

Undercover: Book 3

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STORYPDF

Complete English text · US Letter reading edition

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About this edition

This StoryPDF reading edition contains the complete English text, with its original paragraph and section order preserved.

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Chapter 1

"Claire, you have another letter, but this one is from Princeton!" my mom yelled while I was in the shower. I quickly rinsed the conditioner out of my hair and shut off the water, and wrapped myself in a towel. I rushed downstairs, almost slipping on the steps. I tore the letter from my mom's hands and started to open it. My mom only rolled her eyes, knowing this was a usual occasion when there was a college letter. I threw it on the counter, unfolding the paper, and began to read it.

Dear Claire Martez,

Thank you for your interest in Princeton University. After taking time and looking over your application we are sorry to inform you that we are unable to offer you a spot at our university.

I sighed sadly and set down the letter, not even bothering to read the rest. This was the college I wanted to get into the most, and the one letter I'd been waiting for all summer.

"Did you get in?" my mom asked; cracking eggs into a pan.

I shook my head. "No. I guess I'll just look through the colleges I did make it into and see if one of those are at least decent," I said before heading back upstairs. I went into my room and grabbed my brush. I started to brush my blonde hair before I laid back on the bed and groaned loudly. It's embarrassing to apply to a school and not make it.

"Claire! Mom said to get ready to go to the store," my sixteen-year-old brother, Jeffery, said walking into the room. "Oh and get some clothes on," he added.

"Nah, I say let her keep them off," his perverted friend Sam said.

"Get out!" I yelled throwing my brush at him. He shut the door before it got the chance to hit him which of course made me scowl.

Damn.

"Dude, that's my sister!" I heard Jeff say after a smacking sound. I got up and walked over to my dresser and pulled out a pair of black high-waisted shorts and a white crop top that said 'Je t'aime' on it above the Eiffel Tower. I put in my shiny, black, dangly, belly button ring and started to walk over to the bathroom across the hallway to dry my hair.

I originally got my belly button done as a dare when I was fifteen. I now knew to never do something that stupid when you have a mother like mine. She grounded me for about four and a half months. No TV. No Phone. No electronics.

Once my hair was dried I grabbed my phone and headed downstairs to the smell of food in the kitchen. "Whatcha makin' me?" I asked my mom, jumping up onto the high stool.

"I'm making your brother and his friend some food before they head to the skate park," she said, causing me to pout.

"Can I have some eggs?" I asked. She rolled her eyes but handed me a plate.

"Thanks, mom!" I said before shoving food in my mouth.

"Claire, manners."

"Love you!" I said with food in my mouth, making her fake gag.

"Hey sweetie," my dad said giving my mother a kiss on the cheek.

"Where are you off to?" she asked him looking suspicious.

"Since it's a week before school the teachers are having a meeting to get ready for all the students coming in a few days," my father answered, stealing a piece of bacon. "I really have to go but I'll see you girls later, but before I go, have you decided on a college Claire?"

"Uh yea I think so," I told him giving him a wide fake smile. "Bye daddy. Have a good day at work."

"Make sure to email them then or else you won't get in. Most colleges are letting students move in within the next few days right after orientation," my dad said sternly before waving and heading out. I quickly finished up my breakfast when mom grabbed her purse and put it on her shoulder.

"You ready?" she asked once I set my plate on the drying rack. After I washed it I nodded, grabbing my pair of black vans and sliding them on.

"Jeffery! Sam! Let's go we're leaving!" my mom yelled from the bottom of the steps before we headed out the front door. I sat in the front, which of course caused a complaint from Jeffery as he stood outside of the car with his arms crossed.

"Yes?" I asked him, rolling down my window.

"I get the front seat," he told me with a glare and I rolled my eyes.

"I'm an adult. Therefore, I get the front. Sorry, bro," I said, shrugging before starting to roll up the window.

"Mom!" he complained.

"Jeffery just sit in the back with your friend," she told him and I smirked at him as he got in the backseat. I turned up the radio and "She Looks So Perfect" by 5 Seconds of Summer was on causing me to squeal. I started belting out the lyrics while dancing as much as I could in a seat.

"If you don't swim you'll drown but don't move, honey.

She looks so perfect standing there in my American apparel underwear and I know now, that I'm so down.

Your lipstick stain is a work of art I've got your name tattooed in an arrow heart and I -"

"Claire please!" my mom yelled cutting me off over the blasting music. I gave her a sheepish smile before turning it down so it was only on low.

"Standing there in my American apparel underwear?' This song is so sexual," Jeffery said, causing my mom to sigh and for me to turn around and glare at him. The moment the car stopped at the skate park, I said, "Out."

"Claire, be a little nicer to your brother," my mother told me causing me to sigh.

"Goodbye, little brother and his perverted friend," I said before they shut the door.

"Bye dork," Jeff yelled before he ran to the ramps meeting up with a group of people.

"You know at the age of sixteen I wasn't allowed to go anywhere but the mall or the movie theater. How come he can go to the skate-park?" I asked looking at my mom curiously.

"He is allowed because he is a boy and if I don't let him he will try to rebel and be cool," she told me rolling her eyes. I scoffed, I doubted he would. Everyone knew how scary my mother was when she was mad. I was pretty sure even the president knew. When we arrived at the store and my mother made me get the cart- yes, at age eighteen I still had to get the cart for my mother. She said I had to because it saved her time but in reality I just think she was too lazy to get it herself.

"Sweetie, can you go get some snacks for the house?" she asked me and I rolled my eyes but reluctantly agreed.

"You may be almost nineteen but that does not mean you can go around rolling your eyes at your poor mother," my mom said.

"Mom it's a little weird when you talk about yourself in the third person."

"Just go get some snacks," she told me with a playful glare. I let out a small laugh and headed to the cold section. I frowned when I noticed there was only one vanilla yogurt left. I went to grab it but someone else quickly grabbed it making my frown turn into a scowl.

"Excuse me! I was going to take that!" I told the guy who just looked at me and scoffed starting to walk away. But I wouldn't let him walk away that easily with my yogurt. I wouldn't have problems like this if the store knew how to refill their products.

"Can I please have my vanilla yogurt?" I asked the guy, holding out my hand and he just chuckled.

"You do just realize this is just yogurt and there are a million other flavors right?" The guy's husky voice said as he stopped to look at me.

"Yes! But I only like vanilla. How about this you give me the vanilla yogurt and you can go get a nice blueberry or strawberry flavor instead," I told him, crossing my arms over my chest and he let out a deep chuckle.

"If this yogurt means this much to you then you can have it," the guy told me and the scowl quickly disappeared from my face and I smiled.

