teeth. "And even if I were making it with him on his desk it's none of Michael's business!" I add and Fiona goes silent.

"Amen!" Clara coos, raising her cup of coffee as she cheers. "Sophia should just stay single forever, it's easier that way."

I'm confused by Claras last words, but I don't have time to ponder them before Fiona gets up and storms to the bathroom.

Clara sighs. "Looks like we're having our first fight, I'm going to follow her."

"Good luck," I offer with a distant smile as Clara gets up to deal with her lovers quarrel.

I sit by myself now, slowly sipping my creamy coffee. I don't usually skip class but if I had to look at Thomas while sitting next to Michael for a whole hour today I think I'd have lost my mind.

Maybe I am being too hard on Michael? It is nice to he wanted by someone that you can actually be with.

Or maybe me and Clara are right and he's one more rejection away from locking me in his trunk.

I don't really know what to do. I just wish that I could have Thomas. Any attraction I have towards Michael seems to be purely physical and that's not enough to form a relationship.

With Thomas I'm just as attracted to his mind as I am his body, and I think that‘ the way it's supposed to be.

My phone suddenly vibrates in my pocket so I reach in and pull it out.

It's from Michael and I audiny sigh.

Michael:

I'm sorry, Sophia. I know that I can be over hearing but it's just because I like you so much. I'll be better about it, just please don't give up on me yet.

I don't reply immediately. My fingers hover over the buttons while I think of what I should do.

Eventually the good natured side of myself wins out. I don't want to hurt his feelings and I really do enjoy being wanted.

Sophia If you promise to not he so overbearing then I forgive you.

I may have agreed to give him another chance but that doesn't mean I‘m going into it blindly.

Michael has football practice tonight and I'm thinking I'll go and check it out. I don't really know a whole lot about him other than he likes football, me, and literature. And that he's rich.

Fiona and Clara return holding hands and looking a little worse for wear.

I don't even wanna know.

"So I've decided to give Michael another shot, but I want to do some digging." Fiona looks pleased but Clara looks dejected.

"Who feels like watching football practice with me?"

***

I don't know why were sitting here freezing our asses off right now. I don't know what I expected to gain from this, and neither does Fiona.

"This is stupid! You can't even see their butts very well because of all of the layers!"

I roll my eyes. "We're not here for butts anyways."

"Then why are we here again?"

I sigh. Clara couldn't come because she still had to work so there was no one here to keep Fiona from pelting me with questions.

"I want to see how he acts when he doesn't think I'm around. I also want to know if his affections are sincere or not."

Fiona smacks herself on the forehead. "He practically stalks you, what could be more sincere than that?"

"Oh I dunno, respecting me as a woman maybe?"

"You and your feminist agenda," Fiona teases.

We watch the team run drills for a while, but eventually I find myself distracted by a couple of girls sitting a few rows in front of us.

One of them has dark chocolate skin and long braids and the other has blonde hair that's cut into a pixie. I can't see their faces but their voices are traveling well enough for me to make out what they're saying.

"Gabbie why are we doing this again? He said he's over you," the darker girl says with a groan.

"I've told you before, Jasmine, he doesn't know what he wants." The girl with a blonde pixie cut has her eyes trained on Michael and I can't help but be overwhelmed with curiosity.

"Yeah well he got what he wanted, what did you think would happen? You'd get married?" Jasmine says with an attitude.

At this point Fiona and I are both expertly trained on these other girls conversations.

"He said it was the best he's ever had!" Gabbie argues but Jasmine snaps back. "Yeh, I'm sure you laying on your back for fifteen minutes really rocked his world."

Fiona's head snaps in my direction "oh shit," she mumbles but I can't look away from the people in front of us.

"He said he really cared!" Gabbie argues but Jasmine starts gathering her stuff up to leave.

"Look, I feel bad for you, I really do. You fell for a Taylor Tactic. It's claimed girls before you, and it will claim them after you but I am not going to sit here and enable you any more."

Jasmine walks away from her friend who is obviously hurt by her lack of support.

Once Jasmine is gone I stand up and start walking towards Gabbie.

"What do you think your doing?" Fiona calls after me but I just ignore her.

"It's Gabbie, right?" I ask once I'm standing next to miss blonde pixie cut.

"Yeah, who are you?" She snaps at me, obviously in a pretty shit mood.

"My name is Sophia. I was just wondering, and this is going to sound super personal so I'm sorry, but when were you and Michael seeing each other?" Gabbie looks at me with wide eyes.

"Excuse me?" She asks, dumbfounded.

"I just really need to know when you guys last hooked up, I'm really sorry," I beg.

"Oh so your the new one aren't you? Fucking f1gures," Gabbie rushes to her feet and starts gathering up her blankets.

"I'm a fool, and you are too if you think you matter to him!" Gabbie starts storming away with all of her belongings, but before she's out of the aisle of the bleachers she looks back at me.

"February ninth by the way," she adds and then she's gone.

I feel a sickening sort of feeling deep inside of my stomach that makes me equally parts angry and sad.

Five days later he was dry humping me on my bed.

I look over at Fiona who looks just as upset as I do, her arms shivering as she holds herself.

"Let's go home, I think I've seen enough."

Fiona and I start walking out of the bleachers when suddenly Michaels voice can be heard calling us from far away. We both turn around to see Michael at the side lines beckoning us over.

"I didn't know you guys were here!" He yells with a smile. I roll my eyes and start to turn away but I can just barely catch the beginnings of Fiona's hand as it shoots up to flip Michael off.

I agree Fiona, kill him. Maybe I will just stay single forever.

***

Chapter 20

For the next week I made sure to keep myself busy enough so that Michael could never catch me alone. I also made a point to come to class right before I'd be late so there was no way he could sit next to me.

It hurt my early bird heart but it was worth it.

I admit that a part of me felt guilty for not even telling him why I was mad, but the other part didn't care because he's a lying man whore.

I could have ended up like Gabbie if I didn't have morals and self control.

Okay, maybe not quite like Gabbie because she got too attached way too fast, but my feelings would still be hurt to be blatantly lied to for a piece of ass.

"Okay, it looks like we're all here. Once we board this charter bus it will take us directly to the airport. We won't make any detours because you forgot your toothbrush so check right now and make sure you all have your tickets for the air plane and the show." Thomas spoke above the crowd of eighteen young adults with authority.

Everyone in this huddle starts checking their pockets and purses and once we all know we have our essentials we start loading the bus.

"Sophia!" Michaels familiar voice starts calling so I push towards the door faster.

"Sophia, for my sake talk to me!" Michael yells and I feel his hand latch onto my own and pull me towards him.

"Let go of me Michael Taylor!" I yell back, using his full name for emphasis.

He uses his superior strength to hold me in place.

"What the hell happened? You said you forgive me then the next thing I know I'm thrown to the curb." He argues, genuine concern showing on his face that I try to ignore.

"Let's just say I'm not falling for your Taylor Tactics anymore." I say spitefully and pull my hand away. Michael looks like something clicks in his mind, but I don't wait around for a response.

I run onto the bus and come face to face with Thomas whose studying my disgruntled features. "Sit with me," He offers.

"What?" I ask, confused.

"Sit with me and take the window seat, he can't bother you if you do. I promise."

I look back at the door where Michael is boarding and quickly shimmy into the window seat beside Thomas.

The look of concern and protective nature on Thomas's face doesn't go unnoticed.

"Trouble in paradise?" Thomas asks once the bus is moving and I'm a safe distance away from Michael.

I run my hands through my hair, messing it up as I do to better portray my agitation.

"It's a forty five minute drive to the airport, Professor, and I don't want to Spend it talking about that oaf who is not my boyfriend, by the way." I can hear the sass in my own voice as I speak but I'm too flustered to care. "Just like you don't want to talk about your break up," I add.

"Fair enough." Thomas replies. "How about we talk about 'The Raven' instead?"

I look up to see a handsome grin on his face.

He knows that I love Edgar Allan Poe, and this shows that he remembers our first conversation. If he's trying to make me fall more in love with him then he's succeeding.

"If I recall you don't think the raven even existed do you?" Thomas asks and I have a huge smile on my face.

"Of course it didn't! The man fell asleep and dreamed the raven. It makes perfect sense if you think about it."

"Convince me, Sophia."

I turn in my seat to properly face Thomas and take a big breath.

"The narrator was reading a book in bed, drifting off to sleep. Suddenly, he's awakened by a tapping that at firstst he can't locate, something similar to dream confusion. Then once he does find the source it's a raven that can speak, but only one word that also happens to be a word that Poe himself popularized, nevermore. Nevermore wasn't very commonly used until the poem was released. Also, was used by the narrator just moments before he sees the Raven." I stop to take a breath.

"And the narrator is accused by many who have studied the poem of depicting the universal human need for self torture, prompting the crow to give his one word answer to questions that he would prefer a yes to instead of no, thus showing the narrators greatest fear. So, I think his actions more closely depict a nightmare. Not only are the crows actions unrealistic, but dream studies even say that seeing a crow in your dreams means you will lose a loved one, which the narrator already has Eleanor, his mistress."

By the time I've finished my rant Thomas is gawking at me.

"You know you're much too smart for your own good, Sophia." He says as he rubs his chin.

"I spend a lot of time reading, my mind comes up with a lot of theories as a by product," I reply but Thomas just laughs.

"Well, you convinced me for sure. I'd love to see what else is hiding in that pretty little head of yours that could be just as convincing."

I bite my lip "Professor." I can't believe he's just said that.

His voice lowers into a whisper "god l hate that word from your mouth."

"Why?" I whisper in return.

The tension has built almost instantly and it isn't even fair.

"It reminds me that we can't..." He sighs. "Never mind Sophia, I'm out of line again."

Thomas straightens up in his seat and pulls his computer from his briefcase.

"I need to check some e-mails, sorry if I'm a bit boring but duty calls."

I know what Thomas is trying to say, and I know that he's just distancing himself for both of our sakes.

I can't really blame him for it.

I know the attraction is mutual and that's made these last few weeks so much more painful. I know he'd have me if he could. At first I was confused as to how he could be so attracted to both Lane and I unless he was the cheating kind, but now I understand it's because we're perfect for each other. In body and in mind. Therefore, either way, we can't resist each other.

I only wish that we had met under different circumstances. Maybe if I could switch schools we could be together, but I have less than thirty credits remaining so I'm no longer eligible for other schools.

Thomas could quit, but he'd never find a more prestigious school to work at in the area.

I've already heard it from his lips the night we kissed outside my door.

We can't.

And it's killing me.

***

Once we arrive at the airport everyone seems to want to do something different. Some people need to pee and some want to get something to eat. Myself and about five others stay at our terminal until it's time to board.

I keep my headphones in so that Michael can't talk to me, and surprisingly that works.

Our gate starts loading and with one last head count, we're all successfully on board the plane. I have a window seat that's next to some people that I don't know which is actually very relaxing. A part of me had been worried that I would be stuck next to Michael somehow but fate smiled upon me.

I spend the entire plane ride listening to music, and drifting in and out of the sweetest dream I've ever had.

Thomas ran his hand down the side of my face, his breathing haggard. I looked up into his bright blue eyes and licked my lips in anticipation. He was leaning in much too slowly. A torturous burn built in my chest as I awaited the freeing sensation of his kiss.

The moon was high in the sky above us and there was a blanket of stars shielding us from the troubles of the real world. My barefeet sunk into pink sand as the sound of nearby waves crashed against distance rocks.

"I love you so much, " Thomas whispered against my lips. "I love you too, "I admitted and moments later my mouth was pressed against his in a pleasurable battle for dominance.

I felt my back hit soft sand as Thomas laid me down with his strong arms, his hips placed expertly between my legs.

His lips traveled to my neck and he bit and sucked the tender skin for several moments before he came back up and pushed my legs further apart.

Maybe I just hadn't noticed before but apparently neither of us were wearing a single piece of clothing, so nothing was keeping us apart as he positioned himself at my slick entrance.

"This is what you want most, right my love? To feel me inside of you?"

I'm about to scream yes but suddenly overhead I hear prepare for landing.

What?

My eyes shoot open and I pull my head phones out.

"Everyone put on your seatbelts and prepare for landing." The stewardess says over the intercom and I groan.

Would it have killed her to wait thirty more seconds?

I adjust in my seat and become painfully aware of the very real arousal between my legs.

Wow I need to get laid.

***

It's nine pm when we finally get to the hotel, but it feels so much later.

Im practically a dead woman walking as I get my room key. Thomas, my acquaintance Sarah, her boyfriend, and the chubby boy I saw on the first day and I all pile into the elevator.

Everyone but Thomas and I get off on the second floor.

I'm very tortured to find that Thomas and I have rooms only three doors apart on the third floor.

After my dream on the plane I can hardly look at Thomas without blushing and picturing him on top of me.

"Get some sleep, Sophia. We have a big day planned tomorrow,"

"You too, Thomas," I use his first name, too tired to keep up appearances especially with no one around.

I'm about to go into my room when the elevator opens again and more people step out, including Michael.

Great, he's on this floor too.

Without so much as a second look, I walk into my room and lock the door.

The one bed hotel room is very modest, equipped with only the essentials, but it's still excellent quality.

I throw my luggage in the corner then fling myself onto the lush mattress. I beg for sleep to take me, and for that dream to pick up right where it left off.

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Chapter 21

i woke up to a soft tapping on my door and a voice that jolts me awake.

"if you want breakfast you better wake up," thomas says and i run my hands over my eyes, smearing yesterday's mascara around.

"thank you!" i call back before rolling off of the bed and getting my bathroom supplies from my bag.

i shower and shave, then get ready for the day. if i thought winter in north carolina was cold, it's nothing compared to new york.

i make sure to really layer up before walking out of my room. i'm about to walk to the elevator when i see michael leaning across the hall, waiting for me.

"so you've been hearing some things about me, haven't you?" he asks with a sigh and feel nervous. i really don't want to do this right now.

"look, michael..." i start but he pushes himself off of the wall and starts walking towards me, a serious expression on his face.

"i know the rumors, and they're my fault, but it's different with you," i roll my eyes but don't interrupt him.

"yes i'm a player, and yes i've lead some girls on but i've never tried this hard before."

"because no one has ever told you no, remember?" i snap back. "and i didn't hear rumors, i talked to gabbie. you slept with her between our first and second dates, how do you explain that?"

"i wasn't in love with you then, like i am now."

"excuse me, what did you just say?"

"something happened during valentine's day dinner that choked inside of me. we actually talked for the first time and i felt my heart come to life. i'll admit, on our first date, i really just wanted in your pants." i scoff and step back from him but he closes the distance.

"you're more than just a pretty face, sophia. you are so smart and strong and caring. you're the definition of a total package." michael keeps pleading his case and i just listen, completely surprised by his words.

"gabbie knew what i wanted, and she still agreed to do it. that shouldn't be my fault."

i honestly don't even know how to respond because as much as i want to stay mad at michael, what he's saying does sound convincing.

"i don't mean to sound like a douche bag, sophia, but ifi just wanted to get laid i'd be talking to someone a hell of a lot easier than you. i finally feel something real for someone, and my past is coming back to bite me. that's just karma. i'll work hard to prove i'm not my past though."

michael looks down at me with hopeful eyes.

"well, as far as explanations go that's not terrible." i mumble, my head and heart having conflicting feelings.

it's so much easier to hate michael, that way i don't feel guilty about rejecting him. if he does truly love me i will feel even worse because i don't know if i'm capable of loving him back. my heart belongs to someone else and i'm afraid it always will.

"i'm sorry i didn't let you explain earlier, i think it was just easier to be mad at you than try to justify being in a relationship with you. i'm not a relationship kind of girl, and i guarantee that eventually you'd get tired of me,"

michael opens his mouth to argue but i just continue.

"if i discover a new book series i have a habit of going missing for a few days until i've read through it like ten times. i'm not a very good cook and i don't like kids all that much either. i'm selfish and i'm not what one would call "wifey" material."

i shrug and wrap my arms around myself possessively for comfort.

"so i genuinely think your love it wasted on me."

i suddenly wish he was just trying to screw me and then go on to the next girl.

"well that's not really how love works, is it?"

he responds with a bit of sass.

"and i'm not standing here offering you a ring, i'm just begging for a chance to make you fall in love with me too."

just a chance? surely i can tolerate that. i mean, it would just involve us spending time together, right? and lord knows i have plenty of time on my hands.

"we can spend time as friends and see where that takes us, if that's okay with you."

"hey i'll take it! at least you're talking to me." michael responds with a smile.

"let's go get some breakfast, i'm starving." i offer in return, today already being much too emotionally draining for my liking.

***

i think the statue of liberty would look a lot cooler if i wasn't dying of hypothermia.

we all decided to hop on a bus and do some sight seeing, but some of us have split off to do other things.

a group of about tive of us are staring over at the giant green lady with our phones out, trying to capture this moment with frost bitten hands.

michael has stayed glued to my side, but i have to admit it's been very pleasant. he's made jokes and offered to carry everything for me. he even bought me a pretzel.

michael has actually tried to buy me everything i stop to look at in every shop window but i say no.

i haven't really thought too much about the nature of his behavior, but the look on thomas's face indicates that it's flirtatious.

thomas looks very annoyed and his fuse seems to be a lot shorter today.

"alright, i think that's enough sight seeing. the play is in three hours so we should all return and get ready." thomas says to his small group.

we all agreed to meet back at the hotel by four so the others already know what's expected of them.

"try to smile a little, professor." michael says to thomas, but his response isn't very professor-ly "the direction of the corners of my mouth are no concern of yours, taylor."

my eyes widen in shock and i try not to giggle.

"douche bag," michael whispers and i smack his arm. "don't be rude!" i criticize. "i'd be annoyed too if i had to baby sit a bunch of young adults in the freezing cold."

i know that's not why thomas is in a bad mood but i'll be damned if i don't defend him anyways.

i don't want to be the reason that he's hurting but life seems to be hell bent on breaking both of our hearts every chance it gets.

***

i zip my dress up and stare at myself in the bathroom mirror for several moments. my nerves are going haywire as i emotionally prepare for what is about to happen.

all lover issues seem far away as i think of walking into the most beautiful theater my eyes will ever witness to watch my favorite play on freaking broadway!

a midsummer nights dream.

i'm suddenly reminded of why i'm in school to begin with. i'm here because one day i want people everywhere to know my name. i want one of my books to be on everyone's shelves. i want to write something spectacular enough to run on broadway.

i'm not here for love, i'm not here for validation. i'm here for me.

and yes, grandma, i am proud. proud of just how far i've come.

i run my hands down my raspberry colored dress and give myself one last smile before grabbing my jacket and leaving my room.

the lobby is alive with similarly dressed college students as we try

to rally for the trip to the theater. i maneuver my way over to thomas to ask him if the bus is here yet but he finds me iirst.

"sophia, there you are. i think that's eve..." his voice trails off as he takes in my full appearance.

thomas rakes his lust filled eyes across my body very slowly before looking away and clearing his throat.

"we're all accounted for, let's head out." he addresses to the crowd and everyone starts to leave, but i'm just stuck in place, my body trembling from the memory of a look that's passed.

"come on, beautiful. you don't want to miss our ride do you?" michael asks me, bringing me out of my trance.

"oh course not, i'm coming," i respond and make my way for the bus.

how could one look be so intoxicating? that one look was so much more arousing than all of my lewd dreams about thomas.

it was fatal.

i sit quietly next to michael who is talking to me about football i think, i'm not listening. i'm just staring hopelessly at the back of thomas's head.

five minutes ago i was a strong independent woman who didn't need a man and now i'm screaming notice me senpai over and over again in my head.

that one look just ruined my night, because if it's one thing i've realized as i sit beside michael and stare at thomas, it's that demetrius, helena, hermia, and lysander have got nothing on me.

***

i sit and stare in complete euphoria as the characters before me spin a story so beautiful that i forget it's fiction.

i'm sitting in red velvet seats, watching a broadway play and i can feel the stars as they form in my eyes. this is what i want! this is my new goal. i will write a play one day that lands me here once more, but not as a witness, no. as a creator.

michael doesn't even bother me during the entire play, he himself is too transfixed on the beautiful happenings before him to try to cop a feel or make a joke. the room is so silent, very

different from just going to watch a move. everyone here paid a lot of money for their seats. everyone here cares.

"sure, why not. it sounds like a great time."

usually i would deny such an offer in exchange for a cozy night in with my television but this is new york, and these memories are the ones that will last forever.

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Chapter 22

A bathing suit was obviously not on my packing list when I was getting ready for this trip, but I know the hotel store should be selling some.

Everyone is off buying stuff for the party or getting ready so I run to the shop to pick up something decent to swim in.

Slim Pickens is the phrase that would best describe this hotels swimwear section.

My options are either village bicycle or nun, and honestly it's a much harder decision than one might think.

The very pretty teal two piece barely covers my butt cheeks and nipples but the black one piece flattens my curves and makes me look like a gender confused prepubescent boy.

"Is this really all you have?" I ask the sales associate whose slumped against a rack of sports bras.

"I mean, yeah. It's kind of like... snowing outside so..." she pops her gum at the end of her response and I suddenly want to beat her with an encyclopedia

"Alright, Well then I'll take this one," I say as I hold up the teal bikini.

"Awesome," she responds painfully unenthusiastically and leads me to the registers.

I buy my waterproof lingerie, and scurry up to my room to put it on, lighting the overwhelming urge to stay home instead all the while.

"Ohhh no, what have I done?" I cringe as I glare at my full butt spilling from either side of the bottoms.

My cleavage looks like I'm on bay watch which is impressive since I have a very modest chest.

Eventually I decide to suck it up. This is what every girl wears to swim in now a days anyhow.

I pull my night shorts and a t-shirt over my swimming suit for temporary coverage.

With a towel in hand I head down to the pool which is already bustling with the sounds of gossip and tipsy laughter.

I walk in and see Michael sitting with a group of guys who are each holding a beer in both hands.

"You know you only have one mouth right?" I tease as I walk over to where he is and kick off my shoes.

"Well if it isn't little miss fashionably late, I was wondering when you'd get here." Michael responds, taking a sip from one of his bottles.

"I had to find something to swim in since I wasn't prepared for a pool party in the middle of a snow storm.

"Fair enough," Michael responds and offers me one of his beers but I decline, walking a few paces to dip my foot in the water.

"I'm not really a beer fan, but I'm definitely here for this heated water."

Shivers of anticipation prick at my skin as I imagine the warm water encasing my body.

Well, here goes nothing I think as I emotionally prepare to expose myself.

I walk to a lounge chair and start stripping from my clothes. I shimmy out of my shorts and then discard my shirt near my towel. I try to embrace body positivity, but in such trying moments I can't help but feel like a frumpy toad in a G-string.

Whistling and cooing suddenly fills my ears and my head looks in the direction of the noise to find Kimberly and her boyfriend sitting in the water, looking at me.

"Lookin' Good Sophie!" Kimberly calls and I can't help but blush.

"Thanks, I call this look the 'only thing they had left'." I joke, my nerves starting to settle.

That is until I look over at Michael who has his whole bottom lip between his teeth and is sitting awkwardly cross legged.

"Are you okay?" I ask innocently.

"Never been better actually," he responds.

I just playfully laugh and step towards the water, sinking into it one stair at a time.

I sigh as the warm liquid engulfs me like a much needed hug.

My hair floats in little spirals as it gets lowered into the water, but I don't go all of the way under, Sparing my face from a mascara water fall.

"You going to get in or what?" I call back to Michael who can't seem to take his eyes off of me. I feel my insides burn with womanly confidence and I can't help but wish Thomas could see me in this bikini.

Michael stands up and pulls his shirt over his head, exposing his drop dead gorgeous body.

Poor Gabbie really didn't stand a chance, did she?

I hopelessly stare at Michael as he gets into the pool, walking straight towards me with a mischievous grin on his lips.

He closes the distance between us then lifts me onto his shoulders effortlessly.

"Hey put me down!" I shriek but Michael just laughs and holds on tighter.

"Hey Isaac, Kim, up for a game of chicken?"

"Hell Yeah!" They agree and I'm suddenly in a battle to the death with Kim as she's perched on Isaacs shoulders. I know that if my head sinks into the water I'll look like a cheap hooker after a money shot so I have to play hard.

Kim Clasps my shoulders with her small hands and tries to shove me off but I take the low road and start tickling her instead.

In a fit of laughter, she falls right off into the water, coughing as she resurfaces.

"That was cheap, Sophie, but I respect you for it."

We all talk for a while and I start to think I've made a new friend. Kim is a very petite girl with brown hair and a lot of freckles. She wants to be a technical writer when she graduates which sounds boring to me but someone has to do it.

After a little while the crowd settles down and people go off into their own cliques to just relax and unwind.

Michael pulls me through the water to an edge where we can sit and talk, his eyes never leaving mine.

How can he be so good at making girls feel special? It's like an art form.

"Are you having fun?" He asks me and I smile in earnest.

"I'm having a lot of fun, thank you, I probably wouldn't have agreed to come if you weren't here."

I'm not what people would call 'good at socializing'.

"Of course, I'm always down for a party." Michael says.

"I know we have our differences Sophia, but I think that's a good thing. You need to get out more and I need to chill more. We balance each other out."

I twirl a piece of damp hair between my fingers and nod. "Perhaps you're right."

"Can we go upstairs and talk?" Michael says after a few moments of relaxing silence.

I'm hesitant at first.

"Aren't we already talking?" I ask, trying not to sound too rude.

"I want to talk about what we talked about earlier. Away from prying eyes."

I think for a moment about What the worse thing is that could happen.

I'm completely sober so I don't really see any harm in it, after all we've been sitting here turning to prunes for a while now.

"Sure, let's go," I agree and we climb out of the water. I grab my towel and wrap it around me for warmth. I ball up my clothes and carry them with me under my arm.

Unwilling to walk around barefoot, I slip my damp feet into my converse and whimper. Goodness that feels disgusting.

Michael and I walk past my room and head for his instead. He swipes his access card and opens the door for me like a gentleman.

His room is identical to mine except his has his own clothes and personal items thrown about instead of mine.

I don't want to sit down because I know my butt will leave wet spots on his furniture, so I stay standing.

"I'm not worried about getting the couch wet, take a seat," Michael offers, reading my mind.

"If you insist," I reply and plop down on the decorative love seat.

Michael sits next to me and angles his body towards me, his arm in line with the back of the couch.

"What do you want to talk about?" I ask bluntly, not oblivious to the tension in this quiet space, or the condoms sitting in his opened duffel bag.

"I actually want to talk to you about some of the rumors you could hear about me, especially from jealous people, if we dated." He responds cautiously.

"Okay, like what?" I ask.

Michael sucks in a slow and steady breath. "Well there's one that says I have two kids, theres one that says I have one testicle, there's one that says I've worked my way through all of the cheerleaders. There's one that says I once paid a hooker for ana "

"Okay I get it!" I interrupt, slightly traumatized.

"The point I'm trying to make Sophia, is that people like to spread lies about me because I'm a bit of a player, but none of those things are true, and i just wanted you to hear it from me first."

I run my fingers through my accidental mermaid waves and look up at Michael whose waiting for a reaction from me.

"I appreciate your honesty and openness Michael, and don't worry, I trust you."

Michael seems to relax and he leans a little closer to me, his eyes searching my face.

"Beautiful and understanding. Seriously, do you even have a flaw?" Michael compliments me with a sincere smile.

"Well, if you must know, I don't really care for football," I tease.

Michael feigns a heart attack. "You wound me, fair maiden!" He accuses and I can't help but giggle.

"Hey you asked," I defend and he sits up from where he had been playing dead.

"Don't worry, sweet heart, I forgive you."

We smile and laugh for several moments but then out of nowhere I'm greeted with Michaels wet hot mouth on my own.

I push him off immediately.

"what are you doing?" I ask, wiping my lips Off.

"Was I reading that wrong? I thought we were having a moment?" Michael looks confused but I can feel my temperature rising.

"That was just a normal conversation! You know what that is right?"

"Okay I'm sorry," Michael says defensively, scooting back from me.

"What about what I said this morning? About us being friends?" I ask, feeling the strongest urge to leave.

"I know Sophia, but I don't really want to be friends with you. It's too hard. I just don't understand Why you won't fucking give in to me. Every other girl would kill to be in your shoes!" Michaels voice raises a few octaves and I'm left speechless. I jump to my feet, leaving my towel and clothes behind.

"You know what, Michael? Maybe those rumors are true." I spit.

"And if your just swimming is pussy why don't you find it somewhere else because you know what? I certainly will never love you. Hell! I don't even like you!" I continue angrily.

I storm towards Michael's door but he beats me to it and blocks my exit.

"You're one ungrateful virgin, you know that? I offer you the world but you still turn your uppity ass nose up."

"So that's why you tried so hard?" I scoff "you think I'm a virgin? Well I hate to pop your cherry Mikey but mines been gone since high school. And if you must know, the only reason we didn't have sex on Valentine's Day is Because I was thinking about someone else."

"Get the fuck out." Michael orders, his voice low and threatening.

"With pleasure," I respond and walk out of his room.

I start walking towards my door, but when I look up I see a set of familiar blue eyes staring right threw me.

He looks ungodly handsome as he stands with his fist clenched to his sides and most of his shirt buttons undone.

I audibly sigh when I make eye contact with Thomas who looks so angry he could explode at any minute. His eyes are glued to my body but there's pure hatred behind his stare.

And I know why.

"Look, yes I'm in a bikini, yes that was Michaels room, but no I didn't do it with him so don't worry. Not that it's really any of your business anyways, Professor, since you've made it perfectly clear that you have no intention of doing it with me any time soon anyways."

My voice is bitter and honestly I'm just so done with people. I'm angry and I don't care who gets caught in the cross fire. I just don't think I can keep these feelings bottled up anymore.

"I don't know what your talking about," Thomas replies with his jaw locked but I can still detect the hint of relief behind his firm features.

He tries to force his gaze from my breasts but he's failing.

Is he seriously going to lie to my face While undressing me with his eyes?

"Oh so you haven't spent this whole day jealous of Michael because he's able to openly flirt with me and you can't?"

"No."

"And you weren't just about to punch a hole through that wall because you thought I'd just slept with him?"

I of course as referencing his still bailed fists.

"No!" Thomas says even louder.

I keep walking towards him, tired of him at least not admitting it. Tired of the swollen sexual tension that lingers between us that causes me pain every day.

He doesn't move a muscle as I close in on him, my green eyes ripe with irritation.

"And you don't want to have me?" I ask finally, just a few inches from him.

He hesitates, his body trembling ever slightly, but eventually he still mutters weak "no."

I roll my eyes and groan. "You men are all the same Aren't you? You're all liars! You promised me you'd never lie to me Thomas, so What do you call this?" I gesture wildly to the situation in front of us.

"I never promised you that, and I'm not lying!" He yells back rather unconvincingly.

"Either way what does it matter? You know as well as I do that it's forbidden!" He adds, pointing his linger at me.

That's an admission in itself.

"Yes you did! Don't you remember that night after the bar when you kissed me.

You said you would never lie to me. You promised." I argue, my cheeks burning.

Thomas shakes his head.

"No, no, I didn't say that to you, I said that to... to..."

His jaw suddenly falls open and my heart drops.

Thomas looks like he's been hit by a truck, and I see the truth unfolding behind his eyes. He takes a step back suddenly from shock and runs his strong hand down his face.

What did I just do? No no no this can't be happening.

How could I be so stupid?

I immediately turn on my heels to run for my door, but Thomas grabs my wrist and holds me in place.

Thomas's voice is barely above a whisper as he fmally puts the pieces together after half of a year.

"...Lane?"

Chapter 23

"I don't know what you're talking about," I lie and try to pull my wrist free.

Thomas squeezes tighter and jerks me around to face him. He's so close that I can feel his breath on my face. I don't think I've ever seen a more volatile look in someones eyes before.

"Yes you do. You come at me, accusing me of lying, when you're the one whose been lying for months!"

His eyes out into mine and I can feel my resolve breaking. My knees go weak, and my eyes burn with the threat of salty tears. I open my mouth to argue but nothing comes out except a fragile shell of my voice.

"I'm so sorry..."

Tears start to spill out and they won't stop no matter how hard I fight them. I have to grip the front of Thomas's shirt to keep from falling into a heap on the hotel floor.

Why is my body giving up so easily?

Through blurry eyes I watch as Thomas's face softens and turns from fury to pain.

"Why Sophia?" He asks in a begging tone. His hand that's not on my wrist grips my waist to help me keep from falling.

His eyes search mine for answers and it makes my want to cry even more.

I shake my head and whimper. "I know I shouldn't have. I know it was wrong, I just wanted to talk to you. It was just a crush. I didn't mean for it to turn into what it did." I start rambling with my trembling voice failing me every few syllables.

"No," Thomas responds, his own eyes turning red and threatening tears. "Why did you leave me?"

Then one single tear rolls down his face.

"What?" I whisper, confusion making my brain numb.

"And please don't tell me it was for Michael," Thomas adds and realization slaps me across my face.

"No of course not," I reply. "I lied. There was no one else. I'm so so sorry. Thomas. It just had to stop. I had to make you hate me. That was no way to live."

"Do I look like I'm living to you?" Thomas groans. "I've been so miserable these last few weeks. I've hardly slept. You were all that gave me happiness. When you decided to cut me off I felt so worthless. You ripped my heart out and set it on fire, Sophia."

I cringe, guilt and sorrow crippling me.