"Really?!" I asked him and he shook his head.

"No, now go away and leave me alone," he told me before turning around and walking away. My jaw dropped. I could not believe him. I just met the guy and he completely acted like an insufferable jerk! I glared at the floor as I walked over to the yogurt section sulking. I grabbed some cheese sticks that weren't far from the yogurt and then went and grabbed some fruit. When I found my mom she already had half of the cart filled.

"It took you ten minutes to get apples and cheese?" Mom asked with a raised eyebrow. "And you didn't get yogurt? What's the occasion?" she asked me only causing me to sulk more.

"I'd rather not talk about it," I told her and she just gave me a strange look before shrugging and heading to the checkout. After everything was scanned and paid for we headed to the car to go home- without my yogurt I may add.

Chapter 2

"You didn't come home last night," my mother said, staring at my father as he walked into the kitchen. Her face showed no emotion besides curiosity

"Yes, I know I'm sorry, sweetie, I fell asleep at the office," my dad said, looking sincere. My mom only nodded.

"Are you going back?" she asked him.

"Yea they are still doing registrations today and tomorrow so it's going to be busy," my dad said and mom nodded.

"Okay, I'll pack a lunch for you," she started to take out lunch meat from the refrigerator and dad hugged and thanked her before heading upstairs to change.

"Dirty rotten liar," I heard mom mumble, causing me to raise a perfectly plucked eyebrow. She threw the butter knife on the counter causing me to jump a little.

"Something wrong, Mom?" I asked and she huffed giving me one of her famous death glares.

"Claire, honey I think your father is cheating on me," she told me all of sudden causing me to choke on my cereal. A few minutes later after almost dying from choking, I finally regained myself.

"What are you talking about, Mom? That is ridiculous. Is this because of him sleeping at the office?" I asked her and she just shook her head.

"No, he smells like another woman! His tie was all out of place and- hello honey!" Mom said stopping what she was saying as my father walked into the room wearing a new professional looking outfit.

"New outfit?" Mom asked, and he nodded.

"Work decided to give me a raise," he said, and she smiled.

"That's great! Oh and Claire has found a college she is going to!" Mom said all of a sudden.

"I have?" I asked through a bite of cereal.

"Where are you going?" Dad asked and I was about to tell him I had no idea but mom interrupted.

"I can't remember the name but she is going to one of the colleges in Chicago!"

"Oh wow! When do you leave?" he asked me. I sighed and just let my mom answer. "Tomorrow morning, isn't that right, honey?" she asked me and I just nodded slowly.

"Yea um... tomorrow?" I agreed, but it sounded more like a question.

"Oh, I'm sorry I can't see you go! I'll make sure to try to get home tonight earlier and we can all have a family dinner. Shannon, please make sure Jeffery is home for dinner tonight. I got to go but bye love you both. I'm proud of you Claire." Dad told us, kissing mom and my forehead before leaving with a wave.

"Mom! What the hell was that about?" I asked her, and she just smiled.

"Claire, I know which college you're going to," she told me and I raised an eyebrow in amusement.

"Oh?" I asked, and she nodded.

"You are going to the university where your dad works," she told me and I shook my head

"No, I am not. That's an all-boys university and second of all, it's barely even a university. They accept sixteen-year-olds there," I said looking at her amused. She couldn't actually think I could go there, right?

"I know. That is why when a petite boy with a small set of boobs comes in they won't even question it," she said waving me off.

"I don't know if you noticed, but my boobs aren't exactly small," I said causing her to glance up from her laptop.

"They will be once you put some wrap around that chest of yours."

"You must be high," I said, shaking my head at her craziness.

"Oh, shush. I'm registering you online right now," she told me and I scoffed. She couldn't be serious.

"Why on Earth would I do that? Why would I waste a year in college as a fake person? I wouldn't get any credit for going there," I said and she shook her head, a smile sliding up her face.

"You, darling, are going to find out if your father is cheating on me," she said looking determined.

"Mother," I snapped. "This is ridiculous!"

"Listen, I'll work it out in the end. I'll talk to someone and make sure you get credit for any classes you take there. We can say you're a transgender or something," she told me before heading upstairs.

"Mom! "I yelled storming after her. "What is wrong with you? I refuse to go to that university! Send Jeffery if you really think Dad is cheating on you! Which he's not," I said, following her upstairs.

"Do you know that for a fact? No? I didn't think so," she said, before clicking one button on her laptop and closing it. "Jeffery isn't mature enough for this and your father teaches college level classes, not the younger ones." I let out a deep breath.

Don't yell. Don't yell. Don't yell.

"Hey, I'll give you some money and you can invite Mia over to go with and help you get some clothes. Maybe even Nathan will help. Just make sure to buy some Axe or something that will make you smell less girly!" she told me setting down her laptop and grabbing her purse. "I'll give you \$150. No actually \$250 because you need to buy a guy's luggage carrier."

"I can't believe you. You already thought this through, didn't you?" I said, shaking my head as I paced back and forth. "Mom, just think about your daughter for a second. This is probably illegal to go to an all-boys school if you're a female! Which is something I am," I yelled at her and she just raised an eyebrow.

"Like I said, we'll use that you're a transgender or something."

"But I'm not and it's terrible to lie about that. You act like it's some joke," I snapped, glaring at her.

"Claire Martez, don't you dare talk to me like that. You may not be happy with this idea, but I am your mother. I'm not forcing you to do this, but I am begging you. And remember I spent, at least, nine hours trying to get you out of my body eighteen years ago! The least you could do is repay me by finding out if your father is cheating on me!" she yelled, tears welling up in her eyes making me release an irritated sigh. I walked over and sat by her and pulled her into a hug.

"Okay, Mom," I muttered. "I'll do this just till I find out! But once I find out I'm leaving and going to my choice of a college!" I told her and she smiled her tears just suddenly disappearing.

What a faker.

"Thank you, Claire! I always knew you were my favorite!" she told me, grabbing her laptop and pulling up the registration application and clicking send.

"Yeah, yeah, whatever," I muttered, waving her off as I walked out of her bedroom. I slid my phone out of my back pocket and dialed the number I knew from heart.

"Hey, bae," Mia said in a high pitched voice making me laugh. Mia had been my best friend since elementary school. Although we did get in fights sometimes I still loved her as if she was my own family.

"Are you back from Florida?" I asked her as I looked down at my chipped nails. I guessed this polish would have to be taken off.

"Sadly yes. I'm back in the nice and chilly Seattle, Washington," she told me and I smiled just imagining her rolling her eyes.

"I'm appalled you didn't call me once you arrived back home," I said, turning on my TV with the remote.

"Sorry! I've been packing for college all week. You know I leave Thursday. Speaking of, tonight we have to go out to that club a few streets away," she said and I bit back a smirk. I knew exactly which one she was talking about. It was actually right by that university. Or well by both universities since there was one for boys and another for girls. Why my father couldn't work at the girls' one? I don't know, but whatever.

"Sounds good! I leave tomorrow morning, so it will be a way for us to get together before we both are off to college," I said while trying to pick my black nail polish off my fingernails.

Couldn't you just use nail polish remover?

"Did you get into Princeton?" she asked, and I frowned.

"No, I wasn't accepted," I told her sadly. My poor baby would be missing out on a quite fantastic person.

"Aww, it's okay! I'm sure whatever college you go to will be better!" She said encouragingly. "Wait, you are still going to college, right? Because I know that was your number one choice, but you wouldn't be that stupid to just not go. Right?"

I shook my head at my friend, putting her on speaker as I changed into a pair of white skinny jeans. "That's actually what I called you about," I yelled, almost falling over as I tried to pull the jeans up my legs. "Yes, I'm still going to college, but come pick me up and we'll go to the mall. I'll explain everything there," I told her and she quickly replied with an 'okay.'

"Be there in ten," she added me before hanging up. I pulled on a black blouse and slipped on some flats. I decided to just put my blonde hair in a fishtail braid. By the time I was done, Mia arrived and we were soon on our way to the mall. This whole process would be interesting.

Chapter 3

"So let me get this straight you're going to your dad's college as a guy to make sure he isn't cheating on your mom?" Mia asked me while we look at guy clothes and I nodded.

"Well, then what type of guy do you want to be? Hot jock? A player? The Bad Boy? Nerd? Druggie?" She listed sounding excited and I just stared at her.

"You know I'm probably not even going to be there that long? It could end up being only a week and you can't tell Nathan about this," I stated and she shrugged.

"Who cares? This is a nice shopping spree and why not?! He would love to hear this," she told me, excited.

"He would tease me endlessly," I told her lifting up a plain green shirt.

"He is your other best friend so of course he would just like I am going to."

"Are you lost?" A man who worked at the store asked and I snorted.

"Nope, just shopping for my brother," I lied and he nodded. He looked to be maybe my age or older.

"Well I'm Julius let me know if you need anything and I mean anything at all," he told me with a wink before going to help someone check out.

"That guy totally wanted your ass!" Mia told me, and I rolled my eyes but laughed.

"How come your brother isn't doing this?" Mia asked me as she lifted up a shirt and held it against me.

"Because he is too young to go to college and would get kicked out the first day for not knowing anything, I mean, he is only a sophomore in high school," I told her and she nodded.

"You should try it on," she said, throwing it into my arms I went to go do that but she grabbed my arm, stopping me.

"No, not yet. You are just going to go all at once and try everything on."

"So are you going to get your hair cut off?" she asked me and I looked at her like she was crazy, which she is when thinking like that. I grabbed just a few simple pairs of basketball shorts and a few plain t-shirts.

"Hell no. It just grew back from Jeffery cutting half of it off a two years ago," I told her and she nodded understanding.

You may be wondering what I'm talking about. Well a couple of years ago Jeffery thought it would be funny to play a prank on me at his birthday party with his friends and they all snuck into my room and chopped off my hair and made it all different lengths. To say it was awful would be an understatement. I had to go to the salon and they made it so it was all the same length which ended a little bit under my ears.

Of course now, my hair is fully back to its original length which is about four inches below my shoulders. A few hours later after trying on and buying outfits we were finally out of the mall I stopped suddenly looking across the street.

"Wait stop," I told Mia as I looked at the sports shop. I've been dying to fix my skateboard and get a new wheel for it. My skateboard was a nice simple plain white, but what made it unique is that I made it have a splatter paint design.

"New skateboard?" Mia asked smirking at me.

"More like just a new wheel. You know I would never replace my baby," I told her and I grabbed her arm and pulled her into the shop. A small bell rang as we opened the door, alerting the workers we entered.

"Claire? I haven't seen you in forever!" Johnny told me as he jumped over the counter and hugged me. I immediately hugged him back and smiled.

"Um, Claire?" Mia called for me.

"Oh sorry! Johnny this is Mia my best friend, and Mia this is Johnny a guy who used to help my dad at work," I told her and she smiled saying a hello and reaching out to shake his hand but he just stared at it. She quickly realized he wasn't going to shake it and awkwardly brought it back. Johnny quickly pulled Mia into his arms and kissed her cheek.

"Please girl, no need to be so formal and I can't believe you went shopping without me," he told us when he noticed the bags.

"Sorry Johnny, but how come you're working here? I thought you wanted to be a teacher?" I asked him and he just shook his head.

"Mmm no way, sister," the twenty-eight-year-old said, shaking his head and putting his hand on his hip. "I decided I wanted to work with beauty instead so I went back to college and now I'm here."

"In a sports store?" Mia questioned.

"Just for now until I get a call from one of the few places I applied for," he told us and we nodded.

"So what can I get you, darling?" he asked me and I smiled.

"I'm just getting a new skateboard wheel," I told him and he nodded and brought me over to the small wall with different colored wheels and sizes.

I grabbed a red wheel to match my others. After checking out and saying goodbye I headed home.

"What did you get?!" Mom asked excitedly.

"Some outfits and a cap thing for my hair and a wig plus some padding thing to hide my boobs," I told her and she frowned.

"Why didn't you just cut your hair? You would have played the role better," she told me and I lightly smacked her arm.

"Mom! This isn't some acting game! I'm only doing this for you for probably a week or two!" I told her.

"Doing what?" Jeff asked coming down the stairs.

"Nothing sweetie. Why don't you go and set the table," Mom told him and he groaned but did what she asked.

"I know, I know, I'm sorry," she replied when Jeffery was in the kitchen. "Go wash up and come down to eat, your father should be home any second and dinner will be ready in five." I went upstairs and threw the bags on my bed and sighed laying down.

"How am I supposed to act like a boy?" I asked myself quietly before I got up and changed into some shorts and a tank top. After washing my face and hands I went downstairs and joined everyone at the table.

"Hey, Claire," my dad said smiling at me from across the table. "You know Jeffery I hope you can continue and try to keep up your grades so you can get into a good school like your sister."

"Not this conversation again," Jeffery groaned and I snorted.

"What do you mean again? Dad never talks to you about school," I told him and he glared at me.

"How would you know? You're always out with Mia and Nathan or Liam," he told me causing me to glare at him.

"I thought you and Liam broke up," Mom asked bring the food to the table.