"I broke my own heart too Thomas! But I did it so you could have a real future instead of being stuck on someone you could never touch. What's the point of loving you if I can never have you? I wanted to forget you. I know it's selfish but -"

"You love me?" Thomas suddenly stiffens as he breaks my rant.

"Yes," I reply softly.

I can see a storm brewing behind Thomas's blue irises. If looks could kill I'd be six feet under by now.

After several seconds of silence Thomas finally speaks, his deep voice like silk as he shatters every barrier between us.

"Forgive me, Sophia, but I don't think I can follow those crap rules anymore."

Suddenly I feel the cold and rough texture of wallpaper collide against my bare back.

Thomas grabs my hip in one hand and my jaw in the other as he slams his hungry lips against my own.

My body erupts in complete nirvana and I grab him, holding him against me with all that I have.

His tongue dances across my bottom lip. I open my mouth, letting him in and tasting him fully for the first time.

My back involuntarily arches against Thomas and my hip presses against his Iirm bulge hidden beneath his slacks.

Thomas groans from deep within his throat and his hand on my hip moves lower. He grabs a handful of the flimsy bikini fabric, pulling it away from my slightly damp skin.

"Tell me to stop now, or so help me Sophia I will do it with you." He threatens in my ear, his lips sliding along my neck.

I shake my head no. It's so hard to speak when all of the nerves in my body are firing at once.

"Don't stop," I manage to say in a breathy whisper.

Thomas's lips crash back into mine. We're both unwilling to stop kissing to even locate his room but by sheer luck my hip bone crashes into the door knob.

I wince in pain but it doesn't slow the desperation between this man and myself.

Thomas's key card clicks and moments later I'm stumbling backwards into a dark hotel room.

Even though it's too dark to see, my hands find the buttons on Thomas's shirt immediately.

I start pulling them apart, but he puts his hands over mine to stop me.

"Slow down, darling. We have all night."

Thomas breaks apart from me and goes to turn on his bedside lamp that casts just the right amount of light on his beautifully decorated room.

Thomas's suite is much nicer than the ones students received. It's larger and there's even a balcony attached to it that's letting in the perfect amount of unfiltered moon light.

I walk slowly to where Thomas is standing and wrap my arms around his neck. I pull his lips back to mine and kiss him in slow motion. Every movement is tender and deliberate.

My fingers trail down his torso until I find the last few buttons that are still attached and make short work of undoing them.

Thomas shrugs his dress shirt off of his broad shoulders, and I sigh softly as I take in the full view of his torso.

He has a defined chest and very little abdominal fat, but he's not ripped out of his mind. He looks perfect.

There's a happy trail of hair that leads downwards from his belly button, and I'm painfully eager to see where it leads to.

My palms come to rest on Thomas's chest and he lifts a hand up to push some hair out of my face. "You're so beautiful," He says softly before pulling me flush against his skin.

He kisses me with more vigor, and I feel his fingers pulling at the string of my bikini top.

Seconds later the cold fabric falls to the floor and I gasp as Thomas pulls away from my lips to look at me the way that I'd just looked at him.

His breathing grows haggard as he looks me all over with lust filled eyes.

His large hot hands come up and massage my breasts slowly, paying extra care to my pebbled nipples.

I moan, blood rushing to my cheeks.

My nervous fingers find Thomas's belt buckle, and the room is filled with the sound of it clanking as it hits the floor.

I undo his button and the brass zipper that's keeping me from my deepest desire.

Thomas steps out of his pants and shoes and I can see the sizable bulge straining against his boxer briefs.

I bite my lip as I stare at it, but a chuckle from Thomas pulls me out of my trance.

"Its all for you." He promises as he steps closer and tangles his hands in my hair. He kisses me passionately as he walks us over to the edge of his bed.

As soon as my ass hits the mattress I kick my shoes off and lay back. Thomas scoots us further on to the bed effortlessly, positioning himself between my thighs.

I arch suddenly and grab Thomas's sides as his mouth sensually cups left my breast, twirling my nipple in small circles. His knee presses firmly between my legs and I tremble from the pressure.

My fingers dig softly into his skin as he kisses lower and lower until he's so low I can no longer reach him.

Thomas quickly pulls down my bottoms and weaves them off of my ankles, tossing them away.

He looks between my open legs with a devious look, the way only a man on the hunt can. I feel myself grow more aroused as he looks at my most sensitive parts with pleasurable intent.

Thomas places wet kisses up my thighs slowly, making his way to my core. I softly moan and fight for breath as the anticipation threatens to kill me.

"Damn," Thomas groans suddenly.

"What?" I ask, disappointed that he stopped.

"You're just already so wet," he grins.

"It's all for you," I promise, repeating his statement from before.

I start to giggle but it gets stuck in my throat as his lips finally connect with my hot opening.

His tongue expertly moves against my tender skin, causing me to grasp the sheets for sanity.

This right here is exactly Why older men are better.

I whimper and moan and I can tell it fuel Thomas more. His tongue moves faster and more firmly against me, but just as I'm about to come he stops.

"Not yet, darling," Thomas growls as he leans up.

He pulls his underwear off and I sit up on my elbows to see him.

Oh yes please!

I almost orgasm just looking at him completely naked. His body is flawless, but his dick is on a whole other level.

It's perfectly thick, and just the right length to make you lose your mind but not die.

I don't have long to stare before Thomas crawls back between my legs.

I'm not sure if he remembers Lane telling him she refilled her pill prescription last month or if he just doesn't care, but neither do I.

Thomas aligns himself With my opening, and puts one hand around the back of my neck.

"Look at me," he whispers. "Tell me you want it, darling."

I know he's teasing me but I love it.

My hands wrap around his neck. I kiss him roughly and once I pull us apart I respond with unyielding desire.

"Please do it, Thomas."

Without another moments hesitation Thomas slides slowly inside of me raw, stretching me open as he does.

"Holy cow, Sophia," Thomas groans, his mouth hanging open.

"It's been a while," I offer in return as I spread my legs further to accommodate his size.

It feels so good as he fills me up that I can hardly stand it.

Thomas pushes to his base then slowly starts thrusting in and out, savoring every little movement.

My legs wrap around his hips and my hands grip his back for stability.

I moan right against his ear and it makes him go faster. Knowing he's pleasuring me makes him crash into me harder. My toes curl and I can't help but cry out "please don't stop!"

Thomas leans back so that he can watch me come undone beneath him as he rocks in and out of me.

His hand grabs my hip and he flips me over, my ass in the air and my face in the mattress.

I arch my back and Thomas grabs both of my hips, angling me just right. He thrusts in to me roughly this time and do it more faster.

His hands move up my back sensually until he reaches my breasts. He grips them and I lean back against his chest, giving him easier access.

Thomas kisses my neck and groans against my skin as the new angle tightens around him.

"Gosh," he breathes and I smile to myself, loving that I'm making him feel so good too.

A few moments later Thomas flips me back over and pulls me onto his lap. I ride him slowly, enjoying the look on his face as I slide along his cock.

God I love this fucking man, I can feel myself about to come so I go faster.

"It's not fair, your too sexy and you're good at this." Thomas groans loudly.

My legs feel weak as I'm about to come so Thomas flips me over and roughly thrusts inside of me until I tense around him, moaning loudly, my own orgasm spilling out.

Thomas groans as he pulls out of me.

He strokes himself until his warm come covers my stomach and chest, marking me as his in the sexiest way possible.

He falls back, both of our strained breathing filling the quiet room.

"That was -" "Yeah it was." I agree immediately.

We both start laughing to ourselves and it's a beautiful moment.

After a few silent seconds to compose himself, Thomas gets up and runs to his bathroom.

He returns with a towel for me to Wipe off with.

After I clean up Thomas wraps his arms around me possessively on the bed.

"Don't ever leave me again," he pleads. I can hear his nervous heartbeat as his pounds against his rib cage.

"I won't." I promise, "And that Professor, is the truth," I add as I nuzzle into his neck.

He pulls me back and cocks an eyebrow "what have I told you about calling me that?"

I playfully shrug. "I cant seem to remember."

"Hmm then maybe you need something in your mouth to keep you from saying it again."

Maybe I do.

Chapter 24

I couldn't tell you what time it is if I wanted to. I'm sitting in a warm paradise, wrapped in cotton sheets and tangled in burning skin.

Thomas is behind me, his arms draped over my shoulders. He's holding me against his chest as though if he released me this moment would vanish from our memories.

His legs are an either side of mine, neither of us wearing an ounce of clothing.

I draw delicate circles on his arms, intoxicated by this moment. This is purgatory. We're hanging between recovering from one round of sexual exploration, and preparing for another.

If it were possible I'd never let him exist anywhere else but inside of me. The feeling I get as soon as he penetrates my body is pure ecstasy, and I'm high on loving him.

"What are you thinking about?" Thomas asks me, whispering softly in my ear, his chin resting in the nook of my neck.

I smile and kiss his arm as it rests on my chest.

"I'm thinking that I could never be happier than I am in this moment with you."

Thomas kisses a soft wet trail from the base of my ear to the edge of my shoulder. His hold releases just enough so that I can move my head and give him better access to my skin.

The question what's after this? lingers in the air, but for now we blissfully ignore it.

"Sophia Lane." Thomas purrs my name against my shoulder, and it feels good to hear both names from his mouth.

"You were made for me, darling," he adds and I grip his arms tighter around myself in response.

Thomas leans back until his head collides with a pillow, and I fall back with him.

I turn over so that I'm facing him, our chests pressed firmly together now.

I move some hair off of his forehead and grin. "When I first saw you your hair was so much shorter,"

"Yeah, that haircut was a mistake," he responds laughing and runs his fingertips down my back.

"Tell me what you were thinking the first time you saw me," I prompt Thomas and he blushes, biting his cheek.

"Don't make me answer that, darling. It's embarrassing." I giggle at his sudden coyness.

"No, I definitely have to know now." I tease him. "Fine." He gives in, but first he rolls us over so he's on top of me.

I settle in comfortably between the sheets and his warm body as it smooshes me.

He loves the control he has on my body, but I love it more.

"Well, I remember I woke up that morning unbelievably excited. It was my very first day at this university and it almost didn't feel real. I got to campus and it felt like there was a target on my back. Apparently there's something arousing about a professor whose under forty, and I was desirable number one."

I roll my eyes, unwarranted jealousy stirring up slightly in my stomach.

Thomas grins at me, amused, and keeps going.

"But I figured, whatever, I can't be swayed by these teenagers. I get to my class room to prepare, thinking I have plenty of time when suddenly you walk in, fifteen minutes early!"

"Yeaaahhh.." I admit.

"I look up to see who has come in, and I see you and honestly I felt really nervous and sick because I began questioning my own resolve. You were too beautiful to be real. But I thought you know what? It's fine. She's probably just some stereotypical hot girl who can barely write a proper sentence, much less a full book report. I'll be fine. Boy was I wrong."

I blush and smile really big at Thomas‘s expense then I pull him in for a quick kiss.

"Keep going."

"You start talking to me about Edgar Allan Poe, of all things, and deeper meanings to The Raven, and you smiled, and fidgeted, and fucking blew me away. You were already the most unbearably beautiful woman I'd ever seen, but your mind was just as captivating. Honestly, I wanted to bend you over one of those awful little writing desks and f*ck you stupid, but that's illegal and I thought better of it."

"F*ck me stupid ?! " I choke out those words as I suffocate on my own laughter.

"Of course! Then you wouldn't be quite so alluring."

I take several moments to recover as Thomas smiles down at me with a look of pure infatuation.

"Now, why don't you tell me how you came to the idea of secretly seducing your Professor?"

I sigh, Supposing it's only fair that I explain myself.

"You left bookish-escapes open on your computer one day after class and I saw your username. I already had an account so I thought what harm could there be in some innocent messaging?"

"Innocent?" Thomas repeats with a chuckle so I emphasize "Yes! Innocent, but you were just so... incorrigible."

"I'll show you incorrigible," Thomas growls playfully and grabs my right breast with his warm fingers, kissing my shocked mouth.

"Exactly," I gasp the word once he breaks away, a look of satisfaction on Thomas's face.

"Keep going." He urges me, and I whimper in disappointment as he removes his hand.

"Well obviously we started talking a lot. Everyday in fact. And I started realizing that this wasn't just talking. I felt so bad about lying but I didn't know how to stop, and I was afraid you'd be furious."

Thomas spreads my thighs apart and pins my wrists above my head.

"Oh I am furious, Sophia," he groans "Keep going."

I try to fmd my voice but it's gone, his teasing wiping my thoughts of anything that isn't him.

"I I decided to end it because I knew I was in love with you, and if you love someone you can't just string them along," I swallow hard under Thomas's strong gaze "And I went to that park to cry."

Thomas kisses me rough and slow, then breaks apart as quickly as he had begun.

"And now... now I don't think I could ever picture a future without you in it."

The look on Thomas's face is unforgettable as he whispers "You'll never have to."

Thomas's words sink down to the depths of my soul, and I pull him in for a hungry kiss. He quickly returns it and starts pulling away any blankets that dared come between us.

I bend my knees and Thomas settles in between them. His hands desperately grab my hips, our lips passionately entwined, as he pushes deeply inside of me once more, sealing our promises in flesh.

***

I wake up to a black room, the only light streaming in through a slit in the curtains.

Thomas is sleeping peacefully beside me. I look over at him and can't help but want to cry from the sheer happiness inside of my heart.

I slowly ease myself out of his bed and walk to the balcony, appreciating the cool air radiating off of the glass. I look out at a sea of white the likes of which I've never seen in North Carolina.

I find Thomas's dress shirt on the floor and throw it on, hiding the bulk of my shame from any possible passerby's.

Taking a deep breath, I unlatch the balcony door and slip out into the unrelenting cold.

My bare toes sink into powdery snow as I walk to the edge of the balcony and stare up at the silver orb hanging among the stars.

Delicate crystal flakes continue to fall as I stare upwards, my heart so full it could burst.

Thomas Crane is laying naked in the room behind me. His scent is on my body and on his shirt. It fills my senses with a feeling of comfort, and I hardly notice the cold as it nips at my skin.

The streets are invisible below, no cars or cabs even daring to drive through the pale sea.

The city that never sleeps has been rendered comatose by this onslaught of white.

I have the strongest suspicion that our flight will be delayed tomorrow, but I don't mind.

I don't ever want to go home. Home is complicated.

I'm not looking forward to hiding my

relationship with Thomas for the next year, but I will do whatever It takes to keep him in my bed and no one else's.

It's taken me so long to find that forever feeling, and now that it's in my grasp I will never let it go. Whatever hardships come with loving this man, I will handle them with all of the fierce strength in my being.

I look back at the half empty bottle of scotch on the coffee table inside of the hotel room and sigh to myself.

My back rests against the cold iron railing on the balcony as I stare at that amber liquid.

Is it just a crutch or is it an addiction?

I know Thomas must have baggage I don't know about yet, but we all do. Luckily for him I'm stronger than I look.

I run my fingers through my snow covered hair and close my eyes, embracing this moment and all of its perfection.

I used to think I hated the cold, but now I see I just hated having no one there to warm me afterwards.

"Why do I always Iind you barefoot in the cold?" Thomas asks, causing my eyes to flutter open.

He's standing on the other side of the door completely naked and grinning.

"I'm just happy you found me." I whisper in return.

***

Chapter 25

I'm so tired.

I don't want to move. I don't want to open my eyes, walk, speak, be alive at all, but I have to.

If I don't sneak back into my room before people start waking up for breakfast it'll be the scandal of the century at Duke.

"Slutty student caught leaving room of fired as fuck Professor"

Yeah, no thanks. I'm good.

"Don't go," Thomas's gruff morning voice wills me to stay, but we both know that I can't.

"I'd love to stay here with you, but unfortunately you're my professor, and I'm just a helpless student you've lured into your bed."

Thomas gives a throaty laugh, his head still pressed to a pillow.

Wow he looks so beautiful.

"I do believe our situation is your fault, my darling Lane."

"That's fair, but I would do it all again if it meant I still ended up yours."

"Alright thats it,"Thomas says as his strong arms come at me, wrapping me up and pulling me back onto the bed.

"If you're going to keep saying such cute things I can't let you go."

"You'd risk getting tired and incarceration for ten more minutes of cuddling?" I tease.

"Well according to your mother I can just write books or something," we both laugh "And they'll pay my bail if I do recall. They love me already, I'm touched."

"My mother does because you're the first man that's managed to make me feel romantic love. The jury is still out on my father, and he's pretty trigger happy lately."

"Fine, I'll let you leave since you're so adamant but first kiss me like you'll miss me."

Two big smiles clash in the middle as Thomas and I kiss tiercely. His tongue tangles with mine and I squeeze his body close. His hands grab my bare ass and my hair as we pour a thousand kisses into one.

I'm left gasping as we pull apart, and he's no better.

"Now go before you have to help me with the arousal you just caused."

I begrudgingly crawl back off of the bed and gather up my things.

I have no choice but to steal Thomas's sweat pants and a t-shirt for the sake of decency, not that I'm complaining.

I cautiously open the door and peek my head out, scanning from left to right. The coast is clear so I make a run for my room.

I pull the key card from my shoe knowing very well that it's probably gross by now, and scan myself in.

Once I'm safely inside my own room the realization finally hits me that the last few hours were real and Professor Thomas Alexander Crane is my fucking boyfriend.

***

I almost fell to my death in the shower, I really don't know how I didn't. I think I was asleep through the whole thing, my body just going through the motions.

I stare now at my clothes, trying to decide what to wear. I brought some pretty cute options but I j ust can't stop staring at Thomas's sweat pants. The comfy fabric is calling my name, and I want to wear them even more knowing they're his.

I slip them on and suddenly feel so much better. I suppose I just like knowing a piece of him is near my crotch.

I slip on a slightly cropped dark blue sweater that leaves a little tummy showing for that casual boyfriend look and finish it with a pair of black UGGS.

I'm so comfortable I could pass out on the floor, but I think better of that idea.

I throw on some mascara and pile my hair into a knot on top of my head. Last nights activities have left me famished and I'm right on time for breakfast.

I walk out of my room and hear a commotion to my right, peering over I see Michael standing in his door way with his hands all over a woman as they say their goodbyes.

That woman is Kimberly.

I look on at them in disgust, and Michael looks up at me. Our eyes lock and he smirks, grabbing a big handful of Kim's back side.

Is he trying to make me jealous? Because it's definitely not working. If only he knew what I had been up to last night myself.

"Oh hey Isaac!" I say loudly and watch as Kim practically catapults off of Michael. She looks down the hall at me, pale and out of breath, but I can't help but laugh.

I shake my head in disbelief and walk to the elevators.

Kim watches me in horror as I board the lift, still laughing at the scene I'd witnessed.

"It's not what it looks like, Sophie!" She pleads and runs towards me, but I hit the close door button before she can get here.

I'm really glad I didn't fall for that no morals having dickhead.

Now let's see if Isaac is at breakfast.

***

"No! She's lying!" Kim cries as she follows Isaac out of the breakfast hall.

"Don't touch me, Kimberly, I fucking swear." Isaac yells back, making Kim ugly cry.

He had fallen asleep early last night and was very surprised to see that Kim was no where to be found when he woke up.

Although he wasn't all that surprised when I told him where she'd been. I guess Kim has a habit of being a skank.

Everyone watches in amusement as Kim gets busted while we enjoy our complimentary breakfast.

Usually I would feel guilty about something like this, but now that I've tasted real love I'll be damned if I just let a nice innocent guy get strung around. If I know the truth but keep it to myself then I'm no better than Kim.

I take a bite of fluffy pancakes and make small talk with the people seated around me. A few bites later Thomas walks down looking like heaven on earth.

He's wearing a pair of black j eans and a red sweater that's paired with a gold watch and black dress shoes.

His hair is freshly washed and he surprisingly doesn't look all that tired.

In fact he looks more rested than I've seen him in weeks.

Good morning everyone," he greets us all, but his eyes linger on me for a moment and he smiles, making my heart erupt in my chest.

"I've spoken to the customer service center at the airport, and our flight has been delayed an extra five hours for snow removal. The roads are very dangerous also, so I'd advise during this time that no one tries to leave."

There's a mix of happiness and annoyance among the crowd, but there's nothing we can do about it either way.

That puts us going to the airport at eight pm which means we will have the pleasure of sleeping with broken necks. This trip is going to kill me.

People start getting up to go back to their rooms, but I stay seated. Thomas makes himself a plate and sits across from me.

We talk about simple things that it wouldn't be weird to see a student and teacher conversing about, but inside I know we're both burning for more.

It's going to be so hard to keep everything civil in public this coming year. Right now all I want to do his jump into his arms and kiss him until my lips fall off.

Most people have filtered out now and even Thomas is done eating.

"Well, have a good day Sophia." He says as he stands up.

"And you as well, Professor." I make sure to add at the end because I know it riles him up.

He grins devilishly at me then turns to leave, but sitting there on the table where he had been is one of his room key cards.

I sneakily grab it and shove it into my pocket. After waiting about five minutes I casually walk to the elevators, the same way everyone else does.

Nothing to see here.

I hit my floor number, but before the elevator leaves a few people crowd in.

Some people get off on the same floor as me, and even though I don't know who any of them are i still walk to my own room first, like they'd know.

Once the hallways is empty I make a mad dash for Thomas's room. I click the key card and slip inside, closing the door as quickly as I can.

A masculine chuckle sounds from behind me and I roll my eyes playfully. "What are you laughing at?"

"The innocent student that I just lured back into my bed," he responds smoothly as he takes slow steps towards me.

"I'm not in your bed." I respond with sass and he just laughs a bit more.

"Maybe not yet." He whispers once he's close to me. I grin and lift myself onto my toes, resting my hands on Thomas's chest. He closes the small distance left between our lips and I sigh into his mouth.

"You look good in my clothes," he mumbles as his hands pull slightly on the waist band of his sweats against my body.

"Good, because these are mine now." I joke.

Thomas kisses down my neck then his hands grab the hem of my sweater, pulling it off and letting it hit the floor.

"Fine but this sweater is mine."

"Deal." I reply, unhooking my own bra.

It's only day two but I feel so comfortable with Thomas that all shame disappears. He can have all of me. Every inch of my body is his to exploit.

We make a game of who can undress fastest, meeting finally on Thomas's freshly made bed.

"I don't think I'll ever get used to how much I want you, darling," Thomas growls as he takes in the full sight of my naked body.

I push him over onto his back and straddle him, mounting his hardness as I do and moaning as it fills me up.

"And I'll never get used to how good you feel."

No one knows Whats going on inside this room.

No one knows that right now a professor is deiiling his student. No one except for Thomas and I, and it turns me on so much knowing that it's our little secret.

Every thrust, every touch, every kiss pushes me closer and closer to ecstasy. This weekend is going to do wonders for my romance novel. I have so much more material to refer to.

"Don't tell me you're tired, darling." Thomas purrs in my ear as I lay breathless, completely satisfied. I snort out a laugh in response.

"Tired? No. I'm exhausted. I don't know where you get all of this energy from."

"Well I do run three miles every morning, that has to count for something." He shrugs as if what he just said was no big deal.

"Three miles?"I hiss. "That's ridiculous!‘ Thomas laughs at my expense "it's really not all that crazy. Don't you exercise? Surely you must to look so good."

I scoff "I exercise Alright. Exercise my right to stay home and binge eat Doritos."

Thomas chuckles and smacks my bare ass "Well you might want to start, darling. You're going to need the stamina."

***

The bus from the hotel to the airport almost crashed like eight times during the commute.

I ended up sitting next to overweight sleepy guy who was passed out the whole time, but it gave me the chance to eavesdrop on all of the gossip floating around.

I was able to ascertain that Isaac definitely dumped Kim and that Michael thinks I ratted her out because I was jealous.

He really couldn't be more wrong, could he?

I texted Thomas on the bus, and it was the first time I did so as Sophia, not Lane.

Sophia: I miss you

Thomas: I miss you more

The entire plan ride was spent sleeping, by me at least. I can't really speak for anyone else.

Once we landed Thomas and I had to go our separate ways but I knew it would only be temporary.

I got to my apartment at two am and fell face flrst onto my pillow.

Before dozing off I sent two last texts, one to Thomas and one to Fiona.

A Goodnight Professor

And you won't believe what happened this weekend.

***

Chapter 26

"This better be an emergency or I'm going to kill you!" I scream at whoever is knocking at my door at four-thirty am.

I walk like a zombie towards the sound of hanging, my eyes barely open.

I yank the door open and standing there looking handsomely exhausted is Thomas.

"Oh, hey. What are you doing here?" I ask sleepily, rubbing my eyes.

Im still half asleep which is evident by how calm I'm being about Thomas standing in my doorway.

"I know it's dangerous, darling, but I don't think I can sleep without you." Thomas's eyes beg for me to let him stay, as if I'd ever say no.

"Of course you can stay with me, baby." I say smiling as I gesture for Thomas to come in.

Thomas walks in and closes my door. A latching sound lets me know that it's locked, and we make our way to my bed

"I like baby much more than Professor," Thomas informs me and I bite my lip.

"You will always be both to me," I offer in return. "No. Soon you'll graduate and you won't be able to call me that anymore,"

'Ill always call you that' I think but don't say. I'm too tired to be sassy.

"I hope you want to cuddle, it's only a full size." I say with a yawn as I crawl in back under the warm covers. Thomas crawls in on the other side after pulling off his shirt and kicking off his shoes leaving him in a pair of sweat pants that I'll eventually steal.

"What else do you think I came for?" He asks with a love lorn smile.

His arms wrap around me and our knees bend creating the perfect side spoon.

I fall asleep within seconds.

***

Knock Knock Knock

"Oh my god, what now?" I whimper as I throw the blankets off of myself once more. The clock on the wall reads eight-fifty but that's still too early for me.

I haven't gotten a full nights sleep in two days and I think I'm in the verge of homicide.

Thomas doesn't even stir from the noise or me leaving which is quite impressive.

"What?!" I yell as I open the door. A surprised Fiona is standing there holding two coffees. "Jeeze, what's eating your ass?" She quips.

"I haven't slept in two days, go away." I reply and try to shut the door in her face but she blocks it with her foot.

"Don't you dare slam the door in my face Sophia Lane Dawson!" She responds, offended. "You can't just tease me with juicy gossip and expect me to patiently wait until you're ready to talk."

"Uhm yeah I can!" I reply, still not letting her in.

"Let me in, skank, I'm freezing and I brought you coffee. Clara made it special, just how you like."

"You can't come in."

"Why?"

"Because."

"Because why?"

"Because... because. Fuck I can't think of a reason. Fine you can come in, but only if you promise not to freak out."

"Why would I freak out?"

I roll my eyes and am about to explain when a very sexy tired voice calls from behind me "Darling do you only have green tea? I'm a chamomile man."

Dammit.

"Who the hell is in there!?" Fiona shrieks but doesn't let me explain. She just pushes me out of the way and storms in.

"Holy morning wood batman! Professor Crane it's so good to see you like this. That bulge really brings out the blue in your eyes!"

"Fiona!" I shriek as I run between my best friend and my lover. "One, that's inappropriate, and two, quit looking!"

"Friend of yours?" Thomas jokes from behind me. "Best friend actually, it's nice to finally meet you instead of stalking you from a distance." Fiona responds and sticks out her hand, but I slap it away.

"Fiona! This is why I wouldn't let you in.

Both Fiona and Thomas start laughing at my expense but I don't really find it all that amusing.

"I'm going to go put on a shirt, it looks like you two have a lot to talk about." Thomas says and dismisses himself.

I yank my coffee out of Fiona's hands and take a long drink.

"So how the hell did this happen?" She thSper hisses at me in complete awe.

I set my coffee down and go to the the kitchen to find the chamomile tea for Thomas.

"I sort of accidentally outed myself. One thing lead to another and we ended up having sex six times in less than two days." I say casually as I add water to my kettle.

Fiona suddenly starts faking a heart attack in the middle of my floor.

"My baby is all grown up!" She cries dramatically and I want to pour some of this water down her shirt.

She drapes her hand over her face and holds completely still, but eventually one eye pokes out and she opens her fat mouth.

"How big is it?" She asks while still laying on the ground. "I mean I can see it's big but like... gimmie a number. 7? 8?"

"We are not going to do this right now!" I yell, kicking her the the thigh.

"Closer to nine actually!" Thomas calls from my bedroom, and I just throw my head in my hands.

How do I find these weird fucking people?

"Thanks Tommy boy!" Fiona yells. "See Sophia? Was that so hard."

"I need a drink," I groan.

"I brought you coffee remember?" She asks and I roll my eyes. "Not even coffee could help me with this."

I pour Thomas his cup of tea before leaving Fiona on the floor to venture to my bedroom.

Thomas is sitting on the edge of my bed with a stupid grin on his face.

"Here's your freaking tea," I say, feigning an attitude.

"Come here darling," he calls me in a cute voice, so I set the cup down and walk into his open arms.

"That was dangerous you know? If that had been anyone but Fiona we'd have been "

"Calm down, I already knew it was her. I've had my eye on you for quite some time now, Fiona's voice is very recognizable."

I can't help but laugh at that. It really is.

"So you've been stalking me too?" I tease.

"I like to call it doing research."

"Well I'm glad you aren't a scientist because you couldn't even figure out your two dream girls were the same person,"

"Oh so that's how we're going to be?" Thomas asks as he puts his hands on my hips and kisses my neck.

"If you're going to hurt my feelings you'll need to be punished."

I feel my face grow hot just thinking of all of the things punished could mean but Fiona's voice cuts through my fantasy.

"If you're about to fuck again can I at least record it? Pervs pay top dollar to watch pretty people go at it."

"Why am I friends with you again?" I sigh.

"Because I'm amazing. Now why don't you go take a shower while Ichabod and I have a chat."

I stare at Fiona in confusion. "What are you my dad?"

"No but Clara calls me mommy so close enough."

I throw my hands in the air.

"Okay I'm out of here!"

***

Fiona POV:

Tommy boy sips his tea across from me in the living room, looking all innocent, but he can't fool me.

What kind of weirdo drinks chamomile in the morning anyways? Everyone knows chamomile is a sleepy time tea blend!

He's like a grandpa already that just so happens to still have a tight body and bitchin' weiner.

"You know why we're both here," I stare with a very powerful head nod. I have to portray dominance or else he won't take me seriously.

"Uhm, happenstance id guess?" Tomato sauce replies, playing dumb.

Happenstance? Pshhh nonsense.

"Look, I'm just gonna say it. What's your intentions with my little girl?"

"Little girl?" Tomegranate juice laughs, like this is a joke.

I make my face look more serious incase it accidentally looks like I'm joking.

"Her dad is awful at these intimidation talks so it's up to me instead. What are you here for? Some ass? A baby maker? True love? Spit it out!" I prompt loudly, leaning towards Crane Machine to show that I mean serious business.

"I can see a future with her. More accurately, I can't see one without her. This isn't just some two day sudden romance. We've technically been talking for half of a year." Tom Hanks thinks he's won me over with his response, but I can't be swayed so easily.

"Got any crazy ex girlfriends?" "Nope."

"STDs?"

"Jesus, no."

"Kids?"

"Absolutely not."

"When was your last flu shot?" "Why does that matter?"

"Hey, I'm the one asking questions here pal!" The nerve of Tom Sawyer, I swear.

"Are you always so thorough with Sophia's boyfriends?" He asks me and I shake my head no.

"She's never used the "L" word before so I've never had to. She really loves you so watch your back, Tommy Hilfiger, because if you hurt her I'll kill you probably.

***

Chapter 27

The next week was absolute bliss.

Thomas would sneak over almost every night just to sleep with me after he got all of his papers graded. I wish I had an extra key so that I could just give him one, but I'm not allowed to make copies because the land lady is a butthole.

After class when everyone has tiled out, including Michael who doesn't sit by me anymore, but obviously stares at me the whole time, I run to Thomas for one quick kiss goodbye.

Thomas told me that Michael looks at me way too much and that it bothers him. I really enjoyed that conversation though.

"I hate the way that perv watches you all day While I'm trying to teach." Thomas cringed, grabbing my hip firmly between his strong fingers.

"Oh Professor, don't tell me your jealous," I tease back, straightening his tie that's gone slightly crooked.

"Fine darling, I won't tell you," he smirks, but I kiss that handsome look right off of his face.

A part of me loves seeing Thomas being a little jealous because it's like the perf validation of his feelings for me.

He doesn't tell me he loves me too when I say it first, but that doesn't bother me. That's not something you should ever rush someone to say, and if you ever get mad at someone for not saying it back just because you're ready then your an ass hat and we can't be friends.

As much as I thought I'd hate not having a normal relationship with Thomas, there is j ust something exhilarating about knowing getting caught could ruin both of our lives.

"Woah wait? No! No Soph! whyyyyy?" Fiona yells at me now from across our lunch table.

"I just suggested we go to the gym, not amputate your arm!" I yell back, throwing a crouton at her.

"I'd give my arm before I ever burned my poor innocent calories. I don't like this boyfriend of yours, he's changing you!" Fiona cries dramatically, but I just roll my eyes.

"Boyfriend? Well that was fast wasn't it?" I whip my head around and see Michael standing at the edge of our table with his arms crossed.

"It's none of your business." I quickly defend, turning away from him.

Michael places his hands on the edge of our table and leans in towards me.

"No I'm very curious who this boyfriend of yours is."