"We did," I said glaring at him. I noticed mom had a few more pans so I got up and decided to help.

"Here Mom, hold on let me help," I told her and grabbed one.

"Be careful they're-" she started to say but I already released the pan from my hands as I realized they were scorching hot as it burned my fingers and fell to the ground.

"- Hot," she finished.

"Sorry, Mom," I said sheepishly.

"Nice going, Claire," Jeffery said. I just rolled my eyes.

"It's hard to tell you're sixteen when you act like you're eight," I said and he didn't reply and just stuck his tongue out proving my point. "You know what I'm just going to go to bed. I have to leave early for college tomorrow," I said not feeling really in the mood to eat as a wave of tiredness swept over me.

"Okay goodnight, hon," Mom said hugging me before suddenly gasping.

"Oh wait! I have something for you!" She quickly grabbed an envelope from inside a cabinet. "This is for you!"

"What is it?" I asked her suspiciously.

"It's from Mia. She told me to give it to you before you went to bed." She winked at me and I understood what it actually was, something to do with this new university I'm going to.

"Goodnight, Claire. Call me tomorrow once you're free," Dad told me pulling me into a big hug. "I'll miss you." He kissed my forehead and gave me one more hug before letting me go.

"Even though you're annoying as fu-"

"Don't even finish that sentence young man," Mom told Jeffery causing him to roll his eyes.

"Okay, even though you're annoying and never know how to mind your own business and you don't know how to not take four hours in the bathroom just to get ready I still love you and I hope you have fun being a college student," Jeff told me, hugging me and making my eyes almost water. I didn't realize that even though I was only going to be at this college for a few weeks I will still going to miss my crazy family like crazy.

"Bye, Jeff love you too. Make sure to keep it PG in your sophomore year," I told him and he shrugged.

"I'll think about it. It will depend on how hot the girls are this year I'll find out tomorrow, though," he said, making mom smack the back of his head.

"Eat your dinner then go to bed. You have your first day tomorrow," she told Jeff and he nodded. I gave him a hug and whispered in his ear,

"Try not to annoy mom too much and don't get some girl knocked up." He just laughed and pulled away.

"Make sure to set your alarm, Claire! Goodnight see you in the morning!" Mom yelled to me as I headed up the stairs. Before I went to bed I threw all of my new guy clothes into the plain black suitcase I bought earlier and zipped it up. Putting my suitcase by my skateboard I went and brushed my teeth then hopped into bed I just hoped this experience wouldn't be too bad.

Chapter 4

"Mom I don't want to do this anymore," I told her as we sat outside of the large university. I was just wearing a pair of black basketball shorts some Jordan's and a hoodie then plus my wig.

"Oh no. Don't you dare chicken out! You never know after all this you may date one of these guys some of them are fine," my mom said, winking at a guy making him and I both choke on our own spit in disgust.

"Can you not," I asked, glaring at her.

"Sorry, being here makes me think of my college days. I was one hot sexy prude back then," she said fixing up her hair and lipstick.

"Prude?" I asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Yea that's what all the boys would call me," she told me before puckering her lips.

"Mom, do you know what a prude is?" I asked her and she nodded.

"I'm not that old Claire I'm only forty-one. When they started calling me a prude I didn't know but when I asked they told me it was another word for sex goddess," she told me flipping her hair. I stared at her for a minute before bursting out laughing, tears started to form in my eyes from laughing so hard.

"What? What is so funny?" she asked me.

"Nothing mom," I told her shaking my head and biting my lip to hold back any more laughter.

"Okay, well you have to get going you want to try to get the best bed. Remember to call me so you can let me know how things are going and it's still college so have some fun and make some friends. Don't just spend all of your time stalking your father," she told me and I simply nodded.

Yeah, because it's easy having fun and making friends while pretending to be a boy.

"Here is a bag of your regular clothes just in case you do get some free time. Just remember I love you and if anyone calls you a prude you are off to a very great start. Now bye honey!" she said waving, and I shut the car door. In case you haven't noticed my mom is a little weird. I decided to make it easier on myself and put my stuff on my skateboard and just roll it.

"Great idea man," a guy told me walking next to me as he struggled with his stuff.

"Thanks!" I said and he gave me a weird look. My eyes widened and I quickly corrected myself and coughed.

"Sorry I have a cold my voice is a little off but um yeah thanks, bro," I said lowering my voice and giving him a light punch on the shoulder he gave me another weird look and nodded.

"Well, I have to go hope to see you around," he said and I nodded and he started to walk away but I still heard him mumble,

"Loser."

Wow, Claire thirty seconds of being here and you're already blowing it. I thought to myself sighing. I picked up my stuff off the skateboard when I noticed the stairs in front of me. Grabbing my stuff I started to slowly walk up the stairs. Finally! Reaching the doors I headed in and was surprised by how nice the school was and went into the doors that had a sign that said office.

"Name?" the lady asked and I replied the name my mom wrote down on the sheet from home.

"Jason Lockwood," I replied and she typed my name into the computer.

"Room 326 here's your key and schedule." She handed me the envelope and went to texting on her phone. How friendly, I thought sarcastically. I remembered my mom telling me about this being almost like a boarding school you didn't apply you get sent here. Going onto the elevator I waited till it got to the 3rd floor once the ding went off the doors opened I started down the hall mumbling the numbers to myself as I passed.

"321"

"322"

"323"

"324"

"325"

"326"

"327"

"32- wait 326!" I turned around and backed up two doors. Sliding my key card I opened the door and headed in, the sight that greeted me wasn't too pleasant.

"Baby!" the girl moaned making me quickly turn around.

"Sorry!" I said closing my eyes trying to block out the image of the naked girl. The sound of someone hitting their head and yelling *hey* made me almost open my eyes. Almost.

"Who are you?" the guy asked making me open my eyes I realized he was still wearing no clothes and I made sure to keep my eyes from wandering while he just stood there with his arms crossed in

all of his naked glory. Great my roommate is freaking hot as hell and is a sex god. I thought as I took in his features on his face. He had hazel eyes and dirty blonde hair that almost looked brown that was in a messy form which looked like bed head but I knew from the sight a minute ago is was definitely not bed head.

"Jason Lockwood, I'm your new roommate," I told him rubbing my hand on the back of my neck awkwardly.

"Baby, I thought you said you didn't have a roommate," the girl said, and I noticed she was now only wearing a long guy's t-shirt which I was guessing was his.

"Why are you wearing my shirt?" the guy said coldly also glaring at her and the girl frowned. "And I said I usually don't get one and when I do the guy always ends up switching rooms."

"Sorry," she mumbled and started taking it off, I removed my eyes from the girl and just looked at the ground. I heard a door closing and noticed the girl was gone.