"Back off Michael." Fiona says, about to stand up to probably punch him in the face when someone else suddenly intervenes.

"It's me, dickhead. Now why don't you leave my girl alone."

I'm absolutely mortified as I look over to whoever said that just now.

It's Isaac, and the look on his face says he's willing to fight.

Michael looks between the too of us and smirks, his smile long gone.

"Oh really? Well isn't this just funny. See ya Isaac, I'll tell Kim you said hi." Michael bumps Isaacs shoulder roughly as he walks away, but Isaac doesn‘t seem phased by it.

"Hey Isaac, why did you just say all of that? I mean I'm grateful but -"

"Can we talk, Sophia? Somewhere private?" Isaac asks me, his head of dirty blonde hair nodding towards Fiona When he says private.

All of the blood drains from my face and I look back at Fiona in terror. She gives me a nervous nod and I stand up.

"I don't see why not." I follow Isaac outside where there's considerably less people because it's still kind of cold out.

He walks until we're under a big oak tree with dead branches and a carved up trunk.

Once we're completely alone Isaac turns to look at me though his face seems awkward as he struggles with what to say.

"First I want to say thank you for telling me about Kim. You didn't have to since it didn't affect you so I really appreciate that. I'd have probably married that whore if I never found out."

I bite my lip nervously, still feeling slightly guilty that I caused Isaac the pain that's now currently etched on his face.

"I actually meant to tell you this a few hours after you told me about Kim

and Michael, but when I went to your room you weren't there. I walked by Professor Cranes room on my way to the elevator and heard... well uh." Isaac shifts uncomfortably in his spot and my heart hammers like a sweaty carpenter on the job.

"I heard you.. screaming... look I know you're sleeping with our Professor," Isaac Iinally whisper screams, his dark brown eyes not making contact with mine.

Oh boy.

"But I'm not going to tell anyone. You're both adults so who cares really, I just thought I'd do you a favor after you did me one. Everyone knows that Michael still has it out for you so... I

dunno, if you need a decoy boyfriend I can do it. I need new friends anyways, since Kim stole all of ours."

I take a moment to let everything sink in. Isaac knows that I'm in a relationship with Thomas because he literally heard us having sex? I'm so embarrassed I could die.

I look up at Isaac who kind of resembles a lost puppy and decide that I too could use more friends.

"Thank you for saving me back there, I don't know if Michael would have left otherwise. And of course thank you for not telling my secret. Thomas, or Well, Professor Crane and I are definitely involved and I'm so sorry you had to find out via sounds..." Isaac and I both awkwardly laugh for a moment but then I take initiative and smile.

"Why don't you come back in the cafeteria and have lunch with Fiona, and I. I'll introduce you guys. She's the best friend anyone could ever have."

Isaac agrees so we walk back in and regroup with Fiona. I give her the run down of everything and she bursts into laughter. "Oh no poor Isaac!" She cries, referring to hearing our professor rock my world. "It's fine actually, I was just surprised is all." He shrugs.

"How did you know it was Sophia though?" Fiona asks as she dips a fry into some ketchup,

"Please don't make me keep revealing it," Isaac begs with a blush on his cheeks.

"This is the last question I promise." Fiona prods eagerly, meanwhile I want to find the roof of this building and jump off of it.

"Well I heard 'faster Sophia, that feels good'"

"Alright that's it, I'm throwing myself off the roof." I announce dramatically but Fiona just smacks my arm.

"If you're going to break so many rules you need to build up your backbone, sweety, the world of crime will just swallow you whole." Fiona thinks she's so funny, but that's just because she is.

"Well I have to get to class anyways," I announce finally. "Try not to scare him away Fiona." I wag my finger at her then turn to Isaac "If she gets too weird on you just start talking about the Oxford comma. It puts her right to sleep."

"Thanks, I'll keep that in mind." Isaac says with a big goofy smile.

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"Well I'm not exactly thrilled by the idea, but since he already knows I suppose we don't have much of a choice," Thomas says after I explain everything to him. I called him as soon as I got home to discuss the new development in our love life.

"He's a really good guy, and I appreciate his help honestly." I reply as I pace my Whole apartment one hundred times. Seriously what's up with that? I can never hold still while I'm on the phone.

"He's a great kid actually, and very smart. Plus Im thankful that he didn't just rat us out because he very easily could have." I laugh once Thomas finishes his sentence.

"You just called him a kid. What does that make me exactly?" I ask playfully.

"That is a good point. I just see you differently I suppose. Ten years is quite an age gap. How do you feel about it?" He asks me, a hint of worry in his words.

"I love it," I reply honestly "I love how mature and experienced you are. I have never really liked guys my age and you being older only makes me more attracted to you."

Thomas laughs and it makes me smile.

"I never believed girls like you actually existed." Thomas admits and I shrug even though he obviously can't see.

"I'm just special," I tease "What about you? How do you feel about the age gap?"

"Oh I love it." Thomas says eagerly. "You're sexy and smart and every mans dream. Plus when I'm forty you will only be thirty so there will be no need for a midlife crisis."

I can't help but to giggle at his silly logic. "If we get married and you ever even think of having a mid life crisis with some younger bimbo I'll throw all of your books away!" I threaten playfully.

"If?" Thomas replies smoothly. "There is no if, darling. It's just a matter of when."

And suddenly my heart threatens to beat out of my chest.

"My my professor, what makes you think I'd even say yes?" I play hard to get because I don't have the emotional know how to answer genuinely.

"If you say no then I'll just keep asking until you fmally give in. Though I have a sneaking suspicion that you're just dying to be Sophia Lane Crane."

Oh that's terrible!

"You know what, suddenly I feel like this was a mistake. Bye Professor!" I tease into the receiver.

"Don't you dare, Sophia! You're stuck with me, darling. You have no choice. I'd hate to have to give you an A-."

So the professor knows how to play hard ball apparently.

"Fine. You win. For the sake of my A+ I will continue to love you unconditionally."

"That's my girl."

***

Chapter 28

I've got the popcorn, Isaac did you grab the drinks?" I call from the kitchen as I pour two heaping bags of popcorn into an over sized bowl.

"Yup, were all set." He replies, and I walk into my living room to see my friends all sprawled out on my furniture. Fiona and Clara are huddled on my couch with a bunch of blankets like a moat around them.

Isaac is sitting on my love seat with his legs crossed and a pillow over his lap.

"Where am I supposed to sit?" I ask as I set the popcorn down on the coffee table. Fiona and Clara scoot down and adjust their blankets just enough for me to squeeze in next to Clara.

I sit down and they throw some of their warm moat on to my lap, and I can already tell I'll probably fall asleep before this movie is even half way over.

"Hit play, Zac!" Fiona tells Isaac who leans up and grabs the remote off of the coffee table. The movie starts up and we all settle in.

It's crazy to me that sitting in this room are four friends instead of two. It's just been Fiona and I for so long but it seems like just over night our numbers have doubled. Isaac has taken to us so easily. He's smart enough to talk to me about in depth literary concepts but witty enough to keep up with Fiona‘s sarcastic quips.

He even gets along with Clara though it seems that they don't have a whole lot in common. In fact I just don't think Clara gets along with straight men very much at all. Maybe she's had some past had experiences. It's none of my business either way.

It takes all of twenty minutes before I hear the subtle snoring of Isaac as his head hangs back on my love seat. Fiona's head has started bobbing and Clara looks like she won't last much longer either.

We're a bunch of twenty something year olds and it's Friday night yet we're about to fall asleep at nine-thirty? I think not!

I lean up and clap my hands loudly.

"Wake the hell up losers!" I shout and everyone starts to come alive. "We're not going down like this! Grab your jackets, we're going dancing!" I add as I hop to my feet. Fiona stretches and Isaac rubs some drool off of his mouth.

"I can't dance," he admits through a groggy version of his voice. "Doesn't matter, you're going with three girls. You don't really need to know how," I argue. He stands up and starts slipping on his shoes "tine but if any dudes hit on me because they think I'm your gay bff it's on you."

Fiona and Clara laugh as they too start to stand up. "Don't knock it till you try it," Clara says with a wink.

"Who are you and what have you done to my best friend?" Fiona asks at my sudden extroverted willingness.

"Blame it on my fantastic sex life!" I joke, making everyone fake gag at my expense.

I offer them my middle finger in response. Having friends is really fun.

We all make ourselves decent and pile into Fiona's car. I send Thomas a text to inform him of the change of plans, not because I have to of course, but because I want to.

Sophia

Were headed off to The GoodNight for some drinks and dancing. I wish we could be seen together.

Thomas

Me too, darling, but I actually live near there. Have Fiona drop you off after?

Sophia That sounds like an amazing idea, I'll see you in a few hours baby xo

Thomas

I can't wait. The thought of other men trying to dance with you is making me really want to claim what's mine.

I bite my lip, desperately trying to keep the sexual fantasies from ravaging my psyche, but it's proving futile.

I'm going to try to enjoy myself tonight, but all I can really think about is getting into Thomas's bed. I've got it so bad for this man, but my romance novel has never been steamier.

"Wow it's packed in here," Fiona complains as we make our way through the pool of sweaty bodies to the bar.

"What's your poison ladies? It's on me." Isaac offers. "Vodka Cranberry," Clara requests as she grinds against Fiona's crotch, already feeling the music. "Nothin for me," Fiona says "I gotta get us all home safe."

"Proud if you, Fi," Isaac says with a smile then points to me "what Can I get ya Soph?" I think for a moment before saying "make it a whiskey."

Everyone looks at me like I'm a middle aged man but I just roll my eyes. I've never had it before so I want to give it a try. I want to know what Thomas's drink of choice tastes like.

Isaac gives our order to the bartender, a very flamboyant man in a tight white t-shirt that gives Isaac elevator eyes. "Out for a night with the girls?" The bartender asks as he fixes our drinks.

"Uh Yeah, I guess you could say that." Isaac replies, oblivious to the flirtatious undertones in the bartenders voice. "Hands off, tiger, he's mine." I say playfully as I link my arms with Isaacs. The bartender looks dejected but he recovers quickly.

"Well you're a lucky girl, fuck em once for me will ya?" He teases and Isaac proceeds to choke on his own spit. "Oh definitely!" I play along and grab the drinks that have been prepared for us.

"What are you, a dick magnet?" I ask Isaac with a laugh as I distribute our drinks to their rightful owners "Yeah

I think so, it always happens. I don't know why. Thanks for claiming me. I think that guy was about to throw me in his car and take me home for dinner."

"More like dessert." Fiona laughs. "God you're so funny baby!" Clara cheers and shoves her boozy tongue down Fiona's throat.

"I think that's our cue to walk away," Isaac says with a disturbed look on his face. "Yeah, I agree."

We both walk away from the lesbian porno happening near the bar then start haphazardly dancing in the middle of the floor.

"Hey, why don't I be your wing man?" I suggest after an awful sip of whiskey.

Why the hell does Thomas drink this?

"Wing man? What do you mean?" Isaac asks after a quick swing of his beer. "I mean pick a pretty girl and I'll help you flirt with her."

Isaac rises an eyebrow at me "how would you be helpful with that exactly?"

I take another sip from my glass.

"1 saw a movie once where this totally worked. Just trust me." I beg Isaac who starts laughing.

"Are you already tipsy?" He asks in disbelief.

"Psssh What? No. Me? No." I say with a giggle, but it turns to a pout when Isaac takes my glass from me. "I think you should stick to girly drinks."

"Hey give it back!" I whimper but Isaac shakes his head no. "Professor Crane already challenges his morals to sleep with you at all but I think he'd put his foot down if you were shit faced."

Well when you put it like that.

"Fine, I won't drink but let's still get you a girl. Someone nothing like Kim."

I scan the bar to look for a girl whose both pretty and single. Eventually my eyes fall on a tall hot blonde girl.

"Found one," I say confidently.

"Found one? Why do you get to pick?" He questions scandalously. "Because when you picked you ended up With hoezilla."

"Okay good point." Isaac sighs in defeat.

"Follow me." I instruct Isaac as I start walking towards the blonde girl and her friends.

I turn to face Isaac once we're in ear shot of the girls, and I nod subtly at the tall blonde.

"That one good?" I whisper yell, causing Isaac to double over laughing.

"We're not shopping for produce," he laughs at me but I roll my eyes.

"Get it together Isaac, this is serious." I say with my hands on my hips.

"Fine Fine." He replies "I'm cool. Yes the blonde female human is very appealing to me."

"Good, now follow my lead."

I take a moment to get into character before stating very loudly "I'm sorry Isaac but we can't see each other anymore."

"Excuse me?" Isaac asks, barely keeping it together.

"You're a phenomenal lover but my body just can't handle your sexual appetite anymore. You're just too much of a man for me!" I pretend to cry now, and Isaac looks like he's about to pee his pants from holding in his laughter.

"What do you want me to do, Sophia? I have needs!" He manages to play along back.

"Find someone else, Isaac, I'm just not woman enough for you!" I turn and storm off, making sure to walk past the blonde girl whose looking at us in disbelief by now.

"Sorry you had to see that, he's just such an animal in bed. Maybe you'd have a better chance than me since you're just so pretty," I say to her before dramatically storming off.

I make my way towards Fiona and Clara, and when I look back the pretty blonde girl is ferociously flirting with Isaac.

"I think doll face can speak for herself, lesbo," the guy says to Fiona. I feel anger boiling over in my stomach.

"Don't touch me and don't talk to my friend like that!" I yell, getting in the mans face.

"Kitty has claws, I like that. You can scratch me all night long pussy cat."

I groan in disgust before turning back to Clara and Fiona. "Let's just get out of here," I suggest.

They agree but as we start walking away the guy grabs my arm and pulls me against his chest.

"Let me go, perv!" I yell and slap him across the face.

Fiona is calling my name from behind me but the large crown has separated us.

The stranger didn't like being slapped so in return he's got me wrapped up in both of his arms, squeezing so tight I can barely breathe.

"Bad move, baby doll." He threatens but before he has a chance to do any damage to me I'm ripped violently from the mans arms.

I notice the smell of my savior before I even get the chance to look at him.

Thomas.

"Get out or I will really kill you." Thomas says with an eerie calm in his voice. He‘s pushed me behind him protectively, but even though I can't see his face I can feel just how I imposing he is right now.

He's strong and masculine and I know now isn't the time, but it's really turning me on.

"Whatever, dude. She's not even worth the trouble." The guy says and I feel Thomas start to move towards him but I grab his arm and pull him back.

"Let's just go," I beg, pulling Thomas around to look at me. As our eyes meet rage softens into concern.

He nods his head and we both start moving towards the exit. Once we're outside we're greeted by Clara and Fiona.

"Oh thank fucking goodness!" Fiona cries as she wraps me in a big hug.

"I'm okay." I promise her, patting her back.

"Holy crap that worked!" I squeal, causing Clara and Fiona to look over at Isaac as well.

"What worked?" Clara asks

"I think I just got Isaac laid," I announce triumphantly.

"Whoa but she's way too pretty for him!" Fiona says with a shocked tone to her voice.

"That, my friends, is the power of sexual intrigue."

We all laugh and dance together for quite a while, and I even give in to the suggestive grinding coming from both Clara and Fiona.

We dance erotically in a circle like we don't have a care in the world, but eventually I feel an unfamiliar groin against my ass.

"Gosh baby, you're so perfect.“

A mans voice says from behind me causing me to quickly turn around and create some distance.

"Hey, hands off buddy!" Fiona says, pulling me away from the strange guy who looks like he probably drives a lifted truck and has a tribal tattoo.

"It's my job to protect you but some fat lady shoved me away. I'm sorry."

"It isn't your job to protect me, Fi. It's peOples jobs to not be perverts," I argue. "But still." She adds dejectedly.

"Thank you, Thomas." Fiona says finally to Thomas and they actually seem to share a moment of mutual trust and understanding.

"Where's Isaac?" I ask and Clara answers this time.

"Him and Blonde girl left like ten minutes ago."

"Well good for him at least," I say with a smile.

Suddenly I feel Thomas's hand clasp with mine. "I'm taking her home With me," He says more than asks and Fiona nods her head. We say goodbye and then Thomas leads me towards his apartment that's in walking distance.

"Why were you here?" I ask him finally and he responds by placing his hand around my waist and squeezing me tightly against his chest.

"I don't want to tell you, but I suppose it's obvious isn't it." He says bitterly. I run my fingers against his jaw where stubble has started to sprout up.

"Tell me," I prompt him, noticing familiar dark circles underneath his eyes and the smell on his breath.

"I was horribly jealous." He admits, embarrassment obvious on his face. I know he doesn't want to be that guy. The one who hates when his girl goes out, but I have a suspicion that these thoughts aren't his own.

"You've been drinking." I state and he locks his jaw. "I suppose I have."

"Why do you drink so much?" I ask, finally brave enough to put it out there. "You were drinking tonight too." He counters but I roll my eyes.

"I drink socially. You drink alone at night."

Thomas releases me and rubs the back of his neck. He grabs my hand and starts pulling me towards his apartmen again as he tries to find his words.

"I drink when I'm stressed or when something really bothers me. It numbs the emotions." He offers me as a response.

"It has to do more than that," I counter "I had one glass tonight but Isaac cut me off because it messed me up so effortlessly."

Thomas bites his lip but doesn't speak.

"Do you think you might have a problem?" I ask him, trying to get him to look at me but he doesn't.

"No. I don't have a problem. It isn't an addiction, Sophia. A crutch maybe, but not an addiction." He releases my hand.

I can see the shame spread across Thomas's face like a wild fire so I choose to drop the subject for the evening. He can't fool me though, he definitely has a problem, but if I push too hard I know he's just push back harder.

I grab his hand back and entwine our fingers.

"Well I'm glad you came tonight," I say happily. "You saved me, and you did something else." I say with a teasing grin.

"And what was that?" He asks, turning to face me just outside his door.

"You made me incredibly horny." I say bluntly, the confldence in my words sparking something behind Thomas's eyes.

"Then let me show you just how hungry a man can be when he's jealous." Thomas says with an animalistic growl, grabbing my body and pressing it roughly against his own.

His hands search my curves, grabbing and squeezing everything he lands on.

His lips and tongue hungrily suck at my neck and I can feel the throbbing hardness that's torturing him as it stabs into my stomach.

I moan sharply at his sudden ferocity. I've never left so weak or feminine before in my life.

Thomas kisses up my neck and stops against my ear to whisper seductively against my tender skin.

"Tonight, I'm going to ruin you for any other man for the rest of your life."

To be continued...

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"What worked?" Clara asks

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we don't have a care in the world, but eventually I feel an unfamiliar groin against my ass.

"Damn baby, you're fucking perfect.“

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Chapter 29

Mature AF

Thomas's lock clicks and his door swings open. He pulls me inside effortlessly and flips on the light, illuminating our play ground. I don't have time to examine my surroundings because Thomas's lips come down on mine With such an intense fury that it almost knocks me off of my feet.

Thomas means business, and with the way he's pulling at my jeans and looking at me with those cloudy blue eyes I know he meant what he said.

Tonight he's going to ruin me.

I wrap my arms around Thomas's neck and he places his strong hands on my waist, lifting me up. My legs instinctively wrap around his hips and he carries me through his apartment until I'm set down on a lush mattress with a very aroused man between my burning thighs.

His hands find the hem of my shirt and rip it off of me as quickly as they can. He looks down at me, his face predatory. "It's not fair. What you do to me. To my senses." He growls as he leans down to kiss my chest and shoulders.

"What do I do?" I say through a shaky voice.

"I like to think I have self control, Sophia. I like to think that I'm a good man, but with you... for petes sake with you I have no control at all. With you I'm not satisfied until I'm making you scream my name."

I swallow hard at Thomas's words. His hands wrap around me to remove my bra and I'm happy to see it go.

"I'm yours, Thomas. I will always be yours."

Thomas leans back and pulls his own shirt off, the angle causing his unbelievably hard erection to press between my legs. I moan softly and he grins down at me.

"And I'm yours, darling."

Thomas comes back down to kiss my breasts, his tongue dancing across my nipples causing them to harden even more.

His words are just as pleasurable as his actions and my panties suffer for it.

I arch against his body, his weight keeping me helplessly and wonderfully pinned in place.

Thomas grinds slowly against me, exploring every inch of my exposed upper body. We kiss deeply, our mouths not breaking even to breathe. Tasting him is my oxygen, and that's all I need.

Thomas starts undoing my jeans and then slips them off of my legs. His gaze lingers on my panties as he slowly bites his lip. I'm almost certain the soft grey color of them has given my arousal away.

"I love how easily I turn you on." Thomas growls, relishing in the mostly naked woman beneath him. A blush scorches my cheeks, but I try to hide it. I'm not embarrassed under his gaze, but my body can't help but react anyway.

Thomas wraps two of his fingers around the band of my panties and pulls them to the side, exposing my slick pink skin.

I've never seen him like this before. He's so dominating and masculine, as if the thought of another man touching me has driven him mad.

Without another seconds hesitation Thomas's hot mouth connects between my legs, and I moan sharply in surprise

My thin fingers grip his dark brown hair, and I wrap my legs across his shoulders.

He buries his beautiful face between my legs and send me over the edge almost immediately

"That feels so good," I whimper as Thomas's tongue teases my sensitive folds.

"I'm just getting started," he promises me with a devastating smile before yanking my panties down and leaving them wrapped around my knees.

Thomas crawls up to kiss me roughly on the mouth, my own taste still lingering on his tongue, but I couldn't care less. His fingers Iind my eager entrance and two of them slide inside of me slowly at first but then expertly, hitting every tender spot that they can reach.

I moan into Thomas's mouth and grind against his teasing fingers. His thumb finds my clit and begins circling it with slippery pressure.

Eventually kissing is futile as I grip Thomas's skin, his fingers making me come effortlessly.

"Already? This is going to be a fun night, Darling," Thomas piers in my ear, removing his fingers from between my trembling thighs.

I instantly ache for him to put them back, or even better, fuck me, but he doesn't.

He stands on the side of the bed and unbuckles his pants. They fall down and catch at his thighs, exposing his bulge perfectly.

"Come here," He tells me, confidence dropping from his masculine voice like poison.

I crawl across the bed to his crotch and smile up at him. His hand caresses my head before tangling in my hair and squeezing just enough to to show dominance.

Thomas's free hand pulls his boxer briefs down to meet his pants and suddenly I'm staring at his imposing erection with gnawing anticipation.

I grab his thick shaft, knowing just what he wants, and I press my lips to his tip.

The slow teasing doesn't sit well with Thomas so he tightens his grip through my hair and guides his cock to the back of my throat.

Every muscle in my body tightens in desperate arousal as I'm gaged on his perfect manhood. He moves my head back for air. I gasp for a few breaths before I'm back against his crotch, the tip of him tickling my tonsils. He coerces me for several pumps as he basically fucks my throat.

As he groans the sound nearly makes me come again, my perverted mind getting off on just knowing this dick is mine and mine alone.

When Thomas finally pulls his throbbing erection from my mouth I know I look like a slutty mess.

My hair is in totally disarray and I'm gasping, the slightest remnants of drool dripping down my chin.

Thomas and I make eye contact for a moment and I see his whole body tense. I can pin point the exact moment that he decides its time to fuck me flash across his eyes.

He doesn't bother completely removing his pants or even my panties. He just grabs me and maneuvers me onto my knees facing away from him.

Still standing on the side of the bed, Thomas thrusts into me hard and deep making me cry out in shocked pleasure.

He doesn't slow down from there. Thomas pounds into me roughly, his hands digging into my skin for support and my fingers grabbing fistfuls of wrinkled sheets as I moan and scream without restraint or respect for his neighbors.

"Holy cow, Thomas!" I cry out, my voice half muffled as my face is pressed into the mattress. I know so many big words, but right now all I can manage to say is gosh as he disrespects me doggy style.

He starts slowing down but pushes even deeper as his hands dart foreword, grabbing handfuls of my hair.

I can feel my body start to break as he gives me pleasure like I've never known before. I feel the peak of an orgasm rupture through my core but Thomas doesn't stop. He thrusts into me over and over, making me come over and over Without fail.

Eventually Thomas pulls out to switch our position. "I want to see your face," He groans as he finally fully removes my panties and his pants.

I lay on my back on his bed and he crawls between my spread thighs, wasting no time before burning himself deep inside me.

"God you feel amazing," Thomas says, almost in disbelief.

His lips find mine and we kiss sloppily as he ravishes my body. The whole bed shakes as he thrusts harder and faster, making me scream his name, profanities, and sins loudly for the world to hear.

"I'm going to come," Thomas says as he leans back, our eyes locking. I'm drunk on the sensation of his cock as it destroys my life as I know it.

I can feel he's about to bust and something happens silently as our eyes stay locked. We both want the same thing and he doesn't even have to say it.

Thomas thrusts into me one more time and then I feel warmth filling me up as he comes inside of me.

The look on his face is unlike anything I've ever seen as he rocks in and out until every bit of his orgasm is spilled between my raw thighs.

Thomas eventually pulls out and looks down at my broken body with lust filled satisfaction.

He slowly leans over my body and I think he's about to kiss me but he does something else instead. Something completely unexpected.

He lowers his lips against my ear and whispers with complete certainty.

"I love you."

***

Chapter 30

I walk beside Isaac who keeps apologizing to me over and over again.

"It isn't your fault," I promise him again as we walk across campus. The air is finally getting a little warmer, and the grass is growing back in droves.

"It was still selfish of me to ditch three pretty girls in a bar for a one night stand, that was great by the way, thank you." I laugh with Isaac and pat his back.

"Just a one time thing? Why didn't you get her number?" I ask and Isaac shrugs.

"I didn't really want it. She wasn't really my type other than being hot."

"Fair enough."

From a distance I see Fiona start to jog towards us, her art portfolio swaying in the cool breeze like a wind sail and her huge boobs trying to hit her in the face.

I look over briefly at Isaac who has his eyes trained of Fiona with a look on his face that I Instantly recognize because it's how Thomas looks at me.

"Isaac do you.."

"What?" He asks, his head snapping to look at me.

"Nothing." I say, shaking my head as Fiona reaches us.

"Hey losers," She greets us with a playful grin. "You guys wanna come over tonight? I gotta sketch people so I figured I'd exploit my friends,"

"I'm in but I have to work at the library flrst. Is it good?" I ask. "Works for me. Clara is coming too." Fiona looks at Isaac now.

"You comin?" She asks eagerly.

"Wouldn't miss it," he responds with a signature Isaac smile, but now I question if its genuine.

"Cool, See ya later bitches," Fiona says as she blows us a kiss and runs off to her next class.

"Man she'll give you whiplash won't she?" Isaac comments but his smile falls When he notices the way I'm watching him.

"What?" He asks, gnawing into his cheek.

"Do you want to talk about it?" I offer.

"Nope," he responds and shoves his hands in his pockets.

Isaac turns towards the parking lot since his classes are over for the day. "Bye!" I yell sarcastically at his back and he pulls a hand from his pocket to wave at me.

Sensitive subject I suppose.

***

My days at the library have been spent daydreaming now that I have something in my life to fantasize about.

I can't stop thinking about last Friday. After Thomas rendered me a sweaty mess on his bed I finally got to hear the words I had been dying to for so long.

"I love you." His voice was heavenly, and as I lay there basking in the residual sensations still ravaging my senses I felt like I could die happy right there.

We stayed in bed for so long after that, kissing each other and resting in aftermath of the most emotionally charged experience we've ever been apart of.

Eventually, Thomas went to draw us a bath where I spent as much time as I could until the water grew cold straddling him and talking to him about anything and everything I could think of.

And then we spent the rest of the night trying to see who could make the other orgasm more. Thomas won.

Nothing about the way we feel for each other should be forbidden. Loving someone this much isn't something you should ever have to hide but here we are, stealing kissing and dodging curious glances.

"Careful Sophia, you're about to fall out of your chair." A voice laughs at me, pulling me from my beautiful day dream.

"What do you need, Michael?" I ask as I straighten myself up and pretend to be organizing returned books.

"Glad you asked, babe, I need a book on Karl Marx please and thank you." He winks at me and smirks but I roll my eyes.

"Follow me, and don't call me babe." I say bitterly.

Michael starts following me through the rows of shelves until I find the right section.

"You know there was once a time you weren't so cold towards me," Michael points out, crossing his arms over his chest.

"Yes, well you made the mistake of showing your true colors didn't you?" I snap back, not buying the charmer attitude he's trying to use on me.

"I had a weak moment, you were the one who showed their colors. Not me."

"I don't know what your talking about," I accuse, pointing to the book he needs. "If its a sociology report you're needing to do then this book will get the job done." I turn to leave but Michael puts his hand on my shoulder.

"Not so fast, I'm not done." He says, his voice growing angry.

He pulls me effortlessly back and shoves me against the sturdy book shelves.

"I told you I loved you but you tell me you don't even like me. I try to be kind to you but you tell me you want someone else. I kiss you and you blow up on me. How am I the villain in this?" He hisses. I had thought he would be over this. Over me by now but I can see that's not the case.

"Let me go, Michael." I demand, trying to wriggle out of his hold.

"Then a week later you're doing it with Isaac? No I don't buy that. You're just trying to make me jealous. You don't go from a man like me to a boy like that." My face grows hot with rage as Michael keeps talking.

"Isaac is a wonderful man and he has more love and compassion in his pinky finger than you do in your whole body! You can't fool me anymore." I say spitefully.

Michael growls angrily at my words.

For a moment I'm afraid he's going to hit me, or worse kiss me, but he doesn't get the chance.

"You heard the woman, now let her go." An eerily calm voice sounds from my left and standing there is a very relaxed looking Thomas Crane holding a book on old boats.

His face says calm but his body language says something else entirely.

Michael instantly lets me go and storms off in a huff. As soon as We're both certain Michael has left the library Thomas's book hits the floor and he wraps me in a long tight hug.

"Why does everyone think they can just touch you," He seethes in a whisper against my ear. I hold him back just as tight.

"I don't know. I don't like it either." I reply solemnly. Thomas releases me and we both regain our composure.

"Can I see you tonight?" He asks me in a hushed voice as he tries to swallow back the anger as it threatens to rip him apart.

"Every night," I smile back and his face softens. I know we both want to kiss goodbye so badly but it's not worth the risk.

I walk with Thomas back to the front desk where I help him rent his book and he leaves.

Shortly afterwards Isaac arrives to take me to Fiona's like we promised.

"Alright, what's wrong?" Isaac asks once he's noticed we've been quiet for far too long.

"It's nothing." I lie as I watch the street lights go by.

Isaac pulls over to the curb and turns the radio down.

"Talk to me, and if you say I wouldn't understand if you told me I'm kicking you out of my car," Isaac threatens and I audibly groan.

"If I talk then you talk." I bargain.

"Fine," Isaac agrees "but it doesn‘t leave this car."

We shake hands to seal our oath of secrecy then I start telling Isaac about what happened.

"When will that asshole leave you alone?" Isaac says through clenched teeth.

"I don't know, but I'm honestly getting scared. I don't know if he's the kind of guy who'd actually hurt me or not, but I don't like thinking he would." Isaac puts his hand on my shoulder and squeezes. "I'll be damned if I let him, or Fiona or Professor Crane for that matter. You have people watching out for you, and if Michael doesn't leave you alone I'd pay to see what Fiona does to him."

"Thanks Isaac, I feel a little better. I just don't want to tell Fiona because she's freak out."

"I understand."

"Speaking of Fiona, it‘s your turn to spill. Do you have feelings for her?"

Isaac runs his hand through his curly blonde hair and sighs. I can‘t help but smile because that's something I do all of the time.

"It's absolutely stupid isn't it! I dunno," Isaac shrugs "She's Nothing like Kim and that's fan-tactic. She's so strong and beautiful and unique."

He stops talking to rub his eyes and gather his thoughts. "Why do I always do this? I always choose people who could never love me."

"Awh, Isaac," I say with a sigh. "How did this even happen so fast? I didn't even think you'd be ready to move on yet" I ask curiously.

"I've hung out with her a few times one on one, but it's been completely platonic. She's with Clara after all which is really confusing for me because it's really hard to be pining for a lesbian. But her charm and smile didn't even give me a fighting chance, Soph"

Isaac looks genuinely shook as he stares at his steering wheel.

"I mean technically she's Bi, and since were being honest... Clara actually liked me first."

"Wait, What?" Isaac says, his eyes locking onto mine.

"Yeah, she seemed to be hung up on me so I set her up with Fiona instead because I'm straight."

"Does Fi know?" I shake my head no with guilty eyes.

"I'm sure It will never come up anyways," I say mostly to ease myself than Isaac.

"Well let's hope." Isaac agrees. I lay my head on his shoulder and we share a bonding moment of self pity.

Eventually he puts the car in drive and speeds on to Fiona's house.

12 Midnight.

One AM

One-thirty

Isaac dropped me off at home at eleven, and Thomas said he'd be over at eleven-thirty.

Two AM.

He isn't returning my texts or calls, so eventually I decide I should get some sleep.

I lay awake in my bed tossing and turning.

Why would he stand me up? Why wouldn't he be answering? What if he's injured?

What if he's with someone else?

A thousand scenarios cut through my mind and cause me to lay awake until

the sun starts peering in through my curtains.

6AM

Knock Knock Knock

***

Chapter 31

I run to my door and rip it open as fast as I can. Standing in my door way is Thomas looking like hell in his navy blue suit. The tie is barely hanging on and his dress shirt is mostly untucked. I also notice one shoe is untied and the other is covered in mud.

"Darling I'm so sorry -"

"Sorry? Where have you been Thomas?" I ask angrily, not letting him come inside.

He looks pained at my outburst, but I don't care. Anger is boiling in my veins as I look at Thomas's dark circles and five o'clock shadow.

"For fucks sake, were you drinking again?" I ask once the smell hits my senses. He hangs his head in shame, and I just throw my hands in the air in defeat.

"Why?!" I yell, pulling Thomas's tie complete off. "And why do you look like you've been mugged?"

"I just thought I'd have one drink when I got home, but as I waited for you and thought of that bastard touching you I drank more. Before I knew it time had flown by and it was time to come over but honestly I could hardly stand."

I roll my eyes as Thomas tells me his aggravating story.

"I think I decided to walk here, but I blacked out. I don't have my phone, wallet, or keys but I don't think... I don't think."

Suddenly Thomas is pushing past me and running for my bathroom. Once he's there he heaves loudly into the toilet, throwing up what sounds like his entire stomach.

As much as I want to be angry I just can't be. Thomas walked here in a drunken stupor just to see me even though he really should have stayed home. I can punish him for drinking too much but I can't punish him for loving me.

I place my hand in his back and rub it in small circles.

"I'm going to go get my phone and you're going to cancel class, then you're taking a shower." I say and leave the room to get my phone.

When I come back in Thomas is sitting on the bathroom floor with his head in his hands. "Thomas?" I ask once he doesn't lift his head up.

He ignores me, staring daggers at the linoleum.

"Thomas." I repeat more urgently and his head slowly lifts up revealing blood shot wet eyes.

A rogue tear drips down his face and it causes me to suck in a sharp breath. My heart aches and I close the distance between us.

I drop to my knees and wrap my arms around his neck. Thomas buries his head in the nook of my shoulder and squeezes me so tightly I can hardly breathe.

"I don't really deserve you, Sophia." Thomas's voice breaks in my ear. I hold him tighter and shake my head. "You're the only one who does." I argue in return.

"There are things about my past that I avoid talking about, but maybe it's best that we do." Thomas says with disdain. "I think that's a good idea. I actually think we should take a trip. E-mail your students then I'll call Fiona."

Thomas tries to question me, but I give him no answers. After he's cancelled his classes for the day I call Fiona and tell her I need to borrow her car.

She obviously agrees, and tells me that she will be over in about an hour so that she can get ready for class before she drops it off.

I turn on the shower for Thomas who is leaning against my sink with his eyes closed. He looks like he's barely managed to brush his teeth without falling over.

I test the water to make sure it isn't too hot then walk over to him and start unhuttoning his dress shirt.

He puts his hand over mine to stop me. "Why are you so forgiving?" He asks me with weary blue eyes. "You've not done anything in need of forgiveness Thomas." I respond, my fingers going back to undoing buttons.

"I've disappointed you. I made you worry and I stood you up." He argues, but I just shake my head.

He's sick, he didn't hurt me on purpose, but I don't know how to relay that to him without him continuing to deny that there's a problem.

"You didn't hurt me. The other you did," I say simply as I try to weave a picture for Thomas.

He looks at me curiously as I help pull his arms out of his dress shirt sleeves. "What do you mean by other me?" Thomas asks, so I elaborate.

I don't quite believe what I'm saying, but I have to word this perfectly so he will accept help.

"When you're drunk you make bad decisions Thomas, and those decisions often hurt me. You don't make them, the man I love doesn't make those decisions. The other version of yourself does. I blame him, not you."

I'm not a physiatrist, but I feel like this will work better than yelling. Thomas loves me, so I have to use myself against him.

Thomas furrows his eye brows at me "How many times have I hurt you?" He asks me, but I don't want to answer.

"Three," I finally say once I've thought it through.

Thomas's pants fall to the ground after I undo his buckle and zipper.

"The first time was when you called kissing me a mistake. You only kissed me because you had been drinking." My fingers pull at the waist band of Thomas's underwear but once again he stops my hands, suddenly not comfortable with that level of intimacy.

"The second time was when you decided not to trust me and came to the bar, even though that obviously turned out to be a good thing." I move my hands away from his waist band and rest them on Thomas's chest. "You were jealous because you were drinking." I add to bring the point full circle.

"And the third time was last night as I lay awake not knowing if you were hurt or with someone else."

Thomas's jaw falls open slightly and he looks down at me with burning eyes. "I would never..." he starts, but I put my fingers softly against his lips.

"All of these things were caused because you had been drinking. You have no self control when you're drunk, but when you're sober you give me the most wonderful experiences of my life." I kiss Thomas's neck and he lets his head rest on my shoulder.

"I'm so sorry." He whispers.

"I know." I reply simply.

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I grab Thomas's hand and place it over my beating heart. "Then don't."

Time seems to stand still as Thomas helps me out of my clothes and we both step into the running water. It helps wake me up, my own eyelids getting heavy from the lack of sleep.

Every nerve in my body is begging me to make a move on Thomas and coerce him into taking me in the shower, but I know that isn't appropriate right now. I'm trying to get a message across and giving into him so soon after he hurt me would be counter productive.

We dry off and dress ourselves. I let Thomas wear the sweat pants that I had originally stole and he finds some of his other clean clothes in my drawers to supplement an entire outfit.

It looks like an entirely different man is standing in front of me now. Thomas looks so relaxed and chill. His hands are haphazardly shoved into grey sweatpants, his shirt is advertising a rock band, and his hair is completely product free, laying across his forehead and making him look at least five years younger.

It's incredible how he can manage to be the most handsome man I've ever seen no matter what he's wearing.

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"Well have fun playing hooky!" She says with a big smile directed at me. Fiona says goodbye to Thomas and walks out of the door.

"Will you tell me where we're going yet?" Thomas asks me once we're alone again.

"Don't worry about the destination, my love. Just worry about the ride."

We get into Fiona's car and I head on down the highway. Thomas looks dead tired beside me which I understand, but we need to talk so he can't go to sleep yet.

"You said you had some things to talk about?" I mention and Thomas nods.

"This is hard for me, Sophia, but you're important to me." He starts, and I put a hand on his leg.

"I'm actually from Missouri, but as soon as I got a job offer far away I jumped at the idea." Thomas rubs his slightly prickly chin as he remembers.

"I went to MU for school pretty much full ride for academics and fell in love with teaching, but the whole time I was dealing with a nightmare at home. My father lived his life at the bottom of a bottle and I can't ever really remember seeing him sober. My mom passed away when I was born, but he blamed me. He 'raised' me because it was the law, but Love was in short supply. I buried myself in books and stories to fill the void. I learned what true love was from Shakespeare." Thomas stops and puts his hand on my hand that's resting on his leg, and it makes my chest hurt.

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***

Chapter 33

I pull into my parents drive way and the sudden stop wakes up Thomas who has been silently sleeping in the passenger seat for over an hour.

"We're here," I say softly, a yawn following soon after. I'm so freaking tired that it's a miracle I didn't kill us both on this drive.

"And where is here exactly?" Thomas asks as he stretches his long limbs.

"This is my parents house," I finally tell him and he near jumps out of his skin.

"I'm about to meet your parents? In sweat pants? Gosh Sophia that's not fair." He groans as he runs his hands over his face in disdain.

"They don't care what you're wearing, and they already know we're coming so let's go inside."

"Why are we here, though? It hardly feels like meeting your parents is the solution to our problem."

I know Thomas is probably angry now, but that's too bad. "It will make sense soon, now come on." I say forcefully to Thomas who complies by unbuckling himself and opening his door.

Thomas doesn't seem very eager as he steps out of the car, but he doesn't have much of a choice. As I open up the mahogany front door I see his back stiffen.

"I'm home dad," I call out into the empty foyer, my own voice echoing off of the ivory walls.

"In the den, sweetheart." He calls back so I grab Thomas's arm to lead him through the House. Thomas looks around my childhood home with big nervous eyes.

I told him my parents were well off but for some reason he still looks surprised.

"Hey," I say to my dad once I enter the den. He's sitting at his desk scribbling away on some documents. My father is a lawyer so he's probably working on a case from home.

"Hello, sir." Thomas says nervously as we stand in the entryway to the den.

I stifle a laugh as my thirty-one year old Professor is reduced to a nervous teenager meeting his girlfriends dad for the first time.

"Hey baby doll," my dad says happily as he lifts his attention from his work. "Young man why don't you have a seat." My dad says as he addresses Thomas who looks like he could turn and run at any moment.

My mom told my dad about my older boyfriend the second I got done telling her about New-York (I left some details out though) so my dad knows. He's not that he's all that trilled about the age gap but he knows there's nothing he can do about it.

I called my dad after I called Fiona and told him that Thomas was struggling with drinking because I knew my dad would know how to get through to him more than I ever could. I just hope Thomas forgives me for selling him out.

I push Thomas into the room towards the chairs that are stationed opposite my father.

"Well I'm exhausted, I'm going to go lay down." I say suddenly and make a run for my bedroom before Thomas can object.

I'm so exhausted I barely even feel my head hit my pillow before I'm dead asleep.

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Thomas POV:

Oh no what has she gotten me in to?

I sit as frozen as stone across from Sophia's father Who looks to only be about Iifteen years older than me. He's greying and wise looking with an air to him that makes him seem gentle and kind.

"So you're in love with my daughter then?" He asks me, not really a question but more of a statement.

I nod my head and swallow. "Yes sir, that's right."

"Call me Howard," He says to me and I nod my head in acknowledgment.

"Well if you're going to love her then there's something you have to learn right now, young man. Sophia does not need you."

My mouth falls open at his words and I stare at him in disbelief.

"She is the strongest and smartest woman I've ever seen, and if you give her a reason she will toss you away like yesterday's garbage. Believe me, she gets it from her mother. That girl doesn't need anyone, she just lets people be in her life if they want to be. She's too nice for her own good"

"What has she told you?" I ask Howard nervously, afraid my first impression was blown before I even sat down.

"She told me enough. That's why I have a story to tell you." Howard pushes a small brown box towards me.

"Cigar?"

"No thank you."

"Very well." He responds as he chooses one for himself.

Howard lights his cigar then puffs it twice. After a few moments of silence he rolls up a sleeve on his dress shirt and shows me a scar on his arm that runs from his wrist to his elbow.

"I got this scar twelve years ago because I didn't listen when Diane, Sophia's mother, told me she'd leave me ifI didn't get my act together. I told myself I was a social drinker, but really I was a high class alcoholic. She loaded her stuff up in her van one night, along with Sophia, and told me she was never coming back. I punched through our front window out of anger. I got lucky that night because Diane had to come back and drive me the hospital or else I'd have bled to death. I convinced her to stay with me one last time as I lay in that hospital bed, and I haven't had a drop of alcohol since."

I'm completely shocked as I listen to Howard's story, my hands are shaking and I can feel myself start to sweat.

Sophia is so good at handling my drunken disappointments because she's already been here before.

Howard stops to taste his cigar more and I just sit here as the realization finally sinks in that I have to change.

For Sophia, and for myself.

"You know i always heard that women pick a man that reminds them off their father, I just didn't think Sophia would end up in this situation."

Howard gets up and walks over to me.

He rests his hand firmly on my shoulder and looks down at me with fatherly eyes.

"I'm not going to threaten you, I'm no good at it and I'm sure Fiona already has. I won't come after you if you break my daughters heart because you and

I both already know losing her would be punishment enough. Now, son, the choice is yours. What are you going to do?"

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Sophia's POV:

I wake up to a setting sun and the sound of laughter coming from down stairs. The smell of herbs and spices flllS my nose and for a moment I feel like I'm a kid again.

The clock on the wall says it's five pm so apparently I've slept the whole day away.

I sit up and look around my bedroom, but Thomas is nowhere to be seen.

I curiously crawl out of bed and tip toe to the top of the stairs Where I can clearly hear what's being said in the kitchen.

"My goodness Thomas, Sophia never told me you were such a wizard in the kitchen." My Mom compliments Thomas and I smile to myself in the dark hallway. "I haven't actually cooked for her yet." Thomas admits.

"Well there's a first time for everything." My Mom replies. It's quiet for a moment before my mom speaks again.

"Can I see the picture again, please Thomas. I know I'm probably annoying you by now but I can't help it."

"Nonsense, Diane," Thomas replies and my curiosity peaks.

Picture of what?

"Goodness it's so beautiful!" My mothers voice coos. "And it looks expensive!"

"I honestly didn't even pay attention to the price tag. I knew it was perfect for her the moment I saw it."

"And you've already bought it?" She adds. "Yes, it's in my dresser." Thomas answers with a laugh.

My mom sounds like she's crying now and my heart is beating wildly in my chest.

"Sweetheart, you can't keep crying. Sophia will wonder why." My father says lovingly to my mother.

I start piecing the clues together and my eyes start to prick with tears. I cover my mouth to keep from being heard and run back to my room, but not before hearing "The second she graduates I'll be there on one knee waiting."

I get to my room and sit on the edge of my bed fighting back the happiest tears I've ever wanted to cry.

He really wants to marry me, and he's already told my parents. He has a ring. He has a plan!

It must have gone really well with my father, and from the sound of things my mother loves him already.

My body literally starts shaking from excitement and tears turn to quiet laughter.

This is everything I've ever wanted.

I knew it was a risk to bring Thomas here, but it seems to have worked in my favor. I have the perfect parents, perfect friends, and a perfect lover that I know will always bring me happiness.

The sound of approaching footsteps brings me back to the real world.

"Sophia, are you awake?" Thomas's voice suddenly calls from the hallway so I wipe my eyes and straighten up.

"Yeah I just woke up," I lie. He obviously can't know that I know.

Thomas appears in my doorway with a genuine smile.

"Dinners ready, my love." His sweet voice announces and I laugh. He looks so beautiful and relaxed as he leans against the trim.

"It went well then?" I ask and he slowly walks towards me. He crouches down so that we're eye to eye.

"Let's just say I feel like a new man." Thomas admits then he kisses me like he hasn't seen me in years.

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"Now, son, the choice is yours. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to marry her, sir."

Chapter 34

Isaac's POV:

"Are you sure you have everything?" I ask Fiona as she climbs into my car.

"Hmmm let's see. Portfolio, check. Phone, check. Tits, check. Yeah I'm ready freddy let's hit the road jack!" I can't help but laugh at Fiona.

She always makes me laugh.

"Maybe one of these days you'll actually call me by my name," I say with a snicker as I back out of my parking space.

"Probably not. I reserve god given names for the bedroom and job interviews." She replies in her sassy tone, but I just roll my eyes knowing damn well I'll never be in either of those situations with her.

"We don't have to go home, by the way. Clara is stuck at work, and I don't have any plans since I'm carless, let's get some chow."

"What did you have in mind?" I ask her, knowing damn well there's no way a woman knows what she wants to eat.

"I want tacos. How's that sound?"

No woman except this one it would seem.

"Tacos sound fantastic to me. Los Lunas good?" I ask as I flip on my turn signal to head in that direction.

"Los Lunas is perfect. I knew I liked having you around." Fiona winks at me and I feel my chest tighten. I at least wish she knew what she does to me so that she could dial it back a little.

I'm a good man. I'd never touch what isn't mine, so instead I'll watch from afar like a love sick school boy.

We pull into the parking lot at the restaurant and while Fiona is touching up her lipstick I run and grab her car door for her. She looks up at me in genuine surprise.

"What?" I ask once she doesn't look away.

"Nothing, it's just that no one has opened a car door for me before," she admits and it causes my face to harden.

"Well then you haven't met many worth while men, have you?" I offer in response. Fiona steps out of my car and smiles.

"Why else do you think I'm with Clara?"

"Because you love her?" I say sarcastically back but Fiona just raises her eye brow. "Who said anything about love? Clara made her intentions perfectly clear the first night we met. She told me she didn't want anything serious. Didn't I tell you guys that? I could have sworn I did."

"I'm pretty sure both Sophia and I thought you were exclusive." I reply, my brain already in over drive as I realize what this means.

There still hope for me yet.

"I mean, we're basically together but there's no labels. It's better that way because no one gets hurt. I've learned that Clara has been hurt a lot before, and she told me she's still hung up on someone who doesn't love her back so." Fiona shrugs "what can ya do?"

My blood feels cold in my veins as we walk in and sit down at a booth.

Does Clara mean Sophia?

We order our food and then wreak havoc on the chips and salsa.

"So let's bond, curly. Tell me something new about you." I snort out a laugh as my chip breaks in the salsa. "Are we really about to do this?" I ask in mild disbelief.

"You bet your sweet ass we are. C'mon, spill!" Fiona orders so I just give in.

"Uhh, I have two brothers if that counts." I scramble for anything interesting about me.

Holy crap I'm boring.

"That's lame, what else do you got?" Fiona gives me a playful thumbs down so I search my brain for something Fiona would actually fmd interesting.

"Well I can sing." I finally admit, thinking it's the best I have to share.

"Really?" She asks me with genuine interest on her face. I nod my head and take a drink of my soda.

"Then Let's hear it!" Fiona says loudly, leaning closer to me expectantly.

"What? No I'm not about to sing in the middle of a restaurant." I shake my head back and forth feverishly

"Not even for me?" Fiona pouts and I swear she has to know that it makes me fall apart. Her beautiful blue eyes lock onto my much less appealing brown ones, and I feel my palms growing sweaty.

"How about in the car?" I offer as a last ditch compromise.

"You have a deal." She replies and sticks her hand out for me to shake. I give her small hand a quick grab, and soon after our food arrives.

We eat, talk, and laugh and I pay the check even though Fiona tries to tight me for it.

Now we're back in my car. I've barely made it out of the parking lot before she's turned towards me with the radio completely down.

"Alright. Serenade me!" Fiona tells me with her hand dramatically over her heart. I suddenly feel unbelievably nervous. I've sang karaoke before, and I've performed at family members weddings, but this is the most nervous I've ever been. Fiona's opinion matters so much more than strangers or family.

"Yeah, Alright." I say fmally as I try to think of what a good song would be. The restaurant is really close to Fiona's apartment so by the time I've made up my mind I'm pulling in front of her building. I put the car in park and unhook my seatbelt. She looks so inpatient as she waits for me, and I can't help but notice how cute she looks with her face scrunched up.

"Hurry up! The anticipation is gonna kill me!" She shouts and I laugh at her expense.

"Yes, dear." I joke and clear my voice. I choose to sing 'Can I be him' by James Arthur because honestly I can't think of anything else I'd want to say to Fiona.

"You walked into the room

And now my heart's been stolen

You took me back in time to when I was unbroken

Now you're all I want

And I knew it from the very first moment

Cause a light came on when Iheard that song

And I want you to sing it again."

I can't tell if Fiona thinks I'm doing well or not because she's just staring at me blankly. She isn't blinking, and I'm not even sure if she's breathing.

"I swear that every word you sing

You wrote them for me

Like it was a private show

But I know you never saw me

When the lights come on and I'm on my own

Will you be there to sing it again

Could I be the one you talk about in all your stories

Can I be him."

I feel like that's good enough so I stop after the first chorus and wait for Fiona to say something. Her jaw is completely slack and she's staring at me with cloudy blue eyes.

Then I notice for a second that she's staring at my lips, and it makes my heart start to race.

Before I can even react she‘s closed the distance between us and her mouth his on mine. Her hand is around my face and jaw and her body is practically in my lap.

I suck in a sharp breath but as soon as I've regained my composure I'm kissing her back and holy fuck she tastes so good.

Seconds later Fiona has thrown her self back to her side of the car and she's covering her mouth.

"Oh gosh. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to... oh gosh!" She yells and goes to open her door. I open mine too to follow her.

"Hey, Fiona it‘s okay. It's-"

"No it's not okay. I just mouth raped you. I'm sorry Isaac. Can you not tell anyone? Ugh I'm such a whore."

Fiona starts running to her front door but I don't go after her. My heart is keeping me frozen in place, somewhere between broken and whole again.

I suppose this means she liked it?

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Chapter 35

Pretending that I don't know that in the dresser over there is a ring hand picked special for me has been absolute torture.

I haven't looked at it, and I'm not going to. I don't want to know anymore than I already do, and honestly I wish I could forget what I heard. I want to be surprised when the day finally comes, but I'll settle for just being unbelievably happy.

"You know why I love Saturdays?" Thomas asks me as he leans over from his side of the bed and kisses my collar bone.

"No, why do you love Saturdays?" I play along.

"Because neither off us has to run off and do anything. We can sit here in my bed all morning without a care in the world."

Thomas's lips travel down my body as he lays me back and puts some of his body weight over mine. His hands cup my curves and tickle my sides as they slide up and down my impatient skin.

Thomas hasn't had a drink since Tuesday, and although I know that's only been four days I believe him when he says he's changed now. My father has a way With words that makes people listen to him. That's why he's an amazing lawyer. I don't know exactly what my dad said to Thomas, but it's not really my business. There are plenty of stories my dad could have pulled from his archives about how he's messed up in the past because he had an addiction way worse than Thomas.

My father is completely sober now, and I know that Thomas can do it too.

My lovers lips come up to kiss me now sweet and slow as he takes his time.

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of being and ideal grace." Thomas expertly whispers against my tingling lips. It makes a smile pull at the corners of my mouth and pull him even more on top of me.

"I love thee to the level of every day's Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise." I whisper back to him and I can feel his muscles tighten around my small body.

He loves when I speak literature to him.

"I love thee With the passion put to use In my old griefs, and with my Childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death."

Thomas finishes the sonnet and as soon as the last phrase has left his lips were locked in a kiss so passionate that Shakespeare himself would be aroused in his grave.

It's morning which means not only is Thomas full of energy, but his manhood is at full mast, as every mans is when they first wake up.

As I feel the throbbing tool between his legs practically bruising my thigh I wonder if it's used for pleasure or as baseball bat.

Thomas positions himself right at my entrance, but he's unsure if I'm as Willing as he is. His blue eyes lock with mine in a look of pure lustful begging and I'll be damned if I deny him what we both want.

My legs wrap around his waist, and I slowly pull him in, causing the full length of him to slide inside me as I do. He lets out an orgasmic groan and I relish in the delicious sound of it.

This is how we start every morning.

***

"You're with the girls tonight, aren't you?" Thomas asks as we sit in pajamas in front of his television eating cereal. "Yup. An old fashioned girls night in equipped with wine and cheesy romance movies."

"Well I'll be spending my evening in as well grading those god awful Romeo and Juliet interpretations." I laugh as Thomas rolls his eyes. He loves teaching but he can't stand bad grammar so it's kind of a love hate relationship.

"I'd actually love to help you with that, I wish I didn't have plans." I say honestly. Thomas kisses my forehead and whispers "I love you too much to subject you to such madness."

We both giggle and go back to watching the tV. It's moments like these that make me the most happy. When we're spending lazy days on the couch like an old married couple. One day we will be and I can't wait until then.

As the sun sinks lower in the day and I don't think I could have another orgasm if I tried, Thomas let's me leave.

When we were at my parents house my dad convinced me to let him buy me a car. I had been saying no for all of these years because they already pay my rent and tuition. I don't want to

seem like the uptight rich girl, but as I walk to my brand new sky blue Kia Soul I have to admit I'm pretty happy.

I take a shower and put on Thomas's sweat pants and a generic t-shirt. When Fiona and I say night in we mean business so I load up all of the snacks and alcohol in my kitchen and head over to her place with my feet on the gas pedal in a pair of fuzzy slippers.

"Welcome to my humble abode!" Fiona yells as she opens the door for me, my hands full of calories and carbs.

"You're such a weirdo." I say as I walk in. Clara comes over and helps me carry some stuff to the living room.

"Oh hell yeah, you got the good wine!" Clara announces happily and I laugh. “I have expensive tastes I guess."

We all settle in on the couches and start digging into the food. Our faces are a ghastly green color due to and avocado face mask and "Ten things I hate about you" is playing on the tv.

We eat, drink, and be silly for hours as we share in the fine art that is female bonding. Eventually Fiona passes out from being wine drunk, and it's just Clara and I left standing.

"That's so funny!" She says with a high pitched laugh at one of my jokes. She's really giggly and I can only assume it's from her lack of complete sobriety.

"I'm glad you think so, I reply "Humor is an important part of being an author."

"Oh yeah, how's it going with that book you based the main character off of me for?" She asks eagerly, taking another 31p.

"It's really good actually. At least, I think it is. Some of the sex scenes stump me but I'm working through them. There's just only so many different ways you can say the penis went in before it's freakin redundant." I complain and Clara bursts into laughter again.

She hunches over, her face practically in my lap as her whole body vibrates from her feminine giggling.

"Careful, my ego can't handle all of this boosting." I joke with Clara who leans up to look at me, but she's way too close.

Before I have time to put the brakes on she's leaning in and her boozy mouth is pressed to mine.

"What the hell are you doing?" I yell and shove Clara off of me as I stand up.

She looses her balance slightly, but once she's steady again she looks at me with confused eyes.

"You have to know the truth by now, seriously?" Clara's voice has lost its usual sweet tone and it's replaced with a bitter scowl.

"I'm in love with you, okay?" She says as she rolls her eyes and sighs. She stands up and talks a wobbly step towards me.

"You're with Fiona!" I remind her, pointing to the still asleep lump on the couch.

"We're not exclusive. This is just a fling. What I actually want is you. I thought we could get close ifI was always around. I thought that you would see that you feel the same way about me."

"I'm with Thomas!" I argue.

"Who's he? That old guy at the bar? I thought that was a brother or something." I forget that Clara doesn't know that Thomas is a teacher because she doesn't go to the university.

"No, he's my boyfriend." I reply incredulously.

"What's going on?" Fiona finally wakes up and wipes some drool off of her face.

"Clara just kissed me." I inform her.

"Woah, what?!" She says suddenly fully awake and jumping to her feet.

Now we're all standing in her living room in a weird sort of triangle.

"What the hell, Clara?" Fiona asks, her voice angry.

"Don't act so surprised!" Clara shouts "I told you I was in love with someone else."

"I didn't think you meant my best friend!" She growls in return.

"She already knew before she even introduced us." Clara says accusingly, and I feel my body stiffen.

"Woah? Did you know?" Fiona asks me and I bite my lip.

"I knew she liked me, but the love part is new to me. I thought she was over me because you and her got together."

"You set me up with a lesbian that wouldn't leave you alone in hopes that she'd move on? How fucked up is that?" Fiona yells and throws her hands in the air.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you, I thought it would just cause problems." I defend helplessly.

"Well It sure is a problem now." Clara says with a sigh.

"No. You know what. I'm glad this happened." Fiona says, suddenly changing her mood.

"I'm glad because I kissed Isaac earlier this week."

"You did what?" Clara and I both say almost in sync.

"I did it and I liked it and I'm sorry Clara but I don't want to see you anymore." Fiona announces with her arms crossed. Clara looks scandalous as she stares at her almost lover with lost brown eyes.

Fiona shoots me a "back me up" glance so I say my piece next.

"And I'm sorry Clara but I don't think we should hang out anymore either. You used my best friend and disrespected my relationship."

Fiona starts leading Clara to the door but Clara starts crying.

"Wait, I was serious when I said I love you. Don't completely cut me out, please." Clara whimpers and I admit that I feel really bad, but Fiona comes Iirst. "I'm sorry Clara," I say softly and moments later she's outside the door and it's just Fiona and Myself left.

"Wait." I say suddenly, my face growing awkward. "Someone has to drive her home."

"Gosh!" Fiona cringes and rips the door open again after grabbing her keys.

"But don't you dare fall asleep, we have a lot to talk about!"

"You think?!" I call after her with obvious sarcasm.

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Chapter 36

Mature Chapter

Fiona came back looking like she could pull her hair out.

She throws her body onto the couch and picks one of the cushions up, screaming into it dramatically.

"What happened?" I ask, wondering if anything new was the cause of her current outburst.

"Just a lot of crying and her still wanting to be friends. Oh, and she admitted she never liked me other than my body so that's freaking cool."

I cringe and pull my knees to my chest.

"I'm sorry, I thought she had a harmless crush on me, not some weird obsession or whatever." I say meekly, hoping Fiona doesn't hate me now.

"I don't actually blame you, Soph. I just wish you'd have given me a heads up that she was interested in you so that I could have foreseen this."

I bite my lip and nod. I definitely screwed the pooch on this one.

"Clara and I kept it physical without involving emotions so I'm not heart broken or anything, but realistically l think this was supposed to happen." Fiona says whimsically, her eyes looking past me not at me. She hugs the pillow she had screamed into against her chest and smiles.

"I think I like Isaac. Like, like him. I probably traumatized him by kissing him, Soph, but you weren't there! He practically seduced me."

My eyes go big and I almost snort out a laugh. "Isaac was seductive? What do you mean?"? I ask, not sure What to expect.

"He has the voice of a freaking angel and I asked him to sing me a song. He sang this romantic song and we were in the car and the next thing I knew my lady parts wanted to swallow him whole."

"Oh my god, EWWWW!" I screech and cover my ears.

"I haven't even looked at him since and I don't know what to do. Stop acting like a child and help me!" Fiona says with a grumpy tone and throws the pillow at me.

"Hey!" I squeal as it smacks me in my eyes.

"If you like him just tell him!" I say, rubbing my injured eye ball.

"oh really? Just like that? You're one to talk." Fiona rolls her eyes.

"That's different. There's nothing forbidden about you and Isaac."

"But what if he doesn't like me back?" Fiona asks and it takes literally all of my willpower not to scream 'HES IN LOVE WITH YOU HE TOLD ME! GO MAKE BABIES!' But it's not my place. Isaac asked me to keep his secret so I will.

"Did he kiss you back?" I ask Fiona, trying to convince her that he likes her without saying it blatantly.

"I mean, yeah he did." She says with a blush. "But he's a guy, he went home with that bar girl remember? He'd probably just gets ass wherever he could."

I can see Fiona breaking her own heart as she speaks so I have to try to weave my words in a way that convinces her otherwise.

"You know him better than that by now. That bar girl was my idea anyways. And I'm pretty sure he just did that just so Kim wasn't the last girl he had been with. Washing the taste out of his mouth if you will. He didn't even get that girls number, but you guys are actually friends with stuff in common." I argue but Fiona just shrugs.

"He's not really my type though, so I don't know Why I'm having such strong feelings about him."

"Maybe it's because he isn't anything like the people you've perused in the past that you're finding him so irresistible." I lean over and put a comforting hand on Fiona's knee. "Face it, Fi, you exclusively date garbage. Isaac is the first decent guy you've liked since like fifth grade. Tell him how you feel and give him a chance to tell you how he feels. I'm sure he's crazy about you, you j ust haven't noticed yet because you've been focusing on Clara."

Fiona smiles and tackles me with a big loving hug.

"You're right. Thank you, Sophia! You're the best." She compliments me loudly in my ear.

"Anytime, Pi."

***

Fiona and I stay up way too late and before either of us realize it, it's two AM and we're buried in her closet.

"Oh my gosh there's so much in here I've never even worn! What's wrong with me?" She says as she hold a blouse up to her chest that still has the tag on it.

"Did you get this when we were sixteen? Your boobs would never fit into that." I say laughing.

"Yeah that sounds about right. There's so much stuff in here that my mom bought me that I absolutely hated it so I never wore it."

Fiona stands up and starts pulling garment after garment off of their hangers and throwing them at me.

"What are you doing?" I ask as a pencil skirt hits me in the face.

"This stuff probably fits you, try some stuff on." She says. I lift up the array of blouses and skirts and questionably raise an eyebrow.

"Why are all of these clothes so professional?" I ask.

"My mom was trying to turn me into a 'bright young lady' remember? She was trying to get me to throw away my trench coat and I ended up trying to fist fight my mom."

I nod "ahhh that's why you got your bedroom door taken off, isn't it?"

"Yep, That's the time." Fiona pulls a specific skirt and top from my hands and holds them next to each other. Then she goes to her dresser and starts fishing through her stocking collection.

"What are you doing?" I question nervously.

"Does professor do a lot have a thing for sexy librarians?" She asks me as she pulls a pair of black sheer thigh high tights from her drawer.

"I mean... probably. We haven't experimented with fetishes yet."

"I bet he does. Put this on." Fiona demands as she shoves her specially chosen outfit into my arms.

"I'm not wearing this, Fiona." I say blankly and she rolls her eyes. "Oh yes you are, or I'm breaking out the freshmen pictures next time I see Thomas."

"You fight dirty, you know that?" I scowl but agree and go to the bathroom to put of this provocative assortment of dress attire.

I step out looking like a stereotypical porn star.

The black pencil skirt stops two inches above my knee and the white blouse has buttons up the front but as per Fiona's orders I could only button the bottom four. My black bra and all of the cleavage I've ever had are on full display. The tights go just above my knee so you can only just see where they stop if I bend over slightly.

"Satisfied?" I ask Fiona who looks like she's about to pounce on me.

"Holy crap you look so hot! Put your hair in a bun and wear these!" She says excitedly, handing me a pair of black heels.

I put my hair in a tight dancers bun and slip on Fiona's shoe of choice.

"You look phenomenal, but I think you're missing something." Fiona says as we both stare at my reflection in her mirror.

"Oh duh! I know." She says and runs over to her night stand where she rummages for a few moments. She pulls out a pair of nonprescription hipster glasses that she had bought during a phase a few years ago.

"Don't you think that's a bit pretentious?" I complain. Fiona shakes her head. "Not at all! Besides, this way you won't get come in your eyes."