"I thought this was an all-boys university...," I said trailing off awkwardly.

"It is and you won't tell anyone about my little guest or else we'll have a problem," he told me sliding up his jeans.

"Yea, I won't tell my lips are sealed," I told him pretending to lock my lips and throw out the key.

"Great I have a loser as a roommate," he said not bothering to hide the fact of what he thought of me. "The name is Caiden Anderson- stay out of my way and we'll be fine," he told me and I nodded bringing my bags over to the other side of the room where the unused bed was. The door shut signaling Caiden left and I sighed and put my hands on my face.

"What did I agree to?" I asked myself quietly. Deciding to get my unpacking done and over with I folded and put my clothes in the empty dresser and put my bag with my natural clothes under my bed with my skateboard. About an hour later I was done with everything and sat on my bed not really knowing what to do. I got a text from Mia and smiled at what it said,

-

-----To: Claire From: Mia Delivered: 1:27 P.M

Hey, girl! How is the guy life? Any hot guys? Text me back as soon as you get this.

To: Mia From: Claire Delivered 3:49 P.M

Hey Mia! I already miss you! The guy life is already horrible and I've only been here for less than 2 hours. I walked into my hot roommate getting it on with some girl. I'll explain it all later when I

call you tonight. Since we had to cancel our plans last night we can go clubbing possibly this weekend.

Ps. Everyone I meet thinks I'm a loser.

The door opened and Caiden walked in with a group of guys behind him. I noticed one of them was the guy who I talked to while walking in.

"You have a roommate?" one of the guys asked looking surprised and Caiden shrugged.

"Yea, but he will probably move out by the end of the week," Caiden simply said.

"Do you play basketball?" a guy asked and I shrugged.

"A little," I told him in reality I was on the girls' basketball team since middle school and he nodded.

"I'm Nick and this is Kyle, Max, and Tom," Nick told me pointing at three guys. Kyle was the guy who I met earlier I noted.

"Nice to meet you," I said.

"You should join us in basketball so we can play three on three," Kyle told me and I shrugged.

"Sure just a game," I replied. When we all got to the court I noticed a group of guys that applied of about seven, singing together in the corner.

"Who are they?" I asked.

"The weirdos who think they can sing," Tom yelled. I raised an eyebrow at this and he shrugged.

"They needed to know my opinion." As soon as Tom said this I immediately knew who I was 'hanging out' with.

These boys were found at every school you go to, in elementary school, in middle school, and in high school.

First of all, there was Tom. Tom was obviously the jock that liked the attention and most likely played lots of sports. Kyle? He was the cliché bad boy wearing the black leather jacket and jeans with the chains attached that were hanging halfway down his butt. Now, Max, I could easily see he was the quiet one, most likely the relaxed one also. Finally the last two, Caiden and Nick. Well, Nick was the best friend and the closest one to Caiden. He was the oh-so-obvious player also.

Now I wasn't judging him by just his appearance, I was judging by what I've dealt with the last half an hour of being with them as well. I know this fact by Nick stopping by the office on our way back to make plans for a 'quick meet up' with the secretary after she gets off.

Now combined all of these together, the jock, the bad boy, the quiet one, the player and just add an extra personality the cocky one. The outcome you may ask? Oh, that's simple, Caiden Anderson. Now each of these guys you put together and you get a pack of wolves. Oops, I mean a group of guys who are cocky and think they are better than everyone and sexy popular group. The pack of wolves is just what I like to call them all because they all act like wolves following their alpha around or in this case Caiden around.

"Jace, dude watch out!" Tom yelled I looked up just as the basketball connected with my face making me fall backward and land on the green painted court.

"Ow," I moaned rubbing my now sore face. Everyone started to head over at the incident.

"Act like a man," Caiden told me as he looked down at my figure on the ground.

"I didn't exactly expect to be hit in the face with a basketball," I snapped back making sure to keep my voice a little lower like I've been.

Caiden simply shrugging before turning around and heading off the basketball court. Everyone noticed he was leaving and quickly walked off after him leaving me behind. Like I said a pack of wolves. They don't leave their Alpha, their leader.

"Great guys they are huh?" one of the guys from the corner asked me holding out a hand. I grabbed it and thanked him.

"Yes, they are just peachy," I mumbled angrily.

"Are you gay?" the guy came straight out and asked. My eyes widened at his blunt question and frowned.

"No," I said, offended. He quickly noticed this and apologized,

"Sorry, it's just you walk in a feminine way. It would have been okay if you were. I mean I'm gay and that's why most people don't like me, but my friends that you saw earlier are okay with it and all accept me... at least I think they do. It could be the fact that most of them are bi," he said nodding. "Hey, have you heard that song Same Love by Macklemore? That song is very inspiring! Oh my, I'm so stupid. Are you against gay people? I had a feeling you were just like them and that's why you-" The guy rambled on making me put my hand over his mouth causing him to stop talking. I sighed in relief.

"I have nothing against anyone who is gay so don't worry I'm not like Caiden's stuck up group. The name is Jason or Jace as they call me," I told him.

"My name is Eddie. Why do they call you Jace?" he questioned.

"They told me it sounds cooler but in all honestly I could care less how it sounds," I said shrugging and he smiled.

"I think we'll be very good friends," Eddie told me pulling me into a hug. I just nodded slowly and awkwardly patted his back.

Chapter 5

The next morning I wasn't exactly expecting to wake up to a bunch of loud guys. Jeffery must have had his friends over.

"Ugh, what time is it?" I asked annoyed, putting a pillow over my head. The smell of some type of cologne made me freeze. I'm not at home...I'm at an all-boys university as a boy...shit!

"Ugh, this cold needs to go away," I said fake coughing. Lifting my head up from under my pillow I saw Caiden still asleep so it must have been our roommates moving. The room next door to us was connected to the bathroom along with our room so basically we are all roommates just in two separate rooms... does that make sense?

"Shut the hell up," Caiden told me in one hell of a sexy morning voice. I was confused why he was telling me to shut up until I realized my phone was going off. I looked and saw it was my dad and decided it would be a good time to get breakfast. Since I couldn't bring my own car here I had to basically walk everywhere. Getting up and stretching, I grabbed my phone turning it to silent and changed in the bathroom before slipping on my Jordan's. I was about to head out but I grabbed my room key card first and then headed out of the room making sure to slam the door just to irritate Caiden.

Once I was officially out of the school building I opened my cell phone and called my dad back.

"Hey, Dad," I said fake yawning to make it sound like I just woke up.

"You didn't call me yesterday. How is your college like? Make any friends yet?" he asked me and I just let out a small laugh.

"I just got here yesterday I don't have any friends yet and my roommate is coming this weekend from what she told me when I emailed her. I really have to go, though. Sorry I could only talk for a minute! Bye, dad!" I said hanging up before checking for cars and crossing the street to the very wonderful Starbucks. Once I was inside, I got into the small line and waited patiently, looking out the window. It was nice to see the sun was still rising. It was only about five-thirty a.m., maybe six.

"Hi, what can I get you?" the lady asked me smiling politely.

"Can I have a grande double chocolatey chip Frappuccino," I asked the lady making sure to let my voice fit with my guy look. She nodded and grabbed a cup writing it down.

"Name?" she asked me, looking up.

"Jason," I told her and she smiled when I told her that was it, I paid her and went and stood over in the waiting line. A few people later I had my drink and sat down at one of the small tables.

"Hey, Jason right?" Nick, Caiden's friend asked me and I thought about telling him no and that I don't know who he is but decided against it and nodded my head slowly.

"Remember I'm Nick," he told me sitting down not bothering to ask me if his presence was actually wanted, which it wasn't. I noticed he was wearing a red hat and a simple pair of long black and white basketball shorts with a white t-shirt that said Johnston boys' university lacrosse team number 1 in red and black the school's colors.

"You play lacrosse?" I asked him surprised and he nodded taking a sip of his coffee he had.

"I'm the best on the team," he said leaning back in his chair arrogantly making me almost snort.

"Hey, what is that?" Nick asked me pointing to my drink.

"Double chocolatey chip Frappuccino," I responded before taking a sip, he scrunched up his nose in disgust.

"Don't you think that's girly?" he asked me making me glare at him.

"No, not at all," I replied offended.

"Girls only get that shit," he replied and I frowned, how sexist!

Is this world now at the point where we judge people by their drinks?

"No, my brother gets frappuccinos all the time," I said trying to save my fake man pride.

"Yeah, okay whatever dude," Nick said shrugging before raising an eyebrow in wonder, "How come you're up so early?"

"I usually go jogging but today I'm just too lazy," I told him and he nodded understandingly.

"What about you?" I asked and he smirked leaning back in his chair a little. I hoped he would fall and spill his coffee but of course, I wouldn't let him know that.

"I was having some fun with one of the girls from our neighboring schools. You should have seen this chick, man she was a nerd but her looks are just deceiving when it's just you and her, her bad girl side comes out," he said still smirking. I didn't bother to hide my annoyed look and said,

"That's, um, great man. I don't need to know info on your personal life," I told him and he just chuckled. "What neighboring school?"

"Oh it's another university but this one is just for all girls. It's only about a mile or two from our university. You looking for a chick?" Nick asked me and I shook my head.

"I'm focusing on my studies," I told him smoothly.

"How boring," Nick told me before standing up.

"Going to head back and wake up Kyle. We have that opening assembly at seven. You should wake up Caiden," he said and I nodded.

"I'll think about it," I said and he laughed thinking I was joking. The truth was I was being honest. Finishing my drink a few minutes later I left and headed back to the school. When I walked into the room Caiden was getting dressed along with a girl who was trying to find the rest of her clothes. I didn't comment and just walked past them and grabbed my brush and my towel and went into the bathroom making sure both doors were locked.

I took off my wig and the bald cap thing I had on. Yes, I wasn't stupid, I wore a bald cap and a wig. Stripping from my clothes I went into the shower and quickly washed my hair and body. Instead of using my usual great smelling soap I used the awful guy soaps.

Well, they honestly aren't that bad I mean they do smell good.

Once I was done about ten minutes later I stepped out and started drying myself off and grabbed my fresh and still clean clothes that I was wearing earlier. When my wig was fully secure I left the bathroom to see an impatient Caiden waiting outside the door.

"It took you long enough. What the fuck were you doing? Hooking up with someone? Damn, some of us need to use the bathroom as well," Caiden snapped before heading in and shutting the door.

"Well isn't someone in a fantastic mood," I grumbled walking over to my bed. I was surprised to see the girl from earlier just sitting there.

"Hello!" the girl said, smiling at me.

"Uh, hi?" I said back before putting my stuff away. I noticed the girl was just watching me and I raised an eyebrow.

"Yes?" I asked slowly not really wanting to deal with one of Caiden's hook up.

"You're cute," she told me causing me to just stare at her blankly. I didn't know what to reply to this, maybe if I was the girl in this situation like I've been my whole life I would be able to answer. What do guys reply to this? I mean I've had boyfriends but I've never just told them they were cute randomly.

"Uh, thanks?" I said awkwardly.

"No problem! We should get together sometime," she said still smiling and I choked on my spit.

"You're still here?" Caiden asked suddenly, staring blankly at the girl. He stood there only wearing just a black towel around his waist.

Sweet heavens.

"Yeah, I thought we could do it again!" the girl said standing up, and Caiden shook his head and gave the girl a cold look.

"You were an easy and maybe even an okay bang, but that's it. Plus I don't do seconds," he said coldly and she became angry.

"Okay? My boyfriend says I'm excellent!" she said clenching her fists. My jaw dropped at this, she had a boyfriend, yet she just freely hooked up with Caiden. I'm not going to slut-shame, but I mean c'mon, she has a boyfriend. I decided to ignore their conversation and checked the clock to see it was 6:57.

"Damn. We're going to be late," I said grabbing my key card and slipping on my shoes.

Caiden turned away from the girl and looked at me and rolled his eyes muttering, "Freshman."

Ignoring him, I headed out and started to try and find my way to the auditorium. When I finally reached it I was five minutes late but I wasn't the only one and I was just glad to see the ceremony hasn't started. I was surprised to see my dad standing there getting ready to talk to the audience, tuning in I decided to see what this opening ceremony was.

"Hello, students and welcome to Johnston University! Your president, Mr. Fredrick, couldn't be here right now. Therefore, I'm going to take over this ceremony. For those who don't know I am Mr. Martez, I will most likely be your English teacher. To make it simple, this meeting is to just welcome you all and you can all pick up forms and papers on your way out. I would like to inform you all that all classes does start Monday morning for all of you, but as for tonight I hope you all come to the opening dance," my father said to the crowd.

"Great a dance! I'll just invite one of the girls from this school, oh wait there isn't any," Kyle said sarcastically causing my dad to narrow his eyes signaling he didn't appreciate his attitude.