I double over laughing and shake my head. "He's never going to see me in this, you know?" I remind her.

"Of course he is. Right now."

"What are you talking about?" I question.

"You told me that he's ruined you for other men. You've told me about how he's dominated you, how he's pushed your face into the sheets and had his way with you."

"Yeah, jeeze! I get it!" I shout with annoyance and embarrassment.

"Well now it's your turn. Drive over to his place, use your spare key, wake the man up with what I'm betting is his wildest fantasy, and do it with him this time. Figuratively, not literally. I mean unless he's into that, I'm not one to judge."

"He's definitely not in to that, but I get what you're saying." I bite my lip in quiet contemplation.

Maybe it's because I've become a sex addict as of late, but what Fiona suggested sounds fantastic.

"You know what? I'm in." I say with excitement and Fiona squeals.

"Just a few finishing touches like makeup and you're in business!"

Fiona does my makeup pinup girl style and sends me out the door. Even though I've had sex with Thomas countless times by now I'm still nervous as I drive to his place. What if he's so exhausted from grading papers that he turns me down? I'd have to move to the Ukraine and get a new identity.

I try not to psyche myself out too much as I pull into the parking lot of his apartment. I check my appearance in my rear view mirror then step out of my car.

The sound of my heels clacking on pavement echoes through the quiet night air as I make my way to my lovers bedroom.

I put the key in the lock and it clicks. I step inside and all of the lights are out because Thomas went to bed about two hours ago. As I maneuver through his familiar furniture I realize I have no idea what the best way to wake him up 18.

I walk into Thomas's room where he's quietly sleeping. He's shirtless, perhaps even naked, and his sheets are perfectly situated at his hips. He looks so beautiful as he sleeps but not nearly as beautiful as when he's coming.

I walk over to Thomas's bed side lamp and click it on. A soft yellow lift suddenly fills his bedroom and it causes his eyes to pop open.

"God you scared me." He says as he realizes it's me. He rubs his eyes and yawns.

"What are you doing here, darling?"

He asks me but as his yes open to actually take a full look at me his mouth falls open and he slowly rakes his disbelieving gaze over my entire body.

"What's going on?" He asks me once his eyes manage to make it back to my own.

"Well Mr. Crane, It has come to my attention that you have late fees at your local library, and I'm here to collect payment."

Thomas bites his bottom lip and mumbles profanities under his breath as he gawks at me.

I step towards him where he's sitting upright on his bed, using his elbows to prop himself.

I grab his chin and roughly kiss his mouth causing him to groan against my lips.

I eventually push Thomas back so that he's flush against his mattress and I straddle him, my skirt riding up as my thighs spread, exposing the tops of my tights and black panties.

I'm sitting right over Thomas's crotch and I can feel his rock hard arousal threatening to puncture a hole through his sheets.

"Is this a dream?" Thomas asks me with a soft moan as I grind against his throbbing sex.

"Your dreams could never think up half of the things I'm going to do to you." I say in as sultry a voice as I can manage.

Thomas's mouth hangs open in pleasant surprise so I take this opportunity to kiss him, my tongue entering his mouth and tasting every bit of him. I have to get the kissing out of the way now because I don't think he'll be willing to kiss me later.

His hands grab my ass and press me more firmly against his hips.

I know he's dying for a release.

I crawl backwards down his body and pull the sheets off of him. He's only wearing underwear and I quickly dispose of them. Thomas doesn't know what to do and I'm loving it. He's never not been in control before.

"I love how much I turn you on." I tell him just as he's told me in the past, a devilish grin on my face.

I wrap my small hand around the shaft of his cock and start slowly but Iirmly pumping him. His back slightly arches and his strong fingers ball into fists at his sides.

I tease him with my hand for just a few moments before my tongue swipes across his head, feeling the soft skin pulsate against my mouth.

I lower my entire mouth over his head and then shaft, taking it all the way to the back of my throat until I can't breathe. I hold him there for as long as I can before pulling back. He lets out a shocked gasp as the sensations erupt through his body.

Next I vigorously stroke him while my mouth stays wrapped around the head of his cock, sucking and licking the sensitive nerves.

I don't hold anything back, wanting him to feel what it's like for his orgasm to completely belong to someone else, knowing he didn't do a damn thing to achieve it.

Thomas suddenly starts swearing and moaning loudly "Gosh Sophia, stop or I'm going to-"

He can't even finish his sentence before I feel his hot come spill into my mouth.

This is nothing I've ever experienced before in my entire life.

I'm not crazy, I'm not going to say it tases good, but with how turned on I am I could hardly care about the taste. My panties are practically flooded at this point, and I just swallow what's in my mouth without so much as batting an eye.

Thomas is a heaving mess on his bed, sheets still balled up in his fist and sweat is tapered across his forehead.

"Don't tell me you're already tired, Mr. Crane. We're just getting started."

Thomas gives me a masculine throaty laugh and I relish in the sound.

"You're going to kill me, you know that?" He says, still looking at the ceiling in bewilderment.

"No, Professor. I'm going to ruin you." I correct him.

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Chapter 37

I straddle Thomas and grab his arms, pinning them away from his body. I lick my lips as he stares up at me in animalistic arousal.

My mouth comes down on his hot skin, biting and sucking his neck until dark spots form. He's already hard again, and I can feel his desire press against my damp panties.

I grab Thomas's face by his jaw and stare down at him with dominance in my eyes. This is so empowering I can hardly stand it. I feel like a queen.

"You're so sexy when you tremble."

I whisper as I grind my hips against Thomas. He groans and grabs my waist to coerce me harder against his hungry erection, but I grab his hands and throw them off of me.

"This isn't for you, Mr, Crane. This is punishment, remember?" Thomas growls in annoyance but I know he's loving it.

I undo one more button on the dress shirt I'm wearing and pull my bra down until my breasts are fully exposed.

I play with them, teasing Thomas, as I make eye contact with the man between my legs.

After a few moments of pure torture I reach between my legs and pull my panties to the side, sliding perfectly over Thomas's fully erect cock.

There's something painfully erotic about being so clothed with a man inside of me.

Maybe that's because it drives the truth home that this is forbidden.

Thomas moans I feel his hips thrusting hard against me.

"Don't you dare move a muscle." I demand, sliding my body up and down his thick member. Thomas tenses, the look of disobedience on his face telling me that my reign of power is over.

Thomas sits up and cages me between his legs and chest. His hands grab for the front of the blouse and he rips it off of me. Buttons scatter and clink to the floor as the white garment hangs forgotten around my shoulders.

Next Thomas pulls my bra down until it's resting at the base of my ribs just above my hiked up pencil skirt. He puts my right breast into his mouth and uses his grip on hips to lift and lower me roughly on to his cock as though he's punishing me instead.

My hands run through his hair, pulling it and forcing his head back. I lick the length of his neck and the room is filled with our savage moans and the sound of skin slapping together.

"How dare you," Thomas groans "come in here looking like that and expect me to not do it until you can no longer walk."

Thomas is a dominant man. You'd never guess it behind his pressed suits and suave demeanor, but lying dormant inside is a predator, and I am thankquy the prey.

"I don't believe you're capable of that." I say challengingly to Thomas. A flash of pride crosses his hazy blue eyes, and I can tell my challenge has been accepted.

Thomas picks me up and forcefully slams my back into his plush mattress. His hands immediately go to my panties that are now back to covering his prize. He rips them off just as easily as he did my shirt and pulls me by my thighs until I'm situated perfectly in front of him.

"You will regret those words, darling." He promises before slamming into me to his base and covering my mouth with his strong fingers.

"I don't think my neighbors would appreciate how loudly you're about to scream, my love." He whispers above me.

Thomas's fingers on my side dig into my skin and he starts thrusting into me harder and more methodically than he's ever done.

His eyes scan my body starting at my black tight clad legs that are on either side of him. He admires the skirt that's wrapped around my middle and the way that my breasts bounce with each thrust.

He admires the glasses on my face, and I notice that they in particular make him throb inside of me.

I cry out desperately against his hand as my body tumbles Into a level of pleasure that I've never been.

Thomas loves to dominate, and I think I love being dominated just as much.

The hand around my mouth suddenly grabs my jaw and Thomas leans over to look into my distorted face as I try and fail to keep my composure.

"You ruined me a long time ago Lane." Thomas says as a painful reminder of the hell I've put him through.

"And you know what? I don't think I've ever properly punished you for it."

Oh god what have I gotten myself in to?

Thomas is suddenly pulling me off of the side of the bed. My legs dangle over the side as my back stays against the mattress top. Thomas grabs my legs and spreads them as far apart as they'll go before penetrating my body all over again. The grip he has on my inner thighs gives him unyielding leverage as he ravishes my feminine body.

I can't help but cry out as his manhood stretches me open and explores the depths of my sex, but that causes Thomas to lean back over and cover my mouth again.

"Do you want everyone to hear you like this?" He teases me. "Do you want them to hear you as you get crashed?"

A burning blush fills my cheeks as I imagine strangers hearing my moans.

"N-no.." I whimper against his hand and he smiles. "Then he a good girl and shut your mouth before I shut it for you."

I bite down on my tongue to try and keep quiet but Thomas do it faster and faster until I can't help but scream his name.

"You asked for it, Sophia. Remember that." Thomas growls and rolls me over, hiking my ass in the air and shoving my face into the sheets.

My screams are now muffled by cotton as Thomas slams into me as though it's the first and last time he'll ever get to.

My body threatens to fall apart but just as I'm about to crumble from the pleasure Thomas's groans get more frequent.

I know he's about to come, but before he finishes he does something unexpected.

Thomas pulls out of me and pushes me down onto my knees on the floor.

Within seconds of stroking himself I feel the hot sensation of his orgasm as it covers my glasses and face.

I'm completely shocked and gasping for air but Thomas doesn't skip a beat as he kneels down to my level and grins.

"Consider my late fee paid for."

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Fiona POV:

Should I call him and tell him? I mean it's getting so late already.

I sit on my couch and finish off Sophia's rich girl wine.

The clock on the wall tells me that it's almost four AM but after everything that's happened tonight I just can't sleep. I honestly wanted Sophia to go get laid just so that I could be alone with all of my stupid hoe thoughts.

I haven't talked to Isaac since he dropped me off on Tuesday and I know he's probably thinking I'm a child because of it. I've faked being busy or taken a different route to class to avoid him.

For how smart Sophia is I'm surprised she didn't notice, but with dick on her brain so much she's probably just not thinking straight.

That or Thomas has successfully did it to her.

I pick up my phone and stare at the text conversation from Isaac that is just him trying to contact me over and over for the past few days.

Fiona can we talk? I'm not upset I just want to see you in person. Did you skip lunch because of me? Please just talk to me.

Gosh I'm a terrible person.

I bite my plump bottom lip as I try to coerce myself to just send him a freaking text message. Like that's so hard.

Finally my thumb starts tapping out a message for Isaac that he probably won't see until tomorrow morning.

Fiona Come over.

It's vague, I know, but anything more and I just know I would die from cringing.

I throw my phone onto my couch and stumble to my fridge.

The cold air hits my bare legs and I pull my big sweater over my knees to combat the chills as I rummage for a snack.

I find some peanut butter and jelly and decide that at four AM a PB&J is obviously the best snack.

I start spreading the impossible mush over two pieces of bread, taking my time as more thoughts of Isaac pop up in my head.

I wonder what he looks like in a suit?

I bet he looks really handsome. I wonder if his mom would like me if we met? Parents don't usually like me so probably not. He said he has two brothers, what if one of them hit on me? Would he punch them?

Oh no what's happening to me?! These are... wifey thoughts.

I screech in distress as I slam the parts of my sammich together.

This isn't me! What has this stupid blonde haired kind ass hubby material girl done to me?!

I run my fingers through my unruly black hair and groan loudly. This isn't how it's supposed to be. One song and I'm stuck on him? How easy can I be, really?

I'm about to take a sad bite of my sloppy sandwich once I've calmed down when there's a distressed knock on my door.

I run over and pull it open, thinking it's Sophia, but standing there in nothing but pajama bottoms and a black tank top is Isaac.

"Is everything okay? I came as soon as I could. You weren't answering your phone.

I look over at my phone that's abandoned on my couch and feel guilty.

"I'm sorry. I thought you wouldn't get that message until the morning. Nothing is wrong. I mean, stuff is wrong but I don't need help."

"What do you mean stuff is wrong? Where's Sophia?" Isaac looks genuinely concerned and I feel like the grinch as my shriveled heart grows three sizes as I stare up at Isaacs intoxicating coffee eyes.

"Clara kissed Sophia. I kicked her out, and coerced Sophia to go to Thomas's. It's just me now."

"Gosh I'm so sorry, Fiona." Isaac says with a soft concerned voice. I suddenly feel nervous as I stare at my feet and realize I'm not wearing pants.

"I'm not upset about Clara, she was just a fling anyways. What I wanted to talk about was us. I'm sorry I've been ghosting you lately, I just didn't know what to say to you after I forced myself on you."

Isaac looks appalled as he stares at me, his expression much more serious than I've ever seen it before. "That's what you think happened?" He asks me in a deep voice.

"If I didn't want you to do it, Fiona, I would have pushed you off of me. Furthermore, I wouldn't be at your door at four AM because I can't sleep because all I can think about is that fucking kiss. And I wouldn't be about to do this."

Isaac crosses the threshold of my door as he steps towards me and his hands grab the either side of my face.

He slams his mouth against mine and kisses me so passionately that for a second, nothing else exists, and whatever happens next is no longer under my control.

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Isaac POV:

This is stupid. It's absolutely reckless of me, but I just can't help myself. Kissing Fiona once wasn't enough for me, and now I'm helplessly addicted.

She kisses me back now roughly, her small hands wrapping round my neck.

"Isaac.." she Whispers when we pull away for air. She never whispers, so I can tell shes nervous.

I can't help but smile as I realize she's called me Isaac, and gosh does my name sound good on her lips.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to... I couldn't help myself." I attempt an explanation but Fiona shakes her head and pulls me back down towards her lips.

"Don't stop." She instructs me with glossy eyes, and I feel my whole body erupt with familiar masculine desires.

"I want you." She adds as her tongue dances with my own and my eyes roll back as a growl builds in my throat.

I know that I should say no, that this is an awful idea and that it's way too soon, but I'm so turned on that I've lost all control.

Fiona's front door shuts with a loud slam, and I push her over to her couch. She falls back on the cool fabric, and I crawl between her thighs.

My mind is racing and my body is aching as I kiss and grind against Fiona's soft body.

My head can't believe this is happening so I just turn it off instead. I don't think.

I grab both of Fiona's large breasts in both of my hands and squeeze them roughly, feeling her nipples harden.

Fiona's hands take my exploration as a que to pull my shirt off. She throws it onto the floor and bites her thick bottom lip.

I smirk down at her as she admires the view of my bare chest and lustful brown eyes.

I'm so hard it hurts as I press my covered arousal against her baby pink panties.

My hands slide under her sweater and grip her bare breasts now, the feeling of her soft skin making me throb. I tease her perfect chest for several moments, so happy I'm finally able to feel them instead of just dreaming about them.

How can a pair of breasts be so fucking perfect?

Suddenly everything is a frenzy. Fiona is pulling her top off and I'm awkwardly kicking off my pants.

I need to be inside of her now.

I rip Fiona's panties down her Porcelain thighs and toss them away. I crawl back between Fiona's legs but before I penetrate her body I lean over to her ear.

"Tell me you want this." I ask her. I don't want to do anything she doesn't want me to.

"I want it so had," She whimpers and I could honestly come just from the anticipation.

I thrust foreword slowly and feel the hot and tight sensation of Fiona's sex as it engulfs mine.

"Oh my god." I groan as I'm completely inside of her, a small moan escaping her lips.

Her fingers reach around and slide with a burning sensation down my back as I rock in and out of her. It's slow as first but then I feel myself thrust faster and faster. The sounds of slapping skin and a distant television show till my ears along with Fiona's beautiful moans.

Her blue eyes roll back and she plays with her breasts. I move one of her hands away and take her pebbled nipple into my mouth, swirling my tongue around the supple pink skin.

My hands dig into Fiona's plump thighs, using them as leverage to pound harder and deeper into her perfect body.

The raw sensation of her tight wet sex is unlike anything I've ever felt before. I've never gone in bare before, and although it's definitely not smart, I couldn't care less.

Fiona starts to lean me back until I'm seated upright on her couch. She straddles my hips and starts bouncing on my cock expertly, her chest right in my face.

I grab them and bury my face in them as she continues to do it.

This is all so lewd. It's not an awkward first time fuck kind of thing. It's a pent up sexual arousal spilling over into a nasty display of human perversion kind of thing.

"Gosh that feels so good," Fiona moans. Her cheeks are red and her mouth is hanging open. I grab her face and pull her mouth to mine, our tongues battling for dominance.

I hit her lip and she smiles seductively against my kiss.

"You do it good." Fiona says, pleased, and I can't help but chuckle as she rocks slowly on my lap, my girth spreading her open as she does.

"When's the last time you've been with a man?" I ask, not ignorant to just how damn tight she is. It's a miracle that I haven't prematurely come inside of her by now.

"I've been with boys, Isaac. You're the first man."

I groan as her words hit my ears and switch our places. I stand up and maneuver her onto her back on her couch. I hold her thighs against my chest and lower myself back inside of her, the angle unlike anything I've ever felt.

I crash into her over and over, our sounds mixing together until I can't hold it in anymore.

"I'm going to come." I tell her with a ragged breath before pulling out. She leans up and cups her breasts, holding them on full display as I coat them in my white hot orgasm.

What the heck just happened?

I stare down at Fiona who‘s panting and slightly sweaty. She looks up at me and grins, then her gaze drops to her messy chest.

"Wow that was a lot." She giggles awkwardly and I can feel the weirdness setting in.

Fiona gets up and quickly runs to her bathroom to clean up. I start finding my clothes and slipping them on. I don't want this part to be weird, but I really don't know if there's any way to avoid it.

I have feelings for Fiona, and I hope she's ready and willing to talk about them because I would throw myself off of a bridge if I never got to feel her like that again.

"Well that was fun wasn't it?" She laughs but refuses to meet my gaze once she comes back. She starts looking around for her panties and her sweater, covering herself as quickly as possible.

My heart starts to break as I see the panic on her face.

Don't you dare do this to me, Fiona.

I think over and over again as I sit on her couch and wait for her to look at me.

"Look at me." I finally have to demand and she does, her blue eyes look scared as she gives me a once over.

I stand up and walk over to her. I gently grab her jaw with one hand and force her eyes to lock with mine.

"I want to talk about us." I say honestly in a hushed tone. She's so beautiful and strong, but for some reason right now she feels as fragile as glass.

"What about us?" She says as she clears her throat and my face hardens.

"It was just... some fun, you know? No big deal." She insists, crossing her arms over her chest defensively and pulling away from me.

"You don't actually mean that, do you?" I ask, hurt and angry.

"It was just a spontaneous mistake. It happens." She adds, and although I don't believe that she means that, her words still cut through my chest like a razor blade.

"Alright then." I say with a cynical laugh as I slip my shoes on and walk towards Fiona's front door.

"See you Monday." I say bitterly before open and closing her front door with a loud bang.

If this is how she wants it then tine, but I won't chase after her. I'm not going to chase anyone anymore. I learned my lesson with Kim. If Fiona wants me then she will have to come to me.

I sit in my car and punch my steering wheel, my emotions getting the best of me.

I don't know how to even handle these incredible highs and lows.

I go to start my car so that I can drive away, but I can't seem to get the key into the ignition through these sudden tears blurring my vision.

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Chapter 38

After an amazing night with Thomas I went back to Fiona's to see how she was doing. She was curled up on her kitchen floor spooning Nutella and crying which freaked me the hell out.

"What happened?!" I screamed as I ran to her side and tried to pry the spoon out of her mouth.

"I did it to Isaac." She said trough ugly tears, Nutella all over her mouth.

"How did this happen?! And why are you sad then?!" I yell, trying to lift her limp body off of the floor.

I didn't know why I was even yelling it just seemed appropriate at the time.

"Because I told him it was just a one time thing! I told him it was a mistake!" She balled onto my shoulder.

I patted her back awkwardly as a million thoughts ran through my mind.

I felt bad for Fiona, but I felt worse for Isaac because I know how emotionally invested he is.

Fiona gave me the full story, and as soon as she finally cried herself to sleep I put on some normal people clothes and snuck over to Isaacs place.

"Zac, let me in." I said as I knocked on his front door. It was seven AM and I wasn't in the mood to beg.

"Go away Soph." He replied from the other side and I rolled my eyes.

"I know you need a hug. Now open this damn door."

After a few moments of silence I heard the front door unlock and Isaac was standing there looking like hell.

His eyes were red and puffy, and when I opened my arms he practically fell into them. We hugged for a long time silently on his door step until Isaac finally pulled away.

"You might as well come in." He said dejectedly, leading me into his living room.

"Fiona told me why happened. I'm sorry, she gets like this. She can never commit to anything, but I know that she genuinely likes you." I said in an attempt to soothe Isaac who was chugging a beer like it was a Friday night.

"Doesn't matter. I'm not going to play her game. If she wants me she has to tell me."

I respected his resolve, but couldn't just watch him fall apart without doing something about it.

"Let me tell Fiona what you told me that night in the car." I begged him but he just shook his head. " She has to do it herself, Soph. I want to be genuinely wanted for once."

I could tell that Fiona's rejection was bringing up bitter memories of Kim and that there wasn't really anything I could do to help Isaac tonight. Instead, I talked to him until he too eventually cried himself to sleep and then I drove home and slept for twelve hours straight.

Too much has happened lately that's stressed me out. My two best friends refuse to spend time with each other, and finals are on their way. Things with Thomas and I are amazing at least and each day that passes brings me closer to graduation. Closer to a real relationship with the man I love.

I stopped going to the coffee shop that Clara works at, but I heard she got a second job at my favorite bar so I can't really go there either which sucks because Fiona and Isaac really like to drink lately.

Hmm I wonder why.

It's Thursday night and I'm closing down the library. It's deathly quiet as I check in returned books, my eyelids getting heavy with each passing moment.

"Excuse me miss, I'd like to return this book. I'd hate to get a late fee." I hear Thomas's flirtatious voice tease me from the other side of the counter, and I look up and smile.

"What did you even need this boat book for?" I ask with a laugh as I take it from him.

"I'm writing a nautical novel." He says honestly and I raise my eyebrows at him.

"I think Mobey Dick is taken." I joke and Thomas laughs, his eyes squinting and dimples showing.

"So that's what we're calling it now? I mean I know it's big bu

I smack Thomas in the arm With his book and roll my eyes.

"You're a big child you know that?" I tease and he just nods.

My goodness I love him so much.

No one is in the library so Thomas follows me around as I shelve all of the returned books for the day.

We laugh and joke and carry on until the return cart is empty, but just as I'm about to leave the non-fiction section Thomas grabs my wrist and slams my back against the shelves, his hot mouth coming down on mine like fire.

"What are you doing?" I say with a worried expression. "We could get caught."

"No one is here my love." He counters and I sigh.

"Kiss me." I demand and Thomas happily complies, our tongues sliding against each others in a heated show of lust.

Eventually our forbidden dance ends and Thomas and I straighten our clothing and walk out of the shelves like nothing ever happened.

"I'll see you tomorrow?" He asks me with a smile and laugh, nodding my head yes.

I mouth I love you and Thomas whispers it back before making his way out of the library.

I try to ignore the arousal between my legs as I finish locking up the library, but if I'm being honest it's incredibly difficult.

I fish my keys out of my purse as I walk to my car, the parking lot is practically empty and the night is dark. I get to park close to the building because I'm technically staff so I don't ever feel like I'm not safe.

I'm about to open my car door but before I Can I feel strong hands grab me and twist me around, my back hitting with a painful thud against the hard metal.

"I can't believe you." Michael seethes just inches from my face.

"You blew me off for that old ass Professor?" Michael is beyond angry as he holds me in a painful grasp, my wrists starting to bruise from the pressure.

"I don't know what your talking about!" I cry out, trying to kick him or wriggle free.

"Oh stop lying, I saw you both eating each other's faces in the library.' Michael gives a terrifying throaty growl.

"I knew I didn't like the way he looked at you. Is that who you were thinking about on Valentine's Day? You're a whore, you know that?!"

I spit in Michael's face, my eyes squinting in anger.

"Back Off!" I shout, trying to sound more confident than I actually am.

"You know, Sophia. I really did like you. I could have even seen a future with you, but you went and screw that up. A futures definitely off the table but I'll make you a deal."

My body goes cold at Michael's words. He leans and kisses my neck, his breathe hot and unwelcome on my skin.

"Either I tell the dean about your little affair, and I'm sure there's proof on the library cameras, or you give me what I want." Michael whispers right against my ear.

"Do it with me. Do it and I'll take your slutty little secret to the grave."

The blood drains from my face and my stomach lurches as Michael gives me my ultimatum.

"Are you insane? You can't be serious!" I yell, trying not to cry.

"I'm dead serious Sophia. I'll give you twenty four hours to decide. Either this time tomorrow I'm balls deep inside of you, or Thomas is packing up his desk. You decide. Oh, and I'm sure you'll be expelled too."

Michael lets me go and starts walking backwards away from me. My legs feel so weak as I struggle to think of what I should do.

"I look forward to hearing from you, sweetheart." Michael says with a sickening laugh as he crosses the parking lot.

I can't let Thomas get fired, but I also can't give Michael what he wants.

I hunch over, vomiting the entire contents of my stomach onto the parking lot.

After I feel like I can see and think properly again I get into my car and rush over to Thomas's place.

I slam my car door shut and run up to his front door where I hang over and over again on the hard wood.

"I'm coming, I'm coming." I hear Thomas call from the other side.

He's smiling as he opens the door, but it instantly falls as he sees me crying.

"What's going on?" He asks me, pulling me inside and shutting the door.

His hands cup either side of my face in concern and I tell him everything that happened through violent sobs and convulsions.

"That crazy sick son of a b*tch!" Thomas yells and starts pacing his living room. He runs frantic hands over his face and kicks his couch in uniiltered anger.

"Screw him. I'll resign, I don't care." Thomas says as he grips the back of his chair, his knuckles turning White.

"I'm not going to let you lose your job over this, Thomas! I would also get kicked out and lose all of my credits. " I argue.

"Then what do you suggest? Do it with him?" Thomas says almost accusingly,

"What? No I didn‘t say that! I'm just saying we need to think of something else."

"You heard him, Sophia, there is nothing else. I'm such a idiot, if I had just kept my mouth to myself in the library none of this would have happened."

I cover my eyes as I cry, hating that Thomas sees me like this. I'm not a cryer, or at least I wasn't until this year. N ow I'm practically a cry baby.

"Call him right now and tell him to rat us out." Thomas tells me, but I just shake my head no.

"What do you mean no? Those are our only choices, and frankly I'm mad that you didn't tell him no right to his face!"

"You're not thinking clearly, Thomas! There so much at stake here!" I argue, anger bubbling up in my stomach.

"We're at stake, Sophia!" Thomas counters and it feels like a punch to the gut.

"You know what, I can't believe you. I'm leaving." He says suddenly, grabbing his keys off of the counter.

"Where do you think you're going?!" I yell after him but he just spits out an ugly response.

"I don't know, but anywhere is better than here."

And then he slams the door in my face.

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For a moment I contemplate falling to pieces on Thomas's living room floor, but I know that won't do me any good.

Thomas is obviously going to be a child about this situation, so it's up to me to be the level headed adult. I thought dating a thirtyone year old man with a doctorate would mean he was mature enough to handle a little drama.

Guess the heck not.

I wipe my tears away on my sleeve and pull myself together before leaving Thomas's empty apartment. His car is no where to be seen as I make my way across the parking lot.

If we survive this, he's in so much trouble.

If he honestly thinks I'm going to sleep with that ass hole whose boned every girl on campus, then Thomas is the one that's been stupid.

At my words a plan starts forming in my head. I fish my phone out of my purse and dial Thomas's number, but it just goes straight to voice mail.

I roll my eyes and throw my phone onto my passenger side seat. I have half of an idea, but I don't really have what

I need to flesh it out so I do the only logical thing I can think of.

I go to Fiona's place.

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"That infected dick having ass piece of stick is black mailing you into letting him give you his AIDS? Oh no I don't really think so!" Fiona screeches and pulls a chefs knife out of her kitchen drawer.

"Slow down there Machete' we can't just kill him!" I defend nervously. "Why the hell not? Who would even really miss him? He's just another worthless rich boy who thinks they can get whatever they want."

"As true as that may be it's still murder." I say reasonably. Fiona grumbles and tosses the knife into her sink, folding her arms over her chest. "Fine, smarty pants, then what are we going to do?"

"I need to find anyone who's slept with, sexted, or otherwise flirted with Michael and get any nude pics or rude texts they'd be willing to part with. He's wronged a lot of women, and if he thinks he can black mail me then two can play at that game."

Fiona gives me a twisted and excited smile. "Oh hell yes. I know a few girls that I met in my photography class."

"I'm calling Isaac to help too. I'm going to try to find that girl Gabbie from the football game, and maybe Isaac can get something off of Kim."

Fiona's face twists up in jealousy but I just stare daggers at her "now isn't the time." I remind her and she sighs.

"Yeah, okay fine. I'll get my keys." She begrudgingly agrees.

I go out to my car and grab my phone, dialing Isaacs number this time instead.

He quickly answers and I explain everything that's happening to him as quickly as possible. Unsurprisingly, his first thought is also to just murder Michael.

"We're not going to murder anyone, but I do need to ask you to do something really uncool of me."

"Anything, Soph. Just tell me what to do." Isaacs voice is absolute as it sounds in my ear.

"I need you to talk to Kim and see if she has any photos or mean texts from Michael. Anything that makes him look really bad." I explain and Isaac is silent for a moment.

"Alright, I'm on it. Though judging by his dumb jock body I don't think his nudes will be very embarrassing." Isaac argues, and I can't help but laugh into the receiver.

"He may not mind if people see them, but his dad sure will. I don't think Michael would want to sully his family name like that."

I hang up from talking to Isaac then drive to campus. I know Gabbie is in a sorority because she was wearing an Alpha Delta Pi tee shirt when I saw her at the football game.

I run up to the beautiful sorority house and knock on the door. It's not that late yet so someone is bound to be awake.

A girl with long blonde hair and a lot of freckles opens the door.

"Can I help you?" She asks with a thick valley accent.

"Yeah, actually I'm looking for Gabbie." I tell the girl who smiles. "No probs, gimmie a sec." the girl says before running off and leaving me standing in the door way like an idiot.

I walk inside and look around, curious about what the inside of this mansion looks like. My parents would have loved for me to be a sorority girl, but that sounded like a nightmare to me.

"Hey, do I know you?" Gabbie asks as she walks up to me while I'm admiring some crown molding on the ceiling.

"Uh, yeah we met at a football practice session actually." I say awkwardly.

"Ahh that's right, Michael's new toy. What Can I do for you?" Gabbie says bitterly, gnawing on her thin bottom lip.

"Actually, I was hoping you could help me. Michael is trying to use some dirt on me to get me to sleep with him, and so I'm looking for dirt myself."

Gabbie's face is suddenly plastered with shock. "Wait a sec, you haven't slept With him by now?"

"No, and I'm not going to. Will you help me?" I can tell I've earned Gabbie's respect as she smiles brightly at me. "Tell me what I can do."

As it turns out Gabbie isn't the only sorority sister that Michael has sex over. Gabbie introduces me to a few other girls and suddenly my e-mail is flooded with Michael's veiny penis and curt messages. He would literally seduce these women then tell them they should have known it was just a one time thing because they weren't special enough to tie him down.

"That should do it, thanks Gabbie." I say as I walk to the door of the sorority house. "Let me come with you?" She suddenly asks "I want to see his stupid face when his plan backfires, plus you need bodies. You know, Incase we have to kill him."

I almost choke on my own laughter, Gabbie is way cooler than I would have pegged from the first time that we met. She hasn't even asked me what secret of mine he's holding against me, she just wants to destroy Michael and I respect that.

"Sure, why the hell not?" I say with a smile and a shrug.

Everyone agrees to meet back at my apartment once we've gathered enough evidence. I'm surprised to find that when I pull into the parking lot that Isaac is leaning against his car talking to Kim.

"Hey Kim." I say awkwardly as I walk over to her and Isaac.

"Hey Sophie, I'm really sorry about... everything. I want to help." She says in a meek tone.

"You don't need to apologize to me, Kim. You didn't take anything away from me." My eyes lock with Isaac to see how he's doing and other than a little awkward he seems line.

I introduce everyone to Gabbie as we go inside, and finally Fiona rolls up. As soon as she walks into my apartment she's shooting dagger eyes at Kim.

This is going so well.

"Did you get anything?" I ask Fiona as I try to keep on track.

"Uh, Yeah. I got 8 bunch of photos and this one girl, Elizabeth was actually his girlfriend for a while that he cheated on like eight times. There's a lot of texts between them that she sent me."

Suddenly Gabbie's face looks guilty and she sighs.

"Poor Liza, I was one of those 'like eight times'." Gabbie says in shame.

"This is a judgement free zone. We're here to screw over Michael Taylor. Nothing else is important." I reassure Gabbie and Fiona agrees, which I take a promise that she won't beat up Kim.