"For the opening dance the staff has decided to allow for tonight and tonight only, the neighboring school of girls to join this dance. But if one girl is found sneaking off with one of you boys expect to be in the office tomorrow getting your consequence," my dad told everyone trying to look strict but in reality I knew he wasn't really. At times maybe but 99 percent of the time no. After going through the basics of the doors lock at 10:30 and if you don't have your key with you when they lock then you're locked out and blah blah blah. Lunch quickly came around soon I was sitting alone at a table until a guy came over.

"Hey Jason!" he said sitting next to me said smiling. I raised an eyebrow, I'd never seen this guy in my life.

"Hey!" I said back with a fake smile.

"How was your first night?" he asked and I shrugged.

"Actually surprisingly great," I told him before saying awkwardly, "I don't mean to be rude but do I know you..."

"Oh no I'm Leon though. I've seen you with the assholes. Just wanted to know why you're hanging out with them," he said and I stared at him blankly. "You know, Caiden's group."

"Yea I know," I said nodding, it was pretty obvious.

"So are you their towel boy?" he asked me and I scoffed as if would ever be that.

"No, I'm just Caiden's roommate," I told him shrugging and his eyes widened.

"Oh great to know, have fun with that. Listen I have to go but hope you enjoy the school it's hell," he told me walking off quickly. I didn't let his sudden departure bother me and just simply shrugged my shoulder.

"What did Leon want?" Tom asked me as he walked over and sat down in front of me. I was surprised by this and just shrugged.

"Nothing really," I replied trying to play it off cool. But inside my heart was racing. I didn't know how long I could stand being with all these guys, I mean one of these days I was just going to attack them. They talked to me without a care in the world looking like sex gods.

I don't think they know what they are doing to me. Oh wait they don't know because I'm a guy to them right... I thought awkwardly.

"If he talks to you again let us know," he said standing up.

"Why? Who is he to you guys?" I asked him curiously noticing all the other guys looking over here also.

"He is just a rival I guess you could say," Tom replied before heading off back to their table. I simply shrugged not really caring. I'm a girl that doesn't really belong here so why would I honestly care. I heard someone clearing their throat behind me making me almost hit the table annoyed. Why can't everyone just leave me alone for five minutes?

"Yes?" I asked not turning around.

"How come you're sitting all alone?" I heard the voice of my father asked and my eyes widened. Crap not good. One slip up and he'd notice and send me home. Making sure to not turn around I just simply shrugged not wanting to talk. One thing that annoyed my father was when I would give him the cold shoulder which is why I'm doing it now hoping he would get the hint. Even though he didn't know it was me he would get annoyed with the guy or me, Jason. Okay now I just sound crazy.

You are crazy, you agreed to go to a boys' university.

Huh, I guess I did. Well that will at least give me a story to my future children. Wait who said that?

A ghost.

Oh really? I've always wanted to meet a ghost but-

I'm your conscious.

How boring.

"Well now I understand why no one is sitting by you," Dad said while walking off. Huh? Was he talking to me still? Oops. Deciding not to waste my time anymore I threw away much lunch and headed toward my dorm room. Unlocking it and walking in, I grabbed my bag and skateboard and once again left but this time heading off campus.

Chapter 6

I sighed in relief when my blonde hair fell a few inches under my shoulder. Even though I took a shower earlier I didn't have time to look at my long hair. One of my favorite traits about myself was my hair. I liked being a blonde and not a brunette. Most people always stereotyped us blondes as stupid, yet it was nice to always prove them wrong.

I slid off my padding thing so I could finally let my boobs breathe. After everything boy related was off, I slid on a pair of blue shorts and a white shirt that said *I like you a lottle. It's like a little, except a lot* and had two penguins hugging underneath the words. The shirt had no sleeves which I liked a lot. I quickly added a little bit of make-up which was just eyeliner and a small amount of mascara.

Slipping on my usual black vans, I let out a sigh in relief. It'd only been a day and a half and I'm already ready to go back to my normal female life style. Grabbing my bag, I put it on my back and picked up my skateboard. I checked myself over again in the small mirror before leaving the small club bathroom that actually wasn't too far from the university. I couldn't go to any regular place and change because people would think it's weird that I went in as a guy and came out as a girl so I just went into the club. I mean in reality I don't care what people think, but I just didn't want anyone from the university to find out and everyone at the club is probably too drunk or just too busy to care.

Walking out of the small club, I set down my skateboard and grabbed out my iPhone 4S and clicked on my playlist in my music, choosing my first song from it, 'Ain' it Fun' by Paramore. Putting it on shuffle for after the song was over, I put my headphones in my ears and got on my skateboard.

I guessed I'd always been that girl that some would call a tomboy, yet I fit in as what some would call a girly girl as well. I was the type to make and wear those bracelets that you make yourself out of string, yet I was also the type to ride around on a skateboard and never wear dresses.

If someone were to get under my skin, I would be the type to probably punch them. But don't let that fool you because I was also the type to hold a brush and dance around my room singing as if I was at a concert. This was just one of the reasons why Mia always told me that we're best friends. She said I had one of those mixed, crazy personalities that was just hard not to love. She told me even when I was cold to people I was somehow still hilarious.

Thinking about Mia made me really miss her and my other good friend, Nathan. She decided to go to a college about four hours away and Nathan, well, I wasn't not sure. He's told me the name before, but let's be honest, I was too lazy to remember. I just know it was somewhere close.

I was so lost in my thoughts that I didn't even realize I was about to run into someone into I actually looked up. I quickly shifted over but it looked like I was too close and was going to hit the guy either way, so I decided to do the simple thing that most likely only I would do. I jumped off the board and into the grass, letting only the skateboard head his way.

"Sorry!" I told the guy, rushing to grab my skateboard, looking at his face. I immediately scowled remembering him.

"Hey, it's yogurt girl!" he said, realization on his face. "Was that payback for stealing your yogurt? Are you stalking me now or something?"

"One, it was accident and two, No! Why would I stalk you of all people?" I asked him with a raised eyebrow. I noticed he didn't look that bad, to be honest. He was wearing a grey beanie with his brown hair coming out from underneath. He had green eyes and he was wearing a pair of dark jeans and an All Time Low shirt which I honestly loved but I wouldn't ever admit it to him.

"Done checking me out?" he asked raising an eyebrow I wouldn't give him the enjoyment of watching me get embarrassed so instead.

I simply raised an eyebrow back and said, "Yeah, even though there honestly wasn't much to check out."

"You shouldn't lie it is counted as a sin in a church," he told me smirking.

"Good thing I don't go to church," I retorted, causing him to laugh.

"I like you yogurt girl. Want to tell me your name?" he asked and I shrugged.

"If you must know it's Claire Martez," I told him and smiled.

"A pretty name, too bad you're not pretty enough to go with it," he said shrugging and I frowned slightly offended.