We print everything off and practically destroy my printer. I won't be able to print any manuscripts anytime soon but it's worth it just to humiliate Michael.

I try to call Thomas again, but his phone is still off and I figure he's just gone to bed by now.

"Alright, Soph lets do this. Call him." Fiona says to me and I feel so nervous I could faint. There's no reason to wait the full twenty-four hours that Michael so graciously gave me, but part of me still wants to put it off for as long as possible.

"Okay, you're right. I'll do it."

The whole room falls silent as I call Michael. Even though it's going on midnight he still answers almost like he's been expecting me.

"Well hello there, sweet heart." He says with a cheerful voice.

I know I have to sound convincing so in my most flirtatious tone I reply "Hey Handsome."

I wanna barf.

"I was thinking it over, and I realized I'd be an idiot if I didn't take this opportunity to do it with you at least once. I can't sleep anyways, so why don't you come keep me company?"

Everyone in the room is biting my couch cushions and their palms just to keep from audibly laughing. Isaac even almost looks like there are tears in his eyes because he finds it so funny. Gabbie is making humping motions at me as I speak, making it even harder for me to keep a straight face.

"I'm so glad you've come to your senses. I'll be right over." Michael responds and we hang up. Once the connection is cut everyone, including myself, erupts in epic laughter.

"That was too damn much!" Isaac says with a wheeze.

"Yeah, you're killing me Soph!" Fiona agrees and puts her head on Isaacs shoulder as she laughs herself into oblivion. Isaac wraps his arm around her shoulder and both laugh for a while.

Suddenly they both stiffen and separate awkwardly as the two of them realize they were being normal towards each other.

This is exhausting. Just get married already! Is what I want to say but it's obviously not the time for that.

We all wait impatiently for Michael to arrive and just about ten minutes later there's an eager knock on my door.

"Come in." I say loudly and I will never forget the look on Michael's face as he opens the door for as long as I live.

His handsome smile falls into a confused grimace that turns to shock as he sees Kim and then fear as he sees Gabbie.

"What's going on here?" Michael says as he scans the faces of everyone in the room before his eyes fall on mine.

"What's happening is I'm one upping you. You want to black mail me, Michael Taylor? Then go right ahead." I say smugly, crossing my arms over my chest.

Gabbie steps forward now. "But before you go blabbing my girls hot gossip all over campus you should know that it won't end well for you."

Fiona puts her hand on Gabbie's shoulder and smirks. "Because you have dug your own grave, dick bag. And it's so really deep."

"You screwed over way too many women Michael. I found about ten percent of them and they've supplied me with photo after photo of your penis from every angle imaginable plus a list as long as Santa's of cruel and embarrassing text messages you've sent them." I say with confidence.

Kim steps forward this time, obviously ready to give him a piece of her mind too.

"You either drop whatever this is or tomorrow morning a thousand copies of each of these are being scattered all over campus." Kim throws some of our print offs at Michael's feet who looks as pale as snow right now.

"I know you may not care if the world sees your penis, but Id bet your father would be furious. Perhaps, disowned level furious." I add as an extra insult.

"Oh, and Incase all of this still isn't enough to convince you, Mikey, I'll kick your ass if you even try to tell anyone." Isaac says with a masculine growl that even makes me scared.

Michael looks pissed for a moment before his face softens and he gives a throaty laugh.

"I didn't think you had it in you to play hard ball, Sophia, but I stand corrected. Your secrets safe with me... Deal?" I can tell Michael is seriously nervous as he sticks his hand out for me to shake. Him and I both know that if his father knew what he was up to it would be really bad.

I step forward and take Michael's hand as we seal our gentleman's agreement.

With a locked jaw Michael turns and walks out my front door, and honestly I've never even so relieved before in my life.

Everyone seems to let out a ragged breath as the room is filled with silence.

"Holy crap that worked!" I say excitedly and everyone around me starts to laugh.

"I'm really glad it did," Gabbie jokes "but if I'm being honest I was really hoping I'd get to post those pictures around school!"

"Why don't you hold on to them then, they may come in handy."

We all joke and get on for a while until we decide that it's time to part ways.

I still have to take Gabbie home and Isaac has to escort Kim.

"Hey Isaac, could we stop at a diner and talk before you take me home?" Kim asks, and I look towards Fiona who's about to chew all of her finger nails off.

"Yeah, I think that's a good idea." Isaac says in agreement. He walks up to me and gives me a big hug. "Call me later?" I ask and he nods.

"Bye everyone," him and Kim say their goodbyes before walking out.

"Fiona, would you like to come with me to take Gabbie home?" I ask but she just shakes her head, her imagination getting the best of her. I'm sure she's already imagining Kim and Isaac getting back together and having babies, but I know Isaac better than that by now.

"Nah I think I'm going to head home. Tell me how it all works out though." Fiona says and gives me a hug before saying goodbye to Gabbie and leaving.

"Guess it's just us," Gabbie says cheerfully and I nod. "You know I like you a lot more than I thought I would." Gabbie adds with a laugh.

"I know right?" I reply grinning.

We make our way to my car and as we're driving along we make small talk.

"You're an English major right?" She asks and I nod.

"Yup, creative writing emphasis." I explain.

"Well that's cool because my dads actually a publisher so if you ever write anything good you can send it my way."

"Holy crap are you serious?" I ask, gawking at Gabbie.

"Super serious. You helped me get revenge on Michael, it's the least I could do, besides, I have a feeling we're gonna be great friends."

Laughter fills my little car, and soon Gabbie is climbing out.

"Text me!" She yells as she runs up to her door. I agree to do so and once she's safely inside I pull my phone out to call Thomas again.

It goes straight to voice mail, and I almost throw my phone out of my window.

If he's going to be a baby and ignore me then I'm just going to drive over there so we can talk about this like adults.

I love him, and I'm sure this is just what it's like when you have your first light.

That thought makes me audibly giggle. We finally had our first fight. I knew this day would come eventually.

I put my car in park outside of Thomas's apartment and jog up the stairs to his door. I'm just about to knock when the door swings open and standing there is Thomas Crane with his shirt unbuttoned and his pants undone next to Clara who has her shoes in her hand and her shirt on backwards.

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Chapter 39

Right after Fiona leaves...

Fiona POV:

I was going to just go home, I swear I was, but then I drove by that stupid diner and saw Isaacs car parked outside.

Right now he's in there eating food and talking to Kim. They're probably just going to get back together. She probably just redeemed herself tonight and they're going to ride off into the sunset and have a bunch of babies. I did this. I pushed him away and into the arms of that skank.

I pull into the diner parking lot and check my face in the mirror. As soon as I establish that I look flawless I step out of my car and march into the diner.

Kim can have Isaac back over my dead body.

I storm in there and spot their table.

I take long confident strides to their booth and once I reach them they both look up at me in confusion.

"Fiona, what's going on? Is something wrong?" Isaac asks me and I roll my eyes.

"Yeah something's wrong. You're eating a cheeseburger with Kim, you ass hat! How could you do that to me?" I ask with my eye brows scrunched up.

"Do that to you? Kim and I are just talking." Isaac says and I look over to Kim who is staring up at me with big nervous eyes.

"Just talking? What do I look like a new born baby deer? I know what happening here and I've come to put a stop to it. You can't get back together with her, I won't let you!" I say angrily, my emotions deiinitely getting the better of me.

"Fiona were not-" Kim starts but I glare at her. "Can it easy bake oven, I wasn't talking to you."

Isaac snickers at my joke and rubs his hand through his curly blonde hair.

"Seriously Fiona, what's gotten in to you?" He asks, his laugh not doing well to hide his genuine concern.

Is he this stupid? He's going to make me say it isn't he?

"I love you, okay? I pushed you away because I was afraid of my feelings, but that was a mistake. I'm fucking stupid and I'm sorry, but if you try to make up with Kim I will probably kill both of you!" I say in a mad rant style, drawing way too much attention to myself.

"Why did you just say?" Isaac asks as he quickly gets up out of his seat to loom over me.

"I said I Lo-" I can't even finish my sentence before Isaacs lips are on mine and he's kissing me so passionately I could melt into a puddle on the ground.

"Gosh, I love you too Fi." Isaac growls as he pulls away. I bite my lip and look up at him in disbelief.

"Really?" I ask, my head swimming from the sensation of his kiss.

"Of course I do, I only left because I didn't want to get hurt again. I'm so happy you came to your senses." Isaac admits, and I blush slightly, guilt burning in my chest for not just making it official that night we hooked up.

"I'm all yours, I promise," I say sweetly. Were about to lean in for another kiss when Kim's meek voice sounds from beside us.

"Uhm, can someone please take me home?"

"Sure Kim. Let's go." I say as I turn to face her. Her eyes gloss over with a look of pure horror.

"On second thought I think I'll take an Uber.." Kim crawls out of the booth and scurries to the front door with her phone in her hand.

"We really were just talking, you know." Isaac says with a genuine smile "we were getting closure. She was my girlfriend for two years, I think getting a genuine explanation and apology was just what I needed to put all of this behind me for good."

I roll my eyes and grab Isaac by his shirt, pulling him closer to me "I was willing to fight for you, you know. If you tried to take her back I'd have hit her with my car."

"Oh I know. You're absolutely crazy but I love it. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go with my girlfriend." Isaac says with a smirk. He throws some cash down on the table and grabs me by my hand, pulling me out of the dinner so fast I almost get whiplash.

It's so annoying that we drove desperately, but at least we both get to share a laugh as we race back to my apartment well lover the posted speed limit.

As soon as we get there we're rushing out of our cars. Isaac beats me to my front door and once I catch up to him he grabs my keys from me, eagerly unlocking my door.

Once we're safely inside I start ripping his clothes off. Last time we were about to do this I didn't get a good enough look at him. I want to see every inch of this man this time.

Isaac pulls my shirt off and yanks my pants down. We desperately undress each other until we're both stark naked.

Isaac kisses me hard on the lips, one hand groping my breast and the other rubbing between my legs as he backs me up against my bedroom door.

I moan against his mouth and my knees tremble. I grab the throbbing hardness between Isaacs legs and pump it excitedly in my small hand.

The urge to taste him overwhelms me and I drop to my knees, wrapping my full mouth around his cock. He groans instantly and grabs my hair, guiding me as I give him head.

"Wow that's good." Isaac groans, his voice telling me he's impressed as his gorgeous face twists up in a devilish smile.

After a few more moments, I stand back up and push Isaac firmly onto my bed.

"Condom?" He asks, mostly wondering if I think we should use one since we didn't the iirst time. I'd rather feel him inside of me raw, but that's probably not a good idea.

"Bottom drawer on the night stand" I instruct him. Isaac fishes out the little foil square and rolls the rubber down his length. Once it's safe to ride, I straddle him and lower myself on to his pleasant girth. His manhood fills me up, and I moan pleasurably as I smile down at him.

Our hips grind together perfectly, and I take in every sensation of the man below me.

His glossy brown eyes, his erotic groans, his thrusting hips. I take it all in, figuratively and literally.

I've never been one for love, but if this is it then sign me up because my heart and body have never been so in sync before.

Isaac grips my chest and leans up, licking and sucking my nipples. I run my hand through his golden hair and moan my first orgasm of many right against his ear.

Isaac grows and flips us over so that he's on top of me, his thrusts going slow and steady. His jaw is hanging open as he slowly glides inside of my sex, making me feel every single inch of him as he burns me to my core.

Isaac pins my arms above my head and rocks into my body with blissful pumps, our eyes locked. He leans down and kisses my swollen lips, our tongues marrying into one as we taste each other.

I've never done this before. This isn't fucking, this is making love.

Isaac starts thrusting harder and deeper, but he keeps up the same pace. My eyes try to hold his hot gaze but they keep rolling back inside my head in pure ecstasy.

Isaac uses one of his strong hands to grab my jaw and force my eyes to hold with his.

"I love you Fiona." He says in the sexiest voice I've ever heard, causing my whole body to tense from the added pleasure.

"And I- I lo-ve you too." Ibarely manage to whimper as another orgasm takes hold of my trembling body.

Isaacs lips crash back into mine and he groans loudly against my mouth as he comes, sparks literally erupting behind my involuntarily closed eyes.

After a few moments of recovery Isaac pulls out of me and discards the condom in my nearby trash can.

"That was incredible." He says with a deep throaty laugh.

"I've never... never felt anything like that." I admit, still laying breathlessly on my back.

Isaac crawls back on the bed next to me, his arms wrapping around my body possessively.

"I'm never letting you go Fiona Reese. I hope you really love me, because you're stuck with me either way."

I smile against Isaacs arm then kiss it softly. Usually I would make a joke here, but I can't bring myself to ruin this moment.

"Tie me to the bedpost, Isaac Hansen, I'm yours for good."

We lay in silence, completely at ease for several moments until Isaac suddenly perks up.

"I forgot that I told Sophia I'd call her." He says as he begins looking for his jeans on my floor.

"Any particular reason?" I ask him and he shakes his head no.

"No, but she asked me to. Besides, there's definitely a lot to talk about us."

Isaac find his phone and dials Sophia, but it goes straight to voice mail.

"She's probably having some make up sex of her own. We can tell her tomorrow." I say as I shrug off the situation.

"Now get back here and do all of that again, boyfriend."

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One Month Later.

"I can't look at it, Sophia! You look." Fiona begs me as she shoves the little white stick in my face.

I'm nervous too as I take it from her, my whole body tingling with anticipation.

"I'm scared too!" I cry out, not able to check if there's one line or two.

"I'm more scared, now look gosh!" She yells with blood shot eyes.

"Okay okay!" I say defensively as I bring Fiona's gross pee stick in a sandwich baggie into my line of sight.

Two little pink lines stare me in the face and my jaw instantly drops.

"Holy cow, Fiona! You're pregnant!" I almost scream, and drop the pregnancy test on the ground like its made of hot lava.

"Are you really serious?! " Fiona matches my pitch and scrambles to pick the test up off of the ground.

"Holy cow I'm going to be a mom? I don't know how to be a mom! My pet fish died after three days, Sophia help me oh my gosh!" Fiona has a panic attack on my bathroom floor, and I instantly kneel down and wrap my arms around her.

"This is great news Fiona! You'll be a great mom, and I'll be here to help you through everything! We graduate next semester and Isaac loves you. This is awesome!" I cheer happily for Fiona's sake, but deep inside I feel a twinge of subtle jealousy.

Every morning I walk into Professor Crane's classroom. Every morning our eyes lock in agony and I have to pretend I'm okay. Every morning I see him almost break down and cry, and every morning I wipe away tears on the sleeve of my over sized sweater.

"You really think so?" Fiona asks me, the occasional tear streaming down her face and messing up her make up.

"I know so, Fi. This baby is going to have the best life ever."

Fiona scoffs and stands back on her feet, wiping her eyes delicately with her porcelains fingers.

"It's probably going to have issues because two weekends ago we got shit faced and hinged project runway."

"We will make you an appointment to make sure everything is all good, but I'm pretty sure it's okay. What you really need to focus on is how your going to tell Isaac." As soon as I say those words there's a knock on my door and then the sound of it opening.

"Hey it's me, I'm back with the Chinese food." Isaac says as the sound of crinkling bags fill my stagnant apartment.

Fiona's face goes even more pale than usual and her eyes look up at me frantically.

"Uh, we'll be there in a sec." I call out to Isaac, my use of the word sec indicating that I've been spending way too much time with Gabbie.

It's been hard to mend my broken heart when my two best friends are always making out, so instead I've latched onto Gabbie for emotional support.

"You want to just tell him right now?" I ask Fiona who looks frantic.

"What? No! Maybe? I don't know Sophia! What do I do?" Fiona looks like she's about to fall apart, so I grab her shoulders to steady her.

"Just follow my lead, okay?" I say in a comforting manner. Fiona nods and I grab her hand, pulling her into the living room where Isaac is waiting.

"There's my two favorite ladies. Fiona are you okay?" Isaac asks as he notices how red and puffy his girlfriends eyes are.

"Uhm, no, actually she's sick." I say as I improvise.

"Sick? Do you need me to run and get something? Medicine? Something easier to digest than Chinese food?" Isaacs helpfulness kicks in almost instantly and he's on his feet comforting Fiona. It's so cute I could die.

Fiona suddenly starts smiling and laughing. It goes on for several seconds and she can't seem to make it stop.

"I can't," She wheezes “I cant believe I was even worried, baby, you'll be a great dad." Fiona says between giggles as she wraps her arms around Isaacs neck.

"Thank you bab- wait. What?!" Isaac looks like he's been slapped across the face as he pulls Fiona away and holds her at arms length.

"Are you pregnant?" He asks with a loud booming voice, his mouth already contorting into a handsome smile.

"Yes!" Fiona shrieks back and they pull each other into a long loving hug.

"Oh my god, Fiona I'm so happy. This is amazing." Isaac says, and I notice a few happy tears springing from his eyes.

"It must have been from the first time, we've been careful ever since." Fiona says and Isaac laughs. "Well I guess we really are stuck with each other, aren't we?"

I love that my friends are so happy, but the mood is really starting to get to me.

"I'm going to go for a walk and let you guys talk about things. I'll be back in a while." I say to them, and they instantly start trying to conceal their enthusiasm for my sake.

"No, stay! The food will get cold if you leave, besides there's not much to talk about yet." Fiona insists but I shake my head. This is very important and I don't want to bring them down.

"I'll be right back, Fi, gosh you're smothering me." I play it off as a joke and walk towards my door.

"And don't you dare think about having sex on my couch while I'm gone."

Once I'm outside I can take a deep breath. This last month had been nothing but hell as I sort through these feelings that don't seem to want to give me any rest.

I naturally start walking to the school because that's where my feet always seem to take me. The air is warm now and spring is in full bloom. The smell of blossoming trees and fresh rain hangs heavy in the air.

I've thought of forgiving Thomas more times than I could ever admit. Every night while I'm crying myself to sleep I think of what it would be like just to feel his arms around me one last time.

I know I have to be strong, but that's so hard when I feel so weak all of the time.

It feels like a lifetime ago that I was Literarylane21, messaging Thomas secretly every night.

I would give anything to have those days back again.

Now I just spend my nights in my apartment, finishing my senior assignments and working on my novel that is no longer a cutesy romance novel by the way. I was too far along in the plot to change what the character looked like, but I was just far enough along to add an amazing twist.

Clara's likeness will forever be represented in my first ever novel, The Dead Dame, an erotic murder mystery, and you guessed it. She dies.

Gabbie even thinks my book has a good shot of being published, so when I've finished it she will take it to her dad for review.

I watch the campus come into view as I draw ever closer to the school that's housed me for nearly four years. My birthday is coming up soon, and I'm honestly excited to leave twenty-one behind. This year has been so hard, I'm just ready to be done with it.

I walk into the English building to see if anyone is in the computer labs working on an assignment. I've been doing some tutoring in my free time for the sake of spreading my knowledge.

I walk down the empty corridors, most classes having ended an hour ago. There are cliche posters of Shakespeare and Jane Austen on the walls along with poetry club fliers. I stare down at my feet for a while, and doing so causes me to accidentally walk right to Thomas's office.

My throat goes dry as I look up and see his name plate written in silver beside the door. I turn to walk away, but before I've created much of a distance I hear the door creak open.

"Sophia?" Thomas voice is barely above a whisper as he calls my name, the soft vibrato echoing off of the stone walls.

I turn to face him alone for the first time in a month. He looks Terrible. He hasn't shaved in weeks, his dress shirt is wrinkly, and his hair is down almost in his eyes.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to come this far." I offer as an excuse for my presence. I turn to keep walking away, but Thomas's desperate voice wills me back.

"Can we just talk for a moment, please."

My heart almost breaks even further as the desperation in his voice hits it like a jack hammer.

I bite my lip, trying to keep strong and just leave, but I can't.

I turn back around to face Thomas and nod my head, vocal contirmation impossible right now.

I walk into Thomas‘s office and look around at the small well decorated room. There are book shelves along almost every wall, and they're all full. If I were here on different circumstances I would be admiring them all.

"I'm so sorry." Thomas says, his hand coming up to cover his mouth almost as if his apology was an involuntary outburst.

"I'm trying to better myself. I've stayed sober, and I'm trying to get through this, but god it's so hard." He admits, his body starting to shake.

My lips tremble as I look on at the man I'm still so desperately in love with.

"It's hard for me too." I whisper, my voice frail and soft.

Thomas nods in understanding, I don't want him to think that I can just get over him. I don't want him to think what we had wasn't real.

"There's something... something I want you to have." Thomas says as as he walks over to his briefcase.

My heart thumps rapidly in my chest as I watch him undo the latches and pull a small black box out of his case.

I start shaking my head and stepping backwards towards his office door.

He better not. I don't think I can handle it.

Thomas walks up to me, his face full of pain.

"I bought this for you a while back, and it's only right that you have it Sophia. I can't return it, and I don't want to. Please take it." Thomas begs me.

Tears fall down my face like a waterfall as I keep shaking my head no. There's no way I could except my engagement ring as a parting gift. It's too cruel.

"Thomas... please stop." I beg, but he just takes a firm step towards me and opens the little velvet box.

Trough blurry eyes I stare down at the most beautiful piece of jewelry I've ever seen. It's rose gold and peppered with diamonds. There's a large diamond in the center that's surrounded by smaller diamonds that weave a beautiful but simple pattern along the band.

"Please just keep it. I can't. I just can't hold on to it anymore Sophia. It's like a horcrux." Thomas pushes the box towards me, and after several seconds of hesitation I grab it with shaking hands

I don't want it either, but there's something about the way the pain is etched on his face that makes me take it.

We stand for several seconds in silence as I marvel at the beautiful ring hand picked for me. Thomas watches me for a while before clearing his throat and turning towards his desk.

"You should probably go." He says with a sadness looming over his words. I nod my head and grab for his door handle before a sense of bravery takes hold of my the likes of which I haven't felt in a while.

"Kiss me." I tell him firmly. Thomas turns to look at me so quickly that I'm afraid he has whiplash.

"What did you just say?" He asks me in disbelief.

"Kiss me. One last time." I reply, and not even a second later Thomas's familiar taste is against my lips. His hands are cupping my face and his mouth is desperately clinging to mine as we knowingly say our silent goodbyes.

This semester is over in a few days, and there's no way I could handle taking another one of his classes next semester.

When Thomas pulls away it feels like my glass heart falls to the hard floor. We both swallow and compose ourselves before I put my hand back on the door knob.

"Goodbye, Thomas." I say through soft sobs.

"Goodbye, Sophia." He replies, matching my solemn tone.

I open the office door and walk out, not daring to look back at Thomas. My hand tightens around the box in my fmgers, it's presence making my skin burn.

I turn a corner in the hallway, and as soon as I'm sure that Thomas can't see me I fall to my knees in painful sobs.

In a moment of weakness I open the fragile box and take the ring out.

I stare at it for several seconds with blurry eyes before standing back up.

I rub my eyes and try to get the tears to stop falling. Once they do, I grab the beautiful ring and slip it slowly on to my left ring finger.

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Chapter 40

New Year's Eve...

"Do this shot!" Gabbie squeals as she hands me a tiny shot glass full of clear alcohol.

It's eleven fifteen on New Year's Eve and this bar is absolutely packed.

"Are you trying to kill me?" I ask as I laugh, taking the glass and downing its burning contents.

I make a derp face as the taste resonates in my mouth.

"Gosh, that's foul!" I complain, but Gabbie just throws her hands in the air and screams.

"We're celebrating, baby! It's New Years eve and tomorrow you and I are on a plane to visit my daddy! You're getting published bitch, now get fucked up with me!" Gabbie gives her speech like a pro and I join in.

"Gosh yeah!" I yell and we laugh in unison.

As soon as I finished 'The Dead Dame' I sent it to Gabbie who absolutely fell in love with it. She sent my work to her dad and not even two days later I got a call asking me if I'd like to be represented by his publishing house.

I literally almost died.

My last semester of college ended two weeks ago, and now my real life can begin.

At least, as real as it can be. I still wear the ring of an ex boyfriend on my wedding finger everywhere I go. I know it's insane, and Fiona has begged he a million times to take it off, but she's incredibly pregnant, and I can run faster than her.

"I can't believe you've never taken me to this bar before, it's really awesome!" Gabbie screams in my ear.

"That's because the girl my ex cheated on me with works here!" I yell back at her over the noise surrounding us.

"Are you serious? Is she here right now?" Gabbie asks and her head whips towards the bar.

"I don't know, and I don't want to know." I say with a shrug, trying to just enjoy my night.

"Don't you wanna confront her? I bet you haven't. I bet you were a little bitch about it. Admit it!" Gabbie says accusingly at me, her shot of vodka going straight to her head.

I roll my eyes and sigh awkwardly.

"There was nothing to confront." I insist, but Gabbie puffs up like a puffer fish.

"That hoe steals your man and you didn't even punch her in the face? You let her win. SMH Sophia. I thought you were a bad bitch, but now I see your just a sweater loving nerd with no back bone, and a wimpy vagina." Gabbie's sass makes my jaw fall to the floor.

Wimpy vagina ?!

It's really easy to see Why Gabbie and Fiona get along so well.

"I was being the bigger person!" I defend.

"Screw that. Go find this hoe and give her a piece of that sexy brain of yours!" Gabbie argues back.

I don't know if it's just the little bit of liquor I've had talking, or if Gabbie should have been a political major but I'm feeling really convinced right now.

"You know what? You're right. If she's here I'm telling her off English Major style."

"English GRADUATE style!" Gabbie corrects me with a high five.

I start to maneuver through the crowd of sweaty bodies until I finally make the to the bar, Gabbie hot on my heels.

I look around at the many bartenders until one with long black hair and tan skin catches my eye.

"That's her." I say as I point to Clara, my stomach churning just from looking at her.

"Oh my goodness, Sophia, don't freak out but she looks just like the girl in your book." Gabbie whispers in my ear and I roll my eyes. I desperately want to face palm, but I decide not to.

"How am I going to talk to her when there's a million people waiting for a drink?" I say dejectedly.

"Just walk up to her and say you need to talk to her woman to woman. Be confident about it." Gabbie offers me her wise instructions, but they just make me feel nauseous. I'm so bad at confrontation that it isn't even funny.

Gabbie can see that I'm about to bail so she puts her hand on my lower back and pushes me towards the bar where Clara is working.

Clara's eyes dart around the busy room and eventually fall on mine, her pouty lips separating in sudden shock.

It's such a shame that a girl so beautiful could be so damn evil.

"Hey Clara." I say with fake confidence. "Hey." She replies with caution.

"I want to talk to you, do you have a minute?" I ask and Clara looks around at all of her customers.

"I'm kind of busy actually, you know because it's kind of New Years." She says with a rude tone that makes me cringe.

"Fine, we can just talk here then," I say bitterly, confidence building as I speak.

"Why did you try to have a sex with my boyfriend?" I ask loudly over the crowd.

I can see sweat instantly appear and pepper Clara's forehead.

"He tried to do that to me." She says as a response, but I'm not buying it.

"He was drunk. You were sober. You're also a lesbian, so how did you end up in his apartment?" My voice is seething as I ask this question that's been burning me since it happened all those months ago.

"I wanted to hurt you, okay? I wanted you to feel like I did when you rejected me!" She replies angrily and I feel a growl grow in my throat.

"Rejection and getting cheated on are two entirely different levels of pain, Clara!" I shout and slam my hand on the wooden bar table.

"Whatever, he didn't want me any ways. You shouldn't be so bitter!" Clara leans over the bar and puts her finger in my face "you shouldn't even have been mad at him, it wasn't his fault."

Not only am I now surprised that Clara is defending Thomas, but I'm also incredibly confused. What does she mean it wasn't his fault?

"It was both of your faults! He got drunk and betrayed me. It should have been you who said no. If you really loved me Clara you would have done that for me!" I screech my words at Clara and I can tell a huge crowd has formed around us as the drama unfolds.

"He was just trying to drown his sorrows, I'm the one that. I.." Clara suddenly turns red and stops talking.

"You did what?" I say, my heart threatening to bet out of my chest.

"I drugged him, okay?!" She yells, remorse evident on her face.

"You did what?“ I yell, my Whole body erupting with anger, and my blood turning to lava.

"I put rohypnol is is drink." Clara admits and there's an eruption of Ooohhhhhs from all around us.

Something inside of me instantly snaps and I'm jumping over the bar, my hands aimed right at Clara's face.

I grab her by her hair and throw her to the ground, punching her as hard as I can.

"You tried to rape my boyfriend for revenge?! Are you insane?!" I yell between violent sobs and ragged breaths.

I feel strong hands grab me roughly from behind and pull me off of Clara who has blood pouring out of her nose.

"I'm sorry, Okay?!" She chokes out, trying to use a bussing towel to stop the blood.

"Sorry?! You ruined my future Clara!" I scream as the bouncer who has be in his arms starts carrying my towards the door.

The man throws me outside and crosses his hands over his chest.

"You wanna start a fight do it somewhere else, now stay out." He says in a dry voice as he blocks my reentry.

Gabbie runs out seconds later with a look of pure horror on her face.

"Oh my god, that was the most bad ass thing I've ever seen! You launched over the bar, and I think you broke her nose."

I roll my eyes and straighten my slightly torn dress. My hair is in a disheveled mess and I'm pretty sure my tears have destroyed my mascara.

"I could seriously kill her." I say in an animalistic growl.

My phone starts vibrating in my purse, but I ignore it as I try to regain my composure.

Gabbie wraps me in a big hug "it's going to be okay." She assures me, but I just shake my head and cry on to her shoulder.

"No it isn't, Gabs. I broke up with him, and it wasn't even his fault. He didn't betray me, he was drugged. I threw away my entire future because of a lie."

Gabbie looks dejected as she contemplates my words. My phone starts ringing again so in an agitated huff I pull it out of my purse.

"What Isaac?" I ask much more rudely than is warranted.

"Get the hospital Sophia! Fiona is in labor and I'm freaking the out." Isaacs voice is frantic as he speaks and I can hear Fiona screaming profanities in the distance.

"Are you serious? Holy cow we'll be right there!" I yell before hanging up and having a miniature panic attack.

"Fiona's in labor!" I shriek to Gabbie whose eyes dart wide open.

"What are we going to do? We took a cab here?" She asks me, and I had already thought the same thing.

My mind races with all of my options, but the most obvious one is staring me in the face.

"Take off your shoes." I demand as I start pulling my own heels off.

"Are you crazy? It's twenty degrees out here!"

"Take them off. We're about to run."

"To the hospital?!" Gabbie asks, terrified.

"No. Just a few blocks over, now come on."

My cold bare feet slap against the frozen pavement as quickly as they can carry me with Gabbie gaSping for breath behind me.

Luckily for me, someone convinced me to start running every morning, so this is easy for me.

We run and run until a familiar apartment complex comes into view.

I run up the stairs and start banging on Thomas's apartment as loudly as I can, Gabbie falling over gasping for air as she catches up.

"You're going to kill me!" She groans but I ignore her.

Seconds later Thomas is ripping his door open and staring down at me with familiar blue eyes. They rake over me, taking in my torn dress, disheveled hair, and bare feet.

"Sophia. What's going on?" Thomas asks, fear plastered on his handsome features.

I want nothing more than to grab him and kiss him and make up for all of the lost time between us, but right now there are more pressing matters.

"Fiona is in labor, can you take us to the hospital?" I ask with urgency.

"Oh gosh, is that Professor Crane?" Gabbie's voice echoes through the night.

No. I think.

That's my Thomas.

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"Let me grab my shoes." Is all Thomas responds with as he disappears into his apartment, leaving Gabbie and I waiting for him at his door.

"How do you know where the hottest professor ever lives?" She asks me ignorantly before her mouth falls to her feet and she whisper yells "oh my god! Professor Crane is your ex?!"

I bite my lip and nudge her in the ribs "Yes, now be quiet would you." I scold Gabbie who presses her lips firmly shut and tries not to smile.

I'm never going to hear the end of this.

"Okay I'm parked out front, let's go." Thomas says as he runs out with his shoes on. He's also holding a familiar pink zip up hoodie in his hands that he hands to me before locking up his front door.

"Put this on before you catch your death of a cold." He insists, and I feel warmth spread through my chest. I hold the familiar fabric up to my nose, and almost groan when I smell his scent instead of my usual perfume.

I had lost my jacket when I was kicked out of the bar, but that was obviously the furthest thing from my mind at the time.

"Have you forgotten, Thomas? I love the cold." I say reminiscently as we all make our way for the black Chrysler sitting in the parking lot. I pull the hoodie over my shoulders as I relish in the warmth and the smell from it.

Thomas looks over at me with lost eyes, his memories taking him to a place that Gabbie nor I can see.

A place from months ago.

"Seatbelts everyone." Thomas says once we're all inside the car. Gabbie is in the back seat and I'm riding shot gun.

Thomas speeds out of the parking lot and towards the hospital, his hands expertly shifting through the gears of his car as he weaves through the New Years traffic. The way he grips the steering wheel is so sexy, and it send me reeling through my own memories.

The ones of him naked as he pleasures me.

"Why is it I always find you barefoot, Sophia?" Thomas asks me, a familiar smile pulling at his lips that isn't lost on me. His question pulls me out of my perverted thoughts and I sigh.

"It's been.... a long night." I offer in response. The clock is winding down closer to midnight as we speed through the cold winter streets.

"Long? It's been short for me! So much has happened! This is the best night of my life!" Gabbie coos from the back seat and I shoot daggers at her.