"Excuse me?" I snapped.

"I'm just kidding. It goes with you somewhat, I mean you are okay looking," he told me flashing me a cheeky smile and I only rolled my eyes.

"Going to share your name with me anytime soon?" I asked him changing the topic and he shrugged.

"Nope," he replied and for some reason I expected it.

"Well yogurt girl or Claire as you call yourself, I would like to make it up to you and get you some more vanilla yogurt. "He told me and I couldn't help but laugh.

"You want me to go with you to get yogurt, yet you won't even tell me your name," I said and he scratched his chin.

"I guess I could tell you, my name is Mac," he told me and I just stared at him for a second.

"You don't look like a Mac," I told him and he nodded.

"That's because my name is not actually Mac," he said and I scowled at him.

"Then what is it?" I asked while raising an eyebrow. I was usually the type to get them waxed, but I'm a bit overdue and it would be strange to go to an all boy's school with waxed eyebrows.

"West Thompson," he told me smirking.

"Thompson? Why does that sound so familiar?" I asked him and he smirked.

"Cousin to the famous model, Clover Thompson," he told me and I kept my expression blank. I had no idea who that is.

Is this his usual way to try to pick up girls?

"That's, um cool and all, but how about we go get my yogurt?" I said and he nodded.

"I'm paying," he replied and I scoffed.

"Obviously, you didn't even have a choice in the matter," I told him and he rolled his eyes. We ended up going to get frozen yogurt instead and I was surprised to see Caiden's group all sitting there.

Of course, because that was my luck.

All the guys were eating frozen yogurt while Caiden was leaning against the building by a no smoking sign smoking a cigarette. Oh, the irony.

"Hi, what can I get you?" the girl asked at the counter.

"Can I have vanilla frozen yogurt with cookie dough and chocolate syrup on top?" I asked and she nodded writing it down on her paper she had.

"I thought you only liked plain vanilla?" West asked, his eyebrow lifting.

"Frozen yogurt is different," I replied turning around and heading to a round table that had white paint peeling off while he ordered whatever. I noticed Nick was looking over at me and when I caught his gaze he sent me a wink and I scoffed looking away.

What a fuck boy.

West came over with our frozen yogurt. Looking over to see what he got it was strawberry frozen yogurt with a bunch of different toppings like nuts, chocolate, whip cream, fruit . . . etc. About an hour later my alarm on my phone went off and I saw it was almost time for the dance.

"Oh, I really have to go!" I told him standing up and he raised an eyebrow.

"Can I at least have your number before you leave?" West asked me, holding out his phone and I rolled my eyes but added my number. I entered my contact as, *that cute yogurt girl* with the mini pink heart emoji on the end. Once I was done, I handed it back to him and he let out a chuckle.

"I like the name," he told me.

"Well obviously. I mean I'm the one who made it," I told him with fake arrogance and he only shook his head in amusement.

Most people would be worried about giving someone they barely knew their phone number, but it was only a number and how else do you become closer with someone? You don't just hope to see them again.

"See you later," I said as I checked the time one more time. He said a quick goodbye and I only did a quick salute to him before getting on my skateboard and leaving. Putting my headphones in, I starting humming to myself the lyrics of "The City" by The 1975.

When I got to the club, I wasn't surprised to find it completely packed. I couldn't help but feel a little giddy at the song that was playing. So much for that dance. Oh well, I doubt anyone is going besides most of the freshman and I definitely would not be living up to the typical freshman status.

"All right stop, collaborate and listen. Ice is back with a brand new invention. Something grabs a hold of me tightly Flow like a harpoon daily and nightly. Will it ever stop yo - I don't know. Turn off the lights and I'll glow to the extreme I rock the mic like a vandal. Light up a stage and wax a chump like a candle," I sang, dancing and the guy next to me look at me with wide eyes.

"Damn girl you've got game," he said and I laughed as I continued to dance and sing. When the song was over I still didn't leave as another song I loved came on.

Someone familiar passed me and my eyes widened when I saw it who it was, "Leon?" He turned to see who said his name when he looked over at me his eyes skimmed my body and he smirked walking over to me.

"Do I know you?" he asked me stopping less than a foot away.

"No . . .," I said awkwardly not knowing what to say. Of course, he doesn't know who I am.

You're stupid as hell.

Great, thanks for the help.

"I didn't think so. I mean I'm pretty sure I would remember a pretty face like yours," he said and I gave him a look that said, 'seriously.'

"That was cheesy wasn't it?" he asked cringing a little and I nodded letting out a laugh.

"Want to dance?" he asked me and I shrugged. I wasn't in a hurry to get to that dance I'd rather stay here.

"Sure," I said shrugging and he walked me over closer to the middle of the dance floor and we danced to the song 'One Dance'. I let myself get lost in the music as I danced with Leon for the rest of the night.

Chapter 7

Waking up the next morning I quietly moaned at the cold air the touched my skin and brought the blanket up to my neck. Moving closer to the warm body next me I let out a sigh at the heat. My eyes opened immediately and I let my eyes skim the room searching for my phone. I found it on the table next to the bed and squinted my eyes at the bright light. Looking at the time I seen it read 10:56.

Knowing I had to leave, I took one last look at the guy next to me who just so happened to Leon and removed his arm from around my waist and got out of bed. I definitely did not want to deal with his little morning problem.

Putting back on my clothes from last night I searched the hotel room for a piece of paper and pen and left a quick note for him and some money for the hotel room. Once I left the room I headed into a bathroom and put on my guy stuff getting prepared to head back to the school.

Sure, go ahead. Call me the slut. It's the typical label that society will give to those who enjoy sex every once in a while. I've embraced it, but don't get me wrong now. I'm not like Caiden who lives on the stuff and needs a new person in my bed every night. Like I said, it's an every once in a while thing for me.

I checked the time on my phone and the bus schedule. I couldn't help but let out a sigh in relief when I just made the scheduled bus and made it back to the school by 11:10. I would usually take my skateboard but I chose not to. I made my way into the school and scrunched up my nose at the smell of cologne everywhere. You could definitely tell this was an all-boys school.

"Jason, man!" Nick yelled from the down the hallway walking over to me. "Where were you last night? The girls there were hot. A bunch of easy freshman"

"Oh, um, I went out instead. I had a little bit of fun of my own," I told him, I mean it was the truth except I was the girl and Leon was the guy. "Can we catch up later, maybe? I really have to go."

"Nice, man, I see someone isn't exactly sticking with his plans to just stay focused on his studies," Nick said winking and I rolled my eyes before waving and making my way up the stairs, not bothering with the elevator.

I reached my room and slid the key in the door and headed in. I