She gives me two thumbs up as our eyes lock and I can't help but giggle at her attitude. I probably should have explained what was happening before we got to Thomas's apartment, but it's too late now.

"We were at a bar down the street when we got the call from Isaac." Gabbie explains more properly.

"We took a cab to get there and we've both technically been drinking so driving wasn't an option at all. Sophia made us run to your place, Dr. Crane, which honestly is just fascinating to me, and I can't wait to hear the details later."

"Gabbie!" I yell and she shuts up, looking awkwardly out the window.

Thomas looks over at me with curious eyes, his blue stare lingering on my tight dress and exposed cleavage.

I hide my left hand away so that he can't see, the embarrassment alone would kill me.

"Was it just the two of you?" Thomas asks, his voice deepening as he fishes for answers. I know exactly what he's asking and it makes my chest ache.

Was I with a man? Thomas how could you be so foolish? Even when I thought you had betrayed me there was no one for me but you.

"Yes, it was just the two of us." I tell Thomas to put his mind at ease. This is the most we've talked in over half a year, and I can tell the circumstances are driving him mad.

We pull into the hospital parking lot and I run up to the receptionist, my heels clanking loudly on the hard linoleum. I'd have preferred to keep them off, but the hospital has a rule about bare feet.

"Fiona Reese? In labor. Probably saying gosh every three seconds" I frantically tell the receptionist.

"Yeah, I know the one. She's on the second floor, room 203." The receptionist replies with what seems like a bad taste in her mouth over Fiona.

Gabbie and I give a thankful nod to the receptionist and run for the elevator. Thomas is right behind us as we spam the up button.

"I was quite surprised to see Fiona around campus with a baby bump, who is the father? I thought she was into women." Thomas asks as we wait for the lift.

"It's Isaacs. They got together... well about nine months ago actually." I say with a knowing laugh.

Thomas looks surprised, but not at all disappointed.

"Well if anyone can tame Fiona it's Mr. Hansen. He's a very tolerant young man."

Gabbie starts giggling to herself and we both look over at her curiously.

"You called him a young man, but as I have learned about ten minutes ago you fancy the younger ones don't you, Professor."

I roll my eyes and shove Gabbie into the elevator with my hand over her mouth. I'm not usually so physical, but this has been an interesting night for me.

Thomas looks flushed as he hits the two button and we all ride the elevator in pained silence.

As soon as the metal doors clamber open we make a run for Fiona's room where she can be heard all the way down the hall.

"Hi, we're her friends." I tell the nurse who's walking out of Fiona's room.

"It's family only right now, I'm afraid." The nurse tells us but from inside Fiona can be heard screaming my name.

"If that's Sophia you better let her the fuck in, nurse, or you're gonna need a plastic surgeon!"

The nurse looks at me with terrified brown eyes. "Please tell me one of you is Sophia." She asks and I raise my hand.

"That's me."

"Oh thank the lord, go right in. Maybe you can get her to calm down."

"That's not likely, but I'll do my best." I say to the nurse as I rush through the door, leaving Gabbie and Thomas standing outside.

"Oh thank god!" Fiona cries as she sees me walk in. Isaac is standing beside her with sweat dripping down his face. Fiona has his hand in a death grip and he looks close to a mental breakdown.

"I'm tagging out!" Isaac bellows as he wriggles his hand out of his baby mommas grasp.

"Where do you think you're going?" Fiona says, appalled.

"To get water or vodka, whichever I find first. You're doing great babe. Push and breath and I'll be back!" Isaac says quickly as he pats me on the back, and runs out of the room.

I go and sit next to Fiona who looks like she's been in labor for days.

"Hasn't it only been like half an hour? What's wrong with you?" I say with an amused laugh.

"Do you think this is funny? A tiny human is threatening to murder my vagina!" Fiona cries and I just pat her head and kiss the top of it.

"This is just the home stretch, momma, literally. You can do this."

"I know, I just wish it would get out of me already!" She whimpers.

"Speaking of mommas, where is yours?" I ask as I straighten her pillows.

"She's coming, she's driving two hours, but she will probably make it in one." We both laugh at that comment.

Suddenly a contraction hits Fiona and she cries bloody murder as she grips my dress and pulls me against her.

"Breathe, you're doing great." I try to comfort her as my entire left breast is practically exposed from her grip.

"I think I'm dying." She admits as the contraction subsides and she falls back into her pillows. She seems to finally notice my attire and disheveled hair because she cocks an eye brow at me.

"Oh gosh, I forgot you were at a bar! I'm sorry! How did you even get here?" She asks and I stare down at the ring on my finger, biting my cheek.

"We asked Thomas for a ride." I admit and Fiona looks beyond shook at my words.

"Was he there?" She's asks and I shake my head no.

"We ran to his apartment when Isaac called me. I had actually just been kicked out of the bar because I attacked Clara. She put a date rape drug in his drink, Fiona. All to get revenge on me."

Fiona looks like she's prepared for murder, and she even starts to try and get up off of her bed.

"Let's go, I'm killing this bitch." Fiona says through clenched teeth, but I block her and lower her back onto the bed.

"I gave her a bloody nose, and you're insanely pregnant. I think we've done all we can for one night." I say as I try to soothe her.

"Fine, but you need to talk to Thomas in private. Have him drive you home to change clothes and tell him what you found out." Fiona seems oddly reasonable as she looks up at me.

"But what if he's over me? What if he's with someone new?" I ask, fear swallowing my self esteem.

"That man lost everything when he lost you, don't be so stupid. He is sill as in love with you as the day he found out you were Lane. Look at that ring on your finger and tell me you don't know that to be true."

I twist the beautiful hand around my finger and stare at the symbolic rose gold and diamonds. Fiona is oddly always right, she's never let me down in the past so who am I to argue with her now.

"But what about the baby?" I ask.

"She's not coming out anytime soon, take care of business and then come back, preferable with a dozen donuts and a jar of pickles."

I laugh and pull Fiona into a tight hug.

"I love you Fi."

"I love you too Soph."

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Meanwhile Thomas POV:

I don't even know why I've come up, I knew Fiona wouldn't want me in the room, and all I really am is the taxi service.

I start to turn to leave when I hear a mans voice from behind me.

"Professor Crane, what a surprise. What are you doing here?" Isaac asks me and I instantly straighten up.

"He drove me and Sophia here." Gabbie responds before I get the chance to.

"Well thank you, then. Fiona would be lost without her here. I'm honestly already about to pull my hair out from nervousness and it's only been thirty minutes."

Everyone laughs softly at Isaacs admission, but once the room falls silent again I decide I should get going.

"Well it was nice seeing you all, congratulations of graduation Isaac, and I wish you the best of luck."

I turn to walk away after a wave but Gabbie's high pitched voice stops me in my tracks.

"Oh no you don't, English guy." She calls after me.

I turn to face her and her cheeks are red with anger.

"Sophia did not just beat the he'll out of a lesbian rapist so that you can bail before you get a chance to talk about things."

"What?" Isaac and I both sat at the same time.

Gabbie is about to explain herself when Sophia walks back out of the delivery room.

"Thomas, could you drive me home? I want to change out of this dress." Her beautiful voice says to me, and I'm instantly knocked for a loop.

Sophia is so stunning that I can hardly breathe. When she was standing on my doorstep I thought I was dreaming. I never even thought i'd see her again.

"Of course." I respond, my voice weak. Isaac and Gabbie both watch as Sophia walks to where I'm standing. She says she'll be right back to her friends and starts moving towards the elevator.

My heart is threatening to stop all together as the doors open, and suddenly we're alone together for the first time since that painful kiss goodbye.

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Chapter 41

What do I say to him? Where do I begin?

The car ride is mostly quiet as I try to gather the thoughts that are swirling around inside my head.

I should have just believed him from the beginning, I just never would have guessed that Clara would do something like this. I hope it's not too late to fix all of my mistakes, but I won't know unless I try.

Thomas pulls into my apartment complex and puts his car in park.

"I'll wait for you here." He offers but I shake my head.

"Come inside, Thomas. There's a lot we need to talk about." My words seem to surprise him and I can see nervousness spread through his body.

He hesitantly shuts his car off and steps out of it. He follows me to the front door where I unlock it with shaking hands, my body already reacting to his solitary presence.

As soon as Thomas and I are alone inside my apartment I feel every once of my resolve break. Tears begin pouring from my eyes, and I turn to rush Thomas, wrapping my arms around him and burying my head against his chest.

His strong arms immediately react and he pulls me even tighter against him and he rests his chin on the top of my head.

"I'm so sorry," I say through quiet sobs as I cling to him for dear life.

"What could you possibly be sorry for, darling. You didn't do anything. I'm the one that should be sorry, and I am. God I'm so sorry." His voice grows hoarse as he carries on. "I'd give anything to fix what I've done."

I shake my head against his chest and wheeze.

"She drugged you, Thomas. She put a date rape drug in your drink. You didn't do anything wrong."

Thomas's mouth falls open as he regards me now at arms length.

"How do you know this?" He asks me in disbelief.

"You beat her up?" Thomas asks me and I nod through my tears.

"How did you know?"

"Gabbie mentioned something about it. I can't believe this Sophia. I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have gone to that bar, I'm such an idiot, and I can't believe you did that for me."

I start shaking my head and pull Thomas back to me for another hug.

"I don't care. I don't care if you drink every night, I don't care about anything anymore. I just want you. No, I need you Thomas. So much. I'm just not myself without you anymore."

Thomas kisses the top of my head and lets out a long ragged breath.

"I haven't had a drink since that night, Sophia, and I don't plan to ever again. And as for my heart, it's still unbelievably yours."

I feel a hot sensation churn in my stomach as I step back to look at Thomas, his words igniting my chest with the hottest flame I've ever felt.

I lock eyes with him then slowly lift my left hand into his View, showing him the ring that's been seated on my finger since the moment I received it.

"And mine has always been yours." I respond, barely audible.

Thomas's face flashes with desire as he looks from the ring to my eyes.

He closes the small distance between us with one step foreword and encases my face in his strong hands, pressing his lips to mine. His tongue instantly slides across my bottom lip and I part them, welcoming his taste. I pull him against me by his shirt, balling the fabric in my fist as I do.

Thomas pushes me back until my ass hits my couch and keeps me pinned there, unable to move, as if I'd even want to.

"I love you so much," he groans against my lips. I arch my back into his hips and smile against his rough kiss, the bit of facial hair he has rubbing against my cheeks.

"I love you more." I reply but Thomas just shakes his head, his actions becoming ravenous.

He grabs the straps of my dress and pulls them down my shoulders. The silky fabric instantly falls around my ankles, and I shiver from the sudden cold.

I desperately undo Thomas's belt buckle and once it's undone he's pulling his pants down. I rip his shirt open, completely unconcerned as little white buttons break loose from their threads.

There's a hunger between us that I've never felt before. The need to be with him is so strong. The need to consummate our revived love affair is undeniable.

Thomas lifts me off the ground and my heel clad ankles meet around his hips, securing me in place.

He kisses me savagely as he carries me to my bedroom. He's still so used to my furniture that he barely has to look up or check where he's going.

My back is greeted with my sheets as Thomas lowers me down with his body anchored between my thighs.

He grinds his hips against mine as our hands explore each other bodies. The tension is high, and we both know that this isn't a time for foreplay. I need to feel him inside of me like I need to breathe oxygen.

My bra is removed and discarded on to the floor. Thomas yanks my panties off like they're his greatest enemy, his own boxers being removed shortly after.

Suddenly from my living room an alarm starts buzzing that momentarily breaks the mood. "What is that?" Thomas asks breathlessly, and I immediately pull him down for a passionate kiss.

"Happy new year." I Whisper as we break apart. I had set a reminder alarm earlier in the night.

"This isn't a bad way to start off a new year." He grins down at me and then thrusts his hips into mine, his throbbing erection penetrating my sensitive body. A fierce pleasure takes hold of my nerves and Thomas seems to have no control as he fucks me.

He rocks his hips with mine raw and fast, his hands caressing all of my curves from the peaks of my breasts, to the curve of my ass.

His lips greedily smother mine and my cries fill the silent air.

I'm not sure if it's just because I haven't had sex in a long time or what, but nothing has ever felt this good before.

Thomas grabs my hips to keep them steady as he uses my body for his own devices. His face twists in unfiltered pleasure as he buries himself as deep as possible between my legs over and over again.

I come against his cock and he grins with animalistic pleasure at the sight.

He leans down to where his body is practically crushing me, and he begins moving his hips more methodically, my sharp moans turning to slow groans as he delicately grinds against my sex.

"Marry me Sophia." Thomas asks, no, demands, his eyes locked with mine and his heart thumps so hard that I can feel it through his chest.

"Yes. God yes." I cry out, wrapping my arms around his neck.

Thomas groans loudly against my ear and uses my added support from my arms to pull me to the side of the bed. He lifts me effortlessly once my body is half off of the mattress, slamming me against my bedroom door for leverage.

He's never done this before and my body instantly reacts as he fucks me standing up, his hips piling upwards into my core as my legs stay securely wrapped around him. The heels fell off long ago, thank god.

I come again, my body pulsating with pleasure and my finger nails digging into Thomas's bare flesh.

"That's my girl," he growls.

His hot mouth sucks the skin on my neck, biting with intent to damage. I don't even have to see my reflection to know that he's marked my neck and throat with lewd bruises. He's marked me as his.

Thomas walks me back to the bed and sets me back down. He stands at the edge of the bed and admires me for several long moments, the absence his cock making me feel hallow.

It twitches With excitement, dripping wet with my orgasms, as his eyes take in the full sight in front of him.

"I'm never letting you leave my side again, Sophia." He says in a breathy wispy sort of tone before crawling over me and holding my thighs open with his palms.

I bite my lip and arch my back in anticipation, wanting so desperately for him to slide back inside of me.

"Please, please I want sex." I beg, my shame having long disappeared.

Thomas grins and lowers himself down to kiss me, his tongue slow and sensual as he takes a slow moment to taste me.

Eventually his hand grabs his base,

and he guides himself back into my depth, causing a soft moan to escape my throat.

Finally!

Thomas starts rocking hard and deep into me, his hand caressing my jaw.

"Tell me where you want me to come." his voice is deep as his perverted question hits my ears.

"Come inside me," I say without hesitation, wanting so desperately to feel the warmth of his orgasm fllling me up.

Thomas groans at my words, his body involuntarily crashing into mine faster and faster until his sounds peak, and

I can can feel his hot come spill out inside of me.

Thomas collapses into a sweaty mess on top of me, his body weight crushes me slightly; but he tries to prop himself up enough to not kill me.

"God I've missed you, Darling." He admits with a breathy whisper.

"I missed you too. It's been pure torture, but it's over. There's nothing keeping us apart, Thomas."

Thomas peppers my jaw with soft kisses, his body holding on to me so tight.

I can feel the remnants of Thomas‘s orgasm begin to seep out of me and onto the bedsheets, a lewd reminder 0' what we've just done.

"We should clean up and get back to the hospital." I say, not wanting to stop cuddling but also very aware of the fact that my best friend is about to push a baby out of her womb.

"I'll start the shower, darling." Thomas says with a familiar smile.

I was right in thinking that there's no way we could ever go back to how we were before, but that's because I know we can be better. We know what it's like to lose the other now, and we both know we never want to experience it again.

Once the water is hot I step in with Thomas who wraps me in a sensual hug as the water trickles down our bodies.

"I can't wait to make you my wife," Thomas mouths against my cheek, and I smile.

"I suppose I should also tell you that I stopped taking the pill two months ago then." I admit devilishly, Thomas's eyes growing twice their size.

"But I just... gosh, Sophia, are you ready for that?" Thomas looks like a puppy with a squeaky toy dangling in his face as he waits for my response.

"I'm more than ready to start a family With you, Thomas. Besides, if nine months from now we have a baby that means that it can be best friends With Fiona's baby and that sounds too perfect for words."

Thomas grabs me and almost breaks me in half with a strong hug.

"I've never been so happy in my entire life." He admits with the traces of tears in his voice.

"Me neither."

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Chapter 42

Thomas and I quickly redress, but he has to fish through my closet for one of his old shirts because the dress shirt he had been wearing before was a casualty in our erotic war.

I regret nothing.

I slip on a comfortable sweater and some faded old jeans, my feet taking warm refuge in a pair of UGGS. Thomas looks at me and grins. "You're going to be cold Without a jacket."

I shake my head and lift up on my tip toes, kissing him lovingly on the lips.

"I won't be cold, I have my fiancé for warmth."

Thomas's breath hitches in his throat and his eyes close tightly, his heart beat sporadic.

"Say It again." He demands, his whole body tensing against mine.

I kiss him again, my tongue lingering against his, and my lips opting to nibble on his already ravaged bottom lip.

"You're my fiancé," I whisper softly. "I'm going to marry you, spend my life with you, grow old with you."

Thomas opens his eyes and searches my face with careful precision. His strong hand comes up and cups my face. I kiss his palm as he strokes my cheek and smile.

"One day I want a beautiful and crazy little girl, just like you." He admits. I smile in earnest up into Thomas's blue eyes and sigh peacefully.

"I want to give that to you."

***

He holds my hand during the entire car ride, his firm thumb drawing circles against my soft palm. I smile over at him, but he's busy watching the road, a perfect smile etched on his swollen lips.

Was I really so rough with them? I must have been.

Thomas's thumb starts to run along the length of my ring finger, stopping to caress the meaningful ring that decorates it.

"How long have you been wearing this?" He asks me, his voice a sweet sound, almost like thick honey. He doesn't look at me, but I can tell that he wants to.

"I put it on the moment I left your office," I admit, my cheeks burning red as I tell him the embarrassing truth.

"I think my heart always knew that you didn't do anything wrong, even when my head wasn't so sure."

I sill feel so guilty that I didn't listen to Thomas, I know that I reacted how most people would have given the information available, but in the end I just robbed myself of eight months of fantastic sex, and unconditional love.

"I wish I'd have seen it. I wish I'd have looked when I saw you in the halls. Seeing that on your finger would have kept me going on the days I wasn't sure I could even get out of bed." Thomas glances over at me and sees the pain on my face.

"But it doesn't matter now," he continues for my sake "All that matters now is that we have each other, Sophia. You have all of me, and I'll be the best husband anyone could ask for."

My heart flutters at his words and I lean over the center console to rest my head on his shoulder. Nothing has ever felt so absolutely right than this moment here with Thomas.

We pull up to the hospital and make our way to room 203 where a small crowd has formed to await Fiona and Isaacs bundle of Joy.

Isaacs parents have arrived along with Fiona's mother who looks rather posed off, and to my absolute astonishment my parents are here too.

"There you are, sweet heart." My Mom says as she hands her cup of coffee to my father so that she can hug me.

"who told you guys?" I ask in astonishment as I embrace my parents.

"Fiona's mother called us right after she got the news because she wasn't quite sure how to get to Durham. We figured why not just carpool, and here we are." My Mom explains simply. I smile, my face almost starting to hurt after all of the smiling that I've been doing.

Fiona is practically their daughter too so it makes sense.

"Hello again, young man." My father says as he sticks a hand out for Thomas to shake. They exchange pleasantries and my mom gives me a curious look.

"Have you two settled your differences?" My mother asks me directly and I nod.

"Actually," I say as I put my arm around Thomas's waist "were getting married." The words almost sound like their in some other foreign language as they leave my lips and my moms face instantly turns to that of a child in a candy shop.

"That's incredible!" She gasps and throws her arms around both Thomas and I.

"I'm happy that you approve, Mom, but I figured you'd be a bit more skeptical." I say as my oxygen supply is depleated from

Her tight embrace.

"Luckily That Gabbie girl filled us in on where you were and why you were absent when we got here ten minutes ago." My dad says and he grabs me and kisses my forehead. "I also hear you have a pretty amazing right hook. That's my girl." My dad winks at me and I can't help but laugh.

"Where is Gabbie?" I ask as I look around the crowd of impatient people just waiting for the doctor to say they can visit the baby.

"Fiona kicked her mother out almost immediately because she started arguing with her about her birth plan, and Gabbie went in instead. You'd probably do everyone a favor if you went in there." My mother says, her face indicating just how not well Fiona is handling this.

I turn to give Thomas a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Have fun out here, yeah babe?" I say with a coy smile, knowing that he will have a lot to talk to my parents about.

"You know I will. Now, get in there and tame the beast that is Fiona Reese." Everyone giggles, including me.

I rush into the delivery room where a doctor and midwife are positioned at Fiona's spread eagle legs. Isaac is wiping Fiona's forehead with a towel, and Gabbie is making obnoxious breathing sounds.

"I'm back. I'm here." I say hurriedly as

I rush to my friends side, Gabbie is so relieved she looks like she could faint, that or she almost hyperventilated from her breathing technique.

"Well I'm out of here." Gabbie says with a relieved sigh and darts for the door.

"Oh thank god! How did it go?" Fiona asks me through ragged breaths. Isaac shoots me an eager smile as well.

"We've made up, actually, were getting married. It's a long story that neither of you want to hear, I promise."

Fiona lets out a happy shriek that instantly turns to agony as her whole body locks up.

"You have to start pushing, Fiona." The doctor says after Fiona finishes her plea for a quick and painless death that neither Isaac nor myself are about to grant her.

"Someone just shoot me already!" She whimpers loudly.

"You can do this baby," Isaac says sweetly after he gives me a nod and a smile that indicates he's very happy for me, but that celebrations will have to wait.

"I know I can do this Hansen, what I'm not so sure of is why I agreed to sex in the first place! Ever! With anyone!"

Isaac just laughs Fiona's words off, he's honestly handling this like a pro. Fatherhood already looks good on him, and the baby isn't even here yet.

"Oh my god is it coming out of my ass?!" Fiona cries after a long push.

I grip her hand and try desperately not to choke on my laughter.

"Just breathe, Fi, that's physically impossible." I comfort her as best as I can.

"Give me another big push, Fiona." The doctor instructs and Fiona gives it all she has, her whole body shaking from the pressure and crippling agony that her body is going through.

Jesus Christ, where's a Plan B pill when you need one? I can't believe I agreed to have kids just twenty minutes ago.

Crying fills the room as Fiona's beautiful baby is brought into this world. Fiona‘s head hits her pillow with a vacant thud and I know she‘s probably so tired she could die.

"It's a girl.“ The midwife announces. "Would the father like to cut the chord?"

Isaac happily agrees then goes to detach his little girl from Fiona. The midwife quickly wipes away any and all residue from the newborn before handing it to Fiona for skin to skin bonding.

"She's so beautiful." Fiona says through happy tears. Isaac leans down and kisses her sweaty forehead, his eyes locked on their perfect child.

I start quietly balling my eyes out as I watch their little happy family moment unfurl.

Oh yeah, this is why I told Thomas to come inside of me. I want this moment with him, even if I have to endure the ones right before it.

"You see that? That's you're god mommy." Fiona whispers to her baby as she points at me and I feel my heart melt all over the floor.

Fiona jerks her head, indicating for me to get closer. I lean on to the mattress and look right down at the little face blankly staring back up at me.

She has a full head of dark black hair and midnight black eyes. She's so pale she almost looks grey, but I'm pretty sure that's just a new born thing.

"What name have you decided on?" I ask Fiona as I admire her little bundle.

"Ruby. Ruby Sophia Hansen."

Fresh tears spring from my eyes and I nuzzle against Fiona's neck.

"You're making me ugly cry right now, you know that?" I say as I sob onto her hospital gown.

"Get a hold of yourself, Soph, you're embarrassing me in front of my kid."

Isaac and I both laugh and lock eyes.

"This is incredible, isn't it?" He asks, his excitement showing obviously in his brown eyes.

"It's the most incredible thing in the entire world, Isaac." I grin in happy agreement.

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Chapter 43

Everyone takes turns meeting baby Ruby, and they all immediately fall in love with her soft little coos and whines.

I stand next to the coffee machine with Thomas, Gabbie, and Isaac as we refuel. It's three AM and both Gabbie and I know that we're in for a world of hurt tomorrow.

"We have to be on a plane in four hours." Gabbie says With a disappointed sigh. I rub my temples and yawn.

"Unfortunately." I add, but Thomas just cocks an eyebrow at me.

"Plane? Where are you two going?" Suddenly it occurs to me that I never told Thomas about my book.

"Oh my goodness, I haven't even had time to tell you. Gabbie's father is a publisher and he is representing my first novel, The Dead Dame. I'm getting published and our first meeting is tomorrow!" I say excitedly because I know Thomas Will be just as overjoyed as I am to hear that.

He wraps his big bear arms around me and lifts me off of the ground, his head nuzzled into my neck.

"That's so amazing, Sophia! I'm so proud of you."

My feet touch the ground again and he kisses my lips.

"You should get home and rest for a bit then. You don't want to blow this meeting by passing out." He says, but I just shrug.

"I don't even want to go anymore now that Fiona's had the baby. I want to stay here with her." I admit.

"Don't be silly." Isaac says.

"Fiona can live without you for a few days, I promise, I got this." I smile and hug Isaac. I've never had a brother, but even If did I think I'd be closer to Isaac. It was instant love between us. Not sexual love, but deep platonic admiration. We understood each other.

"Honestly I could reschedule. He is my dad after all." Gabbie says with a wave of her hand, but I shake my head.

"No, this is important. I need to make a good impression."

"Then let me take you home, darling." Thomas offers, and I smile. "Sounds good to me. I want to say goodbye to Fiona and my parents first though."

"Of course."

The four of us start walking back to Fiona's room there my parents are already standing outside looking rather groggy.

"We're gonna go find a hotel, sweetie." My Mom says with a yawn.

"Don't you have to be in Nevada tomorrow young lady?" My dad asks and I nod.

"Yeah, but I'm really just banking on being so excited that it gives me enough energy."

"I've been there. Twenty-two is a good age, you should be able to pull it off just fine."

"I should really just give my ticket over to Thomas," Gabbie says with a cheeky smile "Las Vegas is just a short drive away from where we'll be staying. These two could get hitched by Elvis." Gabbie and Isaac laugh at the joke, and my parents almost do until they see my head jerk over to look at Thomas who's already looking down at me with wide eyes.

"Wait, I was kidding." Gabbie says, freaking out after she sees the way we're staring at each other.

"I don't like the Elvis part, but knowing that we could be married as early as this time tomorrow sounds so amazing."

"You wouldn't want a cake? A fancy service? All of your family there?" My mother asks with a worried voice, panic screwing up her normally pretty face.

"It would be nice to have family there of course," I agree "but I don't need any of those other things. Honestly I just want to be married to this man as quickly as possible."

"Well, Sophia has never been one for traditions, we've always known that." My dad says in my defense. I smile at him then turn my head back to Thomas.

"What are you thinking?" I ask, my heart beat like a base drum in my ribs.

"I want whatever you want, love. Wether it's eloping or a big ceremony, I don't care either way" He says, his blue eyes light with anticipation. He wants to know, everyone does.

Are we getting married tomorrow?

"Oh my god is this really happening?" Isaac asks, picking his chin up off of the floor.

"Fiona!" He suddenly yells and starts running into her room.

"Stop yelling, you idiot. Ruby is sleeping." Fiona's voice scolds Isaac, but he doesn't seem to even register she spoke.

"Thomas and Sophia are trying to elope to Vegas!" He shouts and Fiona is suddenly freaking out loudly. There's a bunch of struggling noises, but before too long Fiona appears in the doorway, looking quite frightening.

"How dare you! She says, pointing a finger at me."

"I have earned my bridesmaid duties, and I demand the opportunity to throw you a bachelorette party!"

"Get back in bed, baby, you just pushed out a human being." Isaac says as he tries to coerce Fiona back into the room, not banking on her actually getting up from his news. She shrugs him off, so I walk over to Fiona and put my hands on her shoulders.

"Do you think this is a bad idea?“ I ask her in earnest and she bites her cheek.

"I dunno, sis. I just... I just want it to be special, you know? And if you up and elope Isaac and I can't come because we, you know, had a baby like five seconds ago."

My heart is aching for me to just marry Thomas as soon as possible, but my mother and Fiona are right. It's selfish.

"Fine, we can plan a regular service, but I want to pick the date right here, right now."

Fiona seems to relax. I turn to Thomas and walk over to him, his handsome smile making my legs feel instantly weak.

"When sounds good to you?" Thomas lifts his hand to move some stray strands of hair behind my ear, his tongue tracing along his bottom lip.

"March. Just as the flowers start to bloom, and the air warms a bit. I think three months is all I can wait." My heart flutters, and my mom starts audibly crying beside me.

This has been the most insane day of my life.

Gabbie pulls her phone out and stares at it for a minute.

"March 12th is on a Saturday. Would that work? One of my sorority sisters two dads have a planning service."

"Do you just know someone for everything?" I say with a surprised laugh. Gabbie gives me a proud smile.

"Yes. I have many connections!"

"March 12th sounds amazing to me." I say, turning back to Thomas who nods in agreement.

"Perfect." He agrees and we pull each other into a warm embrace.

"What do you think, Mom? Can you pull off a wedding in three months?" I ask, a single happy year spilling down my cheek.

"For you baby girl, I can do anything."

We all laugh and talk for a few minutes before we decide we need to go our separate ways for the night.

Fiona and Isaac are obviously staying over night with ruby but all of our parents are shacking up in a hotel.

Thomas walks me and Gabbie to his car, my heart feeling so full.

"Would you still come with me?" I ask him as we all pull our seatbelts on.

"To Nevada?" Thomas asks me and I nod.

"If thats okay with Gabbie, of course."

I turn my head to the back seat to look at her. She's already half asleep but she still manages to give me a big thumbs up of approval before her head slumps over on the window.

"I'd love to go, darling."

I smile brightly at the man I love, and watch him closely the entire drive back to my apartment. I memorize every detail of his beautiful face and bask in how purely happy I feel right now. All of my dreams are coming true all at once.

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Mature Content below, get some popcorn

We arrive at the hotel that Gabbie's father is putting us up in with stars in our eyes.

"This is absolutely amazing, Gabs!" I shriek as I stare at the sky high maculate building.

Gabbie's home is currently being remodeled, so there's no room for us to stay there. Instead, her dad offered to put us up in the most amazing hotel I've ever seen.

"He's trying to impress you." Gabbie says with a knowing shrug.

"Impress me?" I ask incredulously. Thomas picks up our bags and starts walking them inside with us, but a man wearing a fancy uniform walks up and takes the bags from him.

"Please, allow me sir." The man says and Thomas allows him to take the bags, the corners of his mouth twitching into a smile.

"Your book will make my dad a lot of money. Until you sign his companies contract you're a free agent. He has to try to reel you in."

I scoff as we walk up to the front desk.

"He has nothing to worry about." I say with an obvious snort.

"Name please." The receptionist asks me and I suddenly tense up.

What if were not on the register?

"Gabrielle Louise Rathbone." Gabbie says with confidence and the receptionist smiles.

"Two queen bedrooms, upper level. I have You right here."

This place is way too rich for my blood, and I can only imagine how out of place Thomas feels.

We get our key cards and the concierge shows us to our rooms while carrying our luggage for us.

We only have two hours before we have to meet with Gabbie's father, and we could all use a bit of freshening up.

We part ways with Gabbie and enter our prestigious room with bright eyes.

"Holy cow, Sophia. This is insane." Thomas gawks and I nod my head in agreement.

"I'm definitely impressed."

It feels like I'm in a different world all together as I stare at the gorgeous linens and flawless furniture.

Thomas turns to me and his gaze falls to my lips. He looks me over and starts walking towards me, his eyes burning as they pierce through me. I've learned to recognize when Thomas is reliving a memory. It always makes his eyes go hazy.

As soon as Thomas reaches me he drops to his knees and takes both on my hands in his. He kisses my knuckles and then grabs my hips, looking up at me.

Thomas is a solid 6'5 so even on his knees he reaches my chest.

"What are you doing?“ I ask with a giggle as his fingers slip under my shirt, gripping my bare skin in his strong hands.

"I'm on my knees for you, begging for you to love me forever." Thomas says with a mischievous smile. His hands travel south and start unbuttoning my jeans. I raise a skeptical eye brow at him.

"Oh, is that what you're going?" I question with soft defiance.

He nods as he undoes my zipper, peeling my pants down my legs.

His lips start kissing down my thighs and I shiver from the heat then sudden cold as his saliva leaves wet traces on my skin.

"I also may be having flash backs from the first time I did it to you, My love." He whispers as his fingers dance around the waist band of my panties.

My head falls back slightly as I revisit those memories myself from nearly a year ago. The feeling as Thomas thrusted inside of me for the first time, the lewd slapping of our skin, the whole arousing forbidden essence of it all.

"I'm also picturing last night, and how if I had known you wanted to bare my child so badly I would have given you so much more... care." Thomas growls against my burning skin as he starts inching my shirt up over my stomach. I grab the hem and pull it off for him, my nipples hardening behind my bra.

"What would you have done differently?" I ask, begging for his perverted words to weave a fantasy behind my closed eyes.

This is almost like the first time we talked on the phone, when he guided me to an orgasm with only his voice.

Thomas starts inching my panties slowly down my thighs and I'm met with an instant undisturbed slick feeling, my body instantly reacting to his gentle touch.

Thomas reaches between my thighs and strokes my slit with a slow calculated finger, causing me to make a soft throaty noise that I've never made before.

"I would have taken my time. I would have drug out every single second with slow thrusts into your tight little-"

"Thomas!" I cry out, interrupting him as a thick finger slides inside of me. I tangle my hands in his dark hair for support as his finger curls inside of me, rubbing the most pleasurable part of my sex.

"Exactly" He says with a raspy register.

"I would have kissed every inch of your body, taking my time to taste every inch of your delicious skin... especially right here."

Thomas slips another finger inside of me as he speaks.

"You're so tight, I don't honestly even know how I've ever fit." Thomas groans, mostly to himself.

I feel my legs getting weak as Thomas fingers me slow and deep, my own juices trickling down my leg.

"Th- Thomas I need to sit down." I whimper, and something absolutely savage passes over his face.

Thomas removes his drenched fingers from inside of me and grabs my waist, lifting me fully out of my jeans and shoes. He pushes me towards the bed, making sure to discard my bra before I get there.

My eyes are glossy as I look at Thomas, completely seduced by how powerful and controlling he's being with my body.

He pulls his own shirt off over his head and then rushes out of his belt and pants. Once he's naked he gives me a devilish grin.

"Sit on my face, darling." He instructs and I feel my body stiffen from nerves. I've never just blatantly sat on anyone's face before.

Noticing my hesitation, Thomas lays down on the mattress on his back and pulls me until I'm straddling his chest.

"Don't make me beg, Sophia, because I will." He says, his mouth practically watering.

I swallow back any hints of doubt and just let my body take over. I maneuver my sex until it's hovering over Thomas's face and he instantly goes to work, pulling my thighs further down until I'm completely seated over his mouth.

My head instantly falls back in unparalleled pleasure as Thomas's tongue fucks me in a way I've never felt before.

It flicks over my clit and plunges into my hole, tickling my insides with its soft wet strokes.

"Oh my god!" I gasp, my body already shaking. I can feel that I'm already going to come and I don't want to do that on Thomas's face. I try to climb off before my release comes but Thomas holds me iirmly in place.

It's out of my control as my muscles seize and core burns. My orgasm is hot and powerful, and so incredibly perverse.

Thomas lets me dismount once's I'm done and he stares at me like a man depraved, my wet orgasm gripping down his chin.

"Did you like that, my naughty girl?" He says as he licks his lips, practically moaning from the taste that lingers there.

He's so different right now, and I think I know why. He doesn't have to look over his shoulder. He doesn't have to feel bad because he's fucking a student. He can just he himself, and holy fuck is this man incredible.

"It was unbelievable," I gasp out.

"But I need more." My eyes dart to his massive erection that's so full it looks like he could burst. It's long and otherworldly as I stare at it. I'm almost intimidated by how hungry for a release Thomas must be, but I don't have time to vocalize my concerns before Thomas has me pinned under his flawless body.

"More? You mean this?" He asks me in a teasing tone, the tip of hick cock at my entrance.

He guides himself in just about an inch and I start to whimper, his immense girth stretching me slowly.

"Yes, oh gosh yes." I cry as he gives me another generous inch. Thomas's face is a canvas and his enjoyment is painted all over it.

He loves coming, but he loves pleasuring me even more.

"Do you want all of it, darling? You have to tell me." He says in a controlling tone, his cock literally throbbing inside of me.

"Please. More." I beg, my body aching from anticipation.

"How much more?" He says with a sinful grin and I wrap my arms around him, my nails digging into his back and my hips bucking on their own.

"All of it! "I moan desperately against his ear. Thomas immediately buries his erection as deep inside of me as it will go, hitting all of my walls and setting fire to my belly button. He has to be practically all the way up to my womb with how deep he is, and he just holds there for a moment while I'm driven mad by the subtle feeling of his cock twitching inside of me, making my whole body erupt in pleasure.

Thomas starts rocking his hips deep, his voice a low hungry growl.

"Are you clenching? Gosh Sophia that's not fair!" He cries out, and he's right. My whole body has seized from the amount of pleasure I'm receiving as he did it to me. My sex tightens because I genuinely think I've been having an orgasm since he fllled me up.

"Does it feel good?" I moan, wanting to hear him say it out loud.

"Does it feel good?" He repeats, his voice dripping with disbelief and raw enjoyment.

"It feels so good I can't almost stand it," He says through a tight jaw and a deep groan.

My eyes roll back in my head and he fucks me faster, my sounds and his mixing as I come again and again all over his ungodly cock.

"I'm coming," He seethes through clenched teeth, and not even a second later I feel the hot sticky sensation pool inside of me to the deepest parts of my sex.

Thomas seems to take longer to finish, his hips grinding against mine until every last drop of his orgasm has been released.

And he doesn't pull out.

He leans down to whisper in my ear, his heavy body keeping me possessively in place.

"And I definitely wouldn't have pulled out yesterday until I was sure you were filled with every drop of my come." He admits, his humid breath tickling my sweaty skin.

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Chapter 44

Not long enough after Thomas destroyed my senses, were stepping out of a taxi and standing in front of Rathbone and Lax, a very beautiful building with What appears to be one thousand windows.

"This is it." Gabbie's says with a soft smile, her blue eyes squinting in the sunlight as she stares up at the enormous building before us.

We walk inside where a perky receptionist is waiting for us.

"Hello, how may I help you oh! Gabrielle, it's wonderful to see you again." The receptionist smiles at Gabbie who looks disgusted as she stares at the curvy brunette.

"Hello, Donna." She says curtly. "This is my father's three o'clock, Sophia Dawson."

I wave and smile at the receptionist and she returns my pleasantries.

"Oh of course, Mr. Rathbone is ready for you in his office."

Thomas and I say goodbye to the nice receptionist, but Gabbie just blows her off.

"What was that back there?" I ask her once we're a safe distance away.

"My parents are divorced, and that receptionist is partially Why." Gabbie replies with a bleak expression.

"Oh, Gabbie! I'm so sorry. Why is she still working here if she slept with your father?"

Gabbie laughs at my question and it causes me to stare in at her in confusion.

"You misunderstand, Soph. She had sex with my mom."

My shock is illuminated all over my face and Thomas snorts a laugh that he tries to immediately cover up.

"That's even more of a reason to fire her!" I yell, my mouth hanging open and my eyes blinking rapidly as I try to absorb this information.

"You'd think right?" Gabbie sighs. "But, nope. He keeps her around I think so that he can keep tabs on where my mother is at. If she's doing okay, ya know?"

"No, I don't know." I honestly reply.

Gabbie sighs and pinches the bridge of her nose.

"My Mom went crazy and started getting a bunch of tattoos and hanging out with bikers a lot. She started screwing around, including Donna, and so my parents rightfully split up. This is a

very short summary by the way, but she keeps in contact with Donna, so my dad keeps Donna around. He still loves my mom for some reason."

I feel like there's a very interesting story here, but we just don't have time to get through it all before the elevator doors slide open to reveal a beautiful hallway.

"This door is his," Gabbie says as she points to her father's name plate.

I suddenly feel my stomach in my throat. I have no idea what I'm doing. Sure, I googled this until my fingers wanted to bleed and I brought everything that Rathbone told me to, but I still feel so unprepared.

Gabbie walks up to the marked door and knocks twice on the deep cherry wood. A male voice can be heard booming from inside "come in!" It sounds and Gabbie turns the door knob, revealing an extravagantly decorated office space fit with bookshelves, and a desk chair so comfortable looking its a wonder how Mr. Rathbone doesn't just fall asleep all day.

"Princess." He says as he crosses the room to greet Gabbie. He places a chaste kiss to her temple then turns to me.

"And you must be Sophia," He says with electric grey eyes, holding his hand out for me to happily shake. His hand goes to Thomas next and the two men exchange names and pleasantries.

"Gabbie, be a dear and run across the street to that little cafe and get me a scone and a blonde roast coffee?“ Mr. Rathbone asks his daughter who immediately agrees.

"Thomas could you assist me?" She asks, and I feel nervous. I know this is all me, but I had hoped someone would be here to help me, that's why I brought them after all!

"Sure thing,you'll do great Sophia." Thomas gives me a kind hearted smile and I feel my nerves settle a bit. He believes in me, and my book honestly speaks for itself. This is just the business side of a deal that's already in the making.

Once it's just Mr.Rathbone and I, He invites me to take a seat at his desk we're there are several papers laid out in front of me, including a copy of my manuscript.

"Honestly, Sophia. I was surprised when such a magnetic and in depth story was brought to my attention by someone so young. You have a natural talent for this." I smile at his words, my chest tightening.

I'm great at this! I got this! "Thank you, sir."

"Please, call me Teddy. We will be talking to each other quite a bit and I think the sirs would drive me mad."

I nod my head in understanding and let out a slow steady breath.

"Alright, Teddy. Well thank you, first of all, for giving my book a chance. At first I was weary of riding the curtails of a friends connection. I mean, I want my book to be published because it deserves to, not as a favor."

"Trust me, Sophia, I am not doing you a favor. I believe wether it's today or next year, this book will be published. I just think Gabbie did me a favor by bringing it to my attention first."

My face is suddenly warm, it feels so good to get vocal validation.

"Now, time for the numbers." Teddy says with a deep smile, his forehead wrinkling a bit. He's obviously in his late forties, but he wears it well. He's handsome and charming, with that salt and pepper look.

Maybe I'm broken? Because honestly if Thomas didn't exist I'd still choose Gabbie's dad over Michael.

I try not to audibly laugh as I simultaneously roast Michael and accept that I'm a sucker for older men, which I'm thankful for because it's why I have my Thomas.

"How does all of that register with you?" Teddy says as he pushes some numbers in front of me. I stare down at the page with perplexed eyes.

"Honestly, Teddy I have no idea. I'm a writer, numbers have never been my forte. All I really need to know is can you get my book onto the shelves, and will I receive a fair portion of the profits?"

Teddy leans back in his chair and laces his fingers together on his desk, his eyes hard.

"You wound me, Sophia. This is Rathbone and Lax. You're guaranteed to sell with us, you will retain full rights to your book. INFACT, I won't touch any aspect of your work, just publish and sell it, if you agree to let Rathbone and Lax be your go to publisher, because you're going places young lady.“

"And percentage?" I ask as if I totally know what I'm doing.

Teddy leans over and whips out a red pen from his suit pocket, circling the paper in front of me. He circles the fifteen percent that's typed on the page

"Can you live With that?"

I stare at the little two digit number. Like a queen! I think but I don't say it.

"Teddy, you have a deal!" I say excitedly. I go to shake his hand but end up knocking over an entire pencil holder, pens and the like falling everywhere.

"Oh gosh, I'm so sorry!" I squeak as I hurriedly gather up the utensils, and I instantly can tell what this man is thinking.

How the hell did this awkward ass girl write such good smut?

Well, I'll tell you how... his name is Thomas Crane.

"Don't worry yourself with this," Teddy says with a booming laugh, assisting me with replacing what I spilled.

After that whole mess has been cleared up I go about signing paper after paper that Teddy insists I carefully read, which I do, and I know it's importantI just want to get this part over with.

"And lastly sign here." I scribble my little signature on the last line, my hand cramping. Thank goodness for computers, because if I had to hand write a book I don't think I could ever do it.

"One blonde roast and a scone for a Mr. Theodore Rathbone." Gabbie says with an uppity kinda tone. Teddy laughs. "Good timing, princess. We were just finishing up."

My whole body is practically shaking as I sit and watch Gabbie and Teddy exchange father daughter banter.

My eyes lock on Thomas who seems to notice my excitement from my chair, I'm sure by now he's learned to read me like an open book, pun intended.

"Well, were all finished here. Let me take you out for dinner, princess. Does seven work?" Gabbie nods and smiles at her father. "Of course you're both invited too. This is a time for celebration! You're going to have a best seller, Sophia Dawson."

I stand up from the chair, my legs wobbly from those words and my heart a pounding mess. Thomas crosses over to me and laces his fingers with mine for subtle support.

"I could honestly pass out right now." I embarrassingly admit. Teddy and gabby both laugh, and I shove some hair behind my ear.

"So drinks and sushi on me later, yeah?"

"Sounds good!" Gabbie chirps.

Thomas and I both agree as well, and turn to leave the office. It feels like I'm floating on air as my feet carry me out of Rathbone and Lax. I pass by so many people in suits that are carrying documents or fancy briefcases. How much money does this place really make?

Once we're back inside the taxi I let out a giant breath of relief.

"I can't believe it!" I gasp, covering my face in my hands. Thomas immediately pulls me to his chest and kisses my forehead.

"You're incredible, my love." He says with a smile that I can feel form on my skin.

"Now that it's done I can tell you honestly, Sophia, I sent your book to my father anonymously!"

"Wait, What?! " I shriek, turning to look at Gabbie.

"I didn't want you to think you didn't earn this, so I sent it and when I got a call about your book I was all like "Hey dad!" And he freaked out. For a second he thought that I wrote it, which was hilarious because you have some steamy scenes in there. I explained the situation to him and he was delighted. You earned this, girl!"

Gabbie's voice is ringing in my ear, and I almost feel like I could cry. I could, but I don't. I've cried way too much lately for my liking.

"Look at that, Thomas, my mom was right. Anyone could just be a writer or something."

The cab is filled with laughter as we make our way back to the hotel. I could really use a nap right about now.

***

I did not get a nap. Not even close. Thomas is insatiable, and I don't have the power to tell him no. How could I? He's so damn handsome and really good at it. He's hellbent in making me pregnant with triplets is what he's trying to freaking do!

"Awhhh you look so beautiful!" Gabbie coos as she looks at me in my peach dress. The air is cold here, and I desperately wanted to wear jeans but Gabbie Forbid it.

"Doesn't she?" Thomas agrees with a gentle kiss to my temple.

"Well, I'm glad I look good." I say sarcastically "even if it means I'll probably die of hypothermia."

My subtle plea to put real winter clothes on goes ignored as we make our way out of the hotel.

We are picked up in a fancy car courtesy of Teddy, and it takes us straight to the restaurant.

Gabbie is practically in her element as she gives her name to the host, using her full name again because I can tell she thinks it's empowering.

Gabrielle is honestly such an amazing girl. How did Michael ever get her Into his bed?

"There you are. I hope you don't mind, but I ordered a bottle of wine for the table." Teddy says as he happily greets us and his daughter.

"Where's Dexter?" Gabbie asks, and I have no idea who that is.

"He's busy this week with your cousin, you know how things are." Teddy offers Gabbie as an excuse and she looks troubled.

"Dexter is my uncle, and the other half of Rathbone and Lax by the way." She tells Thomas and I who nod in understanding.

"Anyways, let's eat! I'm starving!" Gabbie says happily, and I match her enthusiasm.

"This place is really fancy, Teddy, do you spoil all of your clients like this?" I joke as I sip the extravagant wine in front of me.

Thomas places his hand on my knee under the table and squeezes, making me jump slightly from his electric touch.

"Only the ones that are gonna make me millions!" He cheers with a wink, holding his glass up for us to toast with.

My mind is swimming from all of the excitement in my life right now, but even more than being published, I'm looking foreword to marrying the rather silent man right next to me.

"Is everything okay?" I ask him in a hushed voice, searching his eyes for a sign of anything. He's just been staring at me since we sat down.

"Everything is amazing my love, I just can't stop picturing you in white.

***

Chapter 45

I stand still, a delicate ivory fabric hugging my curves. I'm staring at my reflection while everyone around me comments of how beautiful I look.

Someone says that I'm absolutely glowing and it makes my stomach flutter.

I've thrown up today, but it's not only due to the fact that I'm nervous.

I know something that no one else knows.

"My goodness, Soph, you're so beautiful!" Fiona sobs, streaking her perfectly applied foundation, but her mascara stays put. We searched the internet for hours until we found the most cry proof one.

I stare at Fiona's reflection beside me in the mirror, her curvy body adorned in a pearl pink floor length gown. He dark black hair is completely pinned back out of her face, and her heels make her almost as tall as me when I'm barefoot.

"Thank you, Fi. So are you." I reply with wet eyes, trying to force the tears to stay put. She pulls me into a tight hug and we both quietly whimper and sniff for a moment.

While we're hugging my mom walks in with Isaac whose carrying Ruby. Her little mushy body is wearing her own pale pink dress, but it's much more frilly than everyone else's.

"Everyone's ready out there when you are sweetheart." My mother tells me, her eyes glossing over as she takes in the view of me.

My dress is an a line lace gown that hugs me tightly around my hips and bust. The straps are thin and expose my shoulders. My cinnamon hair is pulled back out of my face, and I hardly recognize my own appearance.

"You look like a vision." Isaac says, a smile reaching his eyes. I walk over to him and kiss his cheek.

"Thanks Zac." I say with a smile. I go to grab ruby from him, but Fiona intercepts her child.

"No, I don't think so. This little demon barfs every thirty seconds." I pout, but I know Fiona is right.

"I guess I'm ready then, momma." I say with a raspy voice. My mom pulls me in and smiles against my temple.

"It's not too late, sweetie. I can still sneak you out the back if you're not ready."

We all laugh but I shake my head profusely.

"I am so in love With this man you'd have to drag me out kicking and screaming by my train to keep me from saying I do."

"That's what I thought baby, let's get going then. Your dads a total mess, but he's ready to walk you down."

The March air is oddly warm today, the sun high in the sky and the smell of fresh flowers fills your lungs wherever you go. We picked an outdoor ceremony With silver and pearl pink as our beautiful spring colors. I'm honestly dying to see Thomas in his suit. I wonder if he's just as nervous as I am. Knowing him he definitely is.

I meet Gabbie outside the door, her hands carrying all of our bouquets.

"Oh my god, Sophia!" She squeals when she sees me in my complete ensemble.

"I'm gonna cry. Oh damn I'm gonna cry!" She wails so Isaac and my mother take the flowers, allowing her to embrace me.

My bridal party consists of Fiona, Gabbie, and Isaac whose rocking his pink suit. I know it's not conventional, but I really just don't know that many women. Thomas's party is a bunch of guys he went to college with that seem even more excited than we are that he's finally getting hitched.

"Okay, okay. I'm good now. Let's do this!"

I walk to the start of the stone path that leads to my groom, him completely out of sight right now. My skin erupts from goose bumps and my heart races. I can't believe I'm honestly about to marry this man.

"Alright, honey. The music is going to play soon. I need the bridesmaids and Isaac to line up first. Someone take the baby, where's the flower girl?" Paulo, my wedding planner is honestly so amazing as he rounds everyone up. Fiona's mother comes and takes Ruby to the seating area, and as soon as everyone is in position music starts playing. Over the loud speakers, Feels Like Home fills my ears, and a lump forms in my throat. This is the first time it's felt real.

"It's time, baby girl." My dad whispers in my ear and offers me his hand.

I swallow the nerves as they heat through my chest, grabbing his stable hand.

"Please. Don't let me fall, daddy." I whisper, my voice weak.

"Never, princes. Never."

His strong fingers link with mine as he pulls our arms into a traditional link. My feet wobble, my knees threatening to give out from under me.

"You're doing wonderful, Sophia. I love you so much, my beautiful girl." My dads grasp on me is unfaltering, but his voice is laced with tears.

"I love you too." I say with a heartfelt smile as I break through the bushes and trees planted on either side of the stone path.

My eyes are greeted first by dozens of happy eyes as they stare at me, but quickly I search out what I've been dying to see.

Thomas is standing at the alter in a light grey suit with a white dress shirt, and a pearl pink tie. He looks so handsome that I feel like I could faint. I've never seen him look so perfect in all my life.

His eyes are glued to me, not looking anywhere else. I know he's trying to light it, but solitarily tears start rolling one by one down his cheeks. He smiles brightly at me, his blue eyes full of nervous excitement. I bite my lip to keep from sobbing, determined not to become a blithering mess until at least the vows.

My father takes me as far as he's supposed to, and Thomas walks down to greet him, taking my hand from my father's.

"Take care of her, son." My dad whispers, and Thomas nods.

"Always, sir."

My hand burns where Thomas is touching it, and it's taking all of my willpower not to kiss him right here and now.

I stand opposite him In front of our Officiant, both of his hands grasping mine.

I softly mouth I love you and he mouths it back, our hearts both obviously racing.

"You May now be seated." The officiant says loudly, and the ceremony begins.

I can hardly even hear the man as he asks me to repeat after him, but I manage to not mess it up. Thomas is intoxicating, and I was so certain that my brain would turn to complete mush as soon as I saw him. I was half right.

"Now, I believe the groom has some things he'd like to say."

"Sophia," Thomas starts, clearing his throat that's gone hoarse "I never thought there would be anyone in this world that could convince me to let my guard down like you have. I thought I was unlovable, but now I know that's only because I wasn't being loved by the right person. We're only standing here today because you were stronger and braver than I, you found me when I was broken, and saved me. I've learned the hard way that a life without you isn't worth living, so as everyone as my witness I promise to love you forever, with every fiber of my being."

Here it comes!

I start sobbing, wet tears staining my cheeks as I listen to Thomas's beautiful vows. He reaches his hands up immediately and wipes away the tears as they fall.

"Now, Sophia, what would you like to tell your groom?"

I try to compose myself to tell Thomas just how much I love him, but I can't seem to. I'm an author for fucks sake, but right now I'm speechless. There are no words in the English lexicon that could ever adequately express my overwhelming devotion to Thomas Crane. Since I can't think of my own words, I decide to improvise, searching my memory for what to say.

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, When feeling out of sight

For the ends of being and ideal grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right.

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use In my old griefs, and with my Childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death."

I know most people in the crowd may be confused, but Thomas isn't. He recognized the panic on my face, and the strain in my voice. He saw me struggle, and he knows the weight and value of these words. His mouth is curved into the most alluring smile, and his eyes are swollen and red, his masculinity {ighting him as he cries.

'Gosh I love you so much" he whispers, causing my chest to tighten.

"I now pronounce you husband and wife!" The words fire like a shotgun in my head, and before the Officiant even says you may kiss the bride I have my arms wrapped around Thomas's neck.

His strong hands grasp my lower back, pulling me into the most romantic kiss of my life, my first kiss as a married woman.

Hooting and whistling sounds from our friends and family, along with joyous laughter and applause.

"I present to you, Mr. and Mrs. Crane!"

"That's Doctor Crane!" I correct excitedly, pulling Thomas into another kiss. The crowd erupts with laughter, and we begin our decent back up the stone aisle, cheerful instrumental music playing over head.

"You're so beautiful, wife." Thomas says, his hand in mine as we bask in these first few moments of married life.

"And you're so absolutely handsome, husband."

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"I would like to propose a toast to my best friend in the whole world, soul sister, and partner in crime, oh and her husband too," Fiona's voice radiates throughout the beautifully decorated reception hall. People instantly laugh, Fiona keeping to her hilarious roots.

"I have known this beautiful woman for most of my life. We've been through everything together. She's vomited on me, she's backed into my car. She's got gum in my hair, and she's even stollen my girlfriend."

More laughter sounds as I roll my eyes at Fiona, smiling brightly.

"But none of that matters. I would go to hell and back for her, kicking the devils ass ifI have to. She's the godmother of my child, and the only reason I found my own Mr. forever." Fiona motions to Isaac who blows a kiss at her.

"Thomas, you got really lucky. Usually girls as hot as Sophia don't fall for old men like you, but I guess you're pretty cool. I look forward to fighting over Sophia with you until one of us dies, and I just want you to know from the depths of my heart..."

I brace myself for one more Fiona style classic burn but it doesn't come.

"That I appreciate you so much for finally making her happy. I trust you, Tommy boy, and that's all I can really say."

I rush to hug Fiona as everyone clinks their glasses. I wrap her in my arms and squeeze so tight that I can feel her breathing stop.

"You're killing me!" She wheezes.

"I don't care, that was amazing." I say happily before releasing my friend. Thomas walks over to her and hugs her next, her cheeks burning red.

"Alright, that's enough of the love fest! Let's get drunk!"

Thomas and I go back to our table where we finish getting some food in our systems.

"Darling you've hardly touched your glass of wine, this is your favorite isn't it?" He asks me and I smile.

"It is my favorite." I reply, biting my lip. "I want to give you your present, sneak away with me." I say, grabbing Thomas's hand. He instantly raises an eyebrow at me.

"Are we about to go sneak away for a quick romp at our own wedding?" He jokes and I snort out a laugh.

"No, perv. Now let's go!" I pull Thomas towards my dressing room where an envelope has been waiting for him all day.

"Are you sure?" He asks me, his voice deeper. His hands instantly Start roaming my body as I close the door.

"That's very tempting, but I actually do have something for you. If you could keep it in your sexy tight pants for one second, husband, I can give it to you."

Thomas reluctantly releases me, allowing me to retrieve his gift. I walk back over to him with the envelope in my hands. I give him the little slip of paper and he opens it immediately, pulling out the note card from inside.

"A date?" He asks me perplexed. I nod. "Yes, read it out loud, silly."

"November fourteenth." He says, still confused.

"What is this, darling?" Thomas deep voice asks me and I smile.

"It's my due date."

I watch as confusion turns to realization as the most spectacular look of shock washes over Thomas's face.

"You're pregnant?!" He bellows, his hands dropping the card and wrapping around me. I nod against his hard chest and smile. I can instantly feel his whole body tighten around me, his voice raw when he speaks.

"I'm so happy I don't know what to do, Sophia." He admits. "I don't feel like I deserve all of the amazing things that you've brought in to my life."

I shake my head and grip my husband even closer. "You deserve all of this, my love. And you are going to be an amazing father."

Thomas pulls me away don holds me at arms length, happy tears staining his cheeks.

"I would marry you all over again." He says lovingly, before pulling me into a long and slow kiss.

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Epilogue

November 21:

"Are you doing okay? Do you need me to get you anything, darling?" Thomas's voice is sweet and encouraging as he kneels at my bedside, but honestly all I want to do is strangle him with my IV. It's not like me, honestly, and I know that it's not actually his fault, but just look at him! Completely fit and healthy without anything trying to rip out of his body.

"No offense, sperm donor, but leave this to me." Fiona's voice booms in my delivery room as her and my mother clamber in holding bags full of stuff that I can't yet identify.

"Fiona don't be so rude," my mother quips "but honestly, Thomas. She'll be in labor for a while. Twins are a nightmare. Why don't you go talk to Isaac and Howard." I can see just how badly Thomas doesn't want to leave my side, but we all know that it's going to be several hours before our babies are born.

"I'll be fine, sweetie. If I need anything I'll call you," I tell Thomas in an attempt to soothe his worries. He smiles down at me and it fills my heart with warmth, almost making me forget the pain my body keeps putting me through.

"Alright, darling. I'm going to go get a coffee. I'll be right outside if you need anything." Thomas kisses my slightly sweaty forehead and I wave him goodbye. As soon as he's out of the room my mother turns to me.

"My goodness I love that man." She shakes her head and starts pulling pillows, snacks, and magazines out of her bag. "He's so attentive and caring. You really did good, both of you did. Fiona please show me the ring again!" My Mom has stars in her eyes as she fauns over Fiona and I. Fiona sticks her manicured left hand out for my mother to see, her vibrant red nails contrasting against her soft pale skin.

"It's so beautiful!" My Mom swoons, taking in the beautiful white gold and single large diamond. The design is simple and elegant, and makes Fiona's finger look like a princes.

Fiona smiles brightly, happy for any chance to show off her pretty new ornament. It's poetic actually, we were all at dinner together to celebrate my book launching and Isaac was going to propose. As soon as he dropped to one knee my water broke, a whole week late I might add.

There's was a lot of freaking out and crying for several minutes before we all got our bearings. It's only right though isn't it?. I was proposed to on the night Fiona gave birth too.

Technically.

"So much is happening today, Soph. I can barely breathe!" Fiona says as she fans herself, going to pull a water bottle out of her purse. I grin from my bedside. Fionas dark hair is still in perfect

ringlets and her eyes are lined with black liner. There's black wet streaks in some spots where she had been crying but otherwise she looks absolutely stunning. Ruby is doing wonderful, she's almost one year now and she's already so smart. I pity the man that tries to tame that little girl when she's older. She's already hell in high diapers.

"I know. I think all of the excitement is what sent me into labor!" I say with a laugh. My mom walks over and pats my head with a cool rag. "You up for this baby girl?" She asks me and I snort. "You mean it's optional? I can just hold it in like the need to pee?" My Mom and Fiona laugh and shake their heads.

"If only, sweetie." My Mom sighs "I just want to know if you're ready. You said no epidural so I'm thinking you're crazy." I put a reassuring hand on my moms arm. I don't know why but I really want to try to do all of this natural. They say it's an amazing experience if you can tolerate it.

"I'm going to be fine mom, I think Fiona took enough pain killers for the both of us on Ruby's due date anyways."

We settle into playful banter as the nurses and doctors come in to check my fluids and dilation. Gabbie Iinally arrives and my girls walk me through my contractions and let me complain as much as I want. Honestly, it's not quite as bad as Fiona made it seem, but I 'm not about to tell her that.

***

Thomas stands beside me with a little blue bundle in his arms while a pink one sits nuzzled on my chest.

"You did so good, my love. Look at this little guy. He's absolutely perfect." Thomas's voice is low and soft as he admires his son. I can't help but grin even through my exhaustion. Somehow I'm still awake, all I want is to hold and pamper my babies.

Jade and Jameson, the two most perfect babies in the world. I decided to name my daughter Jade to match Fiona's Ruby, and yes Jade's middle name is Fiona. She can complain about it in fifteen years, who cares.

Jameson Isaac Crane is at least a completely fluid and normal name, Thomas picked it out.

Jade has pretty blonde hair, but Jameson's hair is a cinnamon brown just like mine. They're not identical, but that's more exciting. I can't wait to see which one looks most like Thomas, and which one looks most like me.

Jade begins stirring on my chest and at about the same time Jameson begins to

cry.

"That twin telepathy thing must be real, huh?" I say With a quiet laugh to my husband who grins and nods. We take care of our fussy newborns and spend the night basking in the love that surrounds us in this moment, completely content with the way life has brought us together, and made all of our dreams come true.

*** Seventeen years later:

Jameson POV:

I stomp down the stairs, my cleats getting stuck in the fibers of the carpet like they always do.

"James, come get breakfast!" My mother yells so I yell back even though I'm just about to reach the kitchen.

"Okay!"

"For goodness sakes, Jameson! You almost gave me a heart attack! " My Mom complains, gripping her chest as though her heart was threatening to literally hop off and run away as I round the corner. My moms really pretty. She's only thirty-nine so all of my friends practically drool every time she brings snacks to my practice, or they come over to swim. It's really gross and annoying.

"I'm eating one of your pieces of bacon for that!" She says With a sly grin so I run to my plate where my sister is already sitting one seat over with her freckled face shoved into a book.

"Over my dead body!" I cry out, shoving as many pieces of bacon into my mouth as will fit.

"You're so disgusting, honestly." Jade complains with an uppity sigh before grabbing her book and a grapefruit and walking towards the front door.

"I love you Mom," jade says as she plants a quick kiss on our mothers temple.

"And love you dad!" She yells up the stairs to which a hearty and deep voice calls back "Not so fast, sweetheart."

Our dad comes trotting down the stairs fixing his tie, his peppered hair styled in its usual perfect fashion. Most people have lame dads, like Ruby, but mines actually pretty cool.

Before Jade is permitted to leave our dad forces her to give him a hug, not that she's really complaining either way.

"Are you coming, Fiona ?" Ruby's voice suddenly fills the foyer along with high pitched laughter as she walks inside. Ruby always drives with Jade to school since we're neighbors, but I drive myself.

"Yeah I'm coming, Sophia. " Jade jokes back but it doesn't quite have the same impact.

"Good morning Jameson." Ruby says to me in a soft voice, her small hand waving to me. My eyes go wide as they make contact with her brown orbs and I'm suddenly choking on the sip of O.J. I've just taken.

"Good good morning!" I choke out, my mom coming over and smacking my back before I die.

Ruby laughs and my cheeks burn red, good job Jameson.

Suddenly I'm not so hungry. I grab my backpack from the floor where I had dropped it yesterday and make a bee line for the door.

"Uh, goodbye?" My mom yells, not too happy about my abrupt departure.

"Yeah, bye." I grumble out before shoving past my snickering sister and maneuvering past Ruby, making sure I don't brush against her because I don't think I could stand it.

I hop into my truck and groan against the steering wheel, hitting the top of it with my head a few times before I'm satisfied.

"Stupid stupid stupid!" I mumble.

I really gotta get over this. Ruby is practically family, and she's my sisters best friend. She's like, a whole year older than me, and she's dating some hipster college guy.

She'd never go for a jock like me. She hates guys like me.

Gosh Fiona. I blame her Mom.

***

Sophia's POV:

"Wow, he's got it bad doesn't he?" I say to Thomas after our children have both left. Thomas sips his coffee and smiles into it.

"Yeah, I recognize that look. He's hopeless." Thomas replies. I go to sit next to him as he thumbs through the news paper. I rest my head against his strong shoulder and he kisses the top of it.

"I thought boys like him were supposed to be players, not get tongue tied over one girl that's he's known his whole life." I say with confusion. Jameson plays football, puts product in his hair, and works out way too much. Honestly, he's a less terrible little Michael. Good thing he actually knows how to respect women.

"We raised him better than that, darling. Honestly, I'm just looking foreword to this year at school. They're all seniors, and I have a feeling the drama will be noteworthy."

I turn my mischievous smile towards my husband.

"I bet it would make for a great book." I admit, but Thomas just kisses the smile right off of my lips, the hint of coffee and his familiar taste bringing back a thousand happy memories.

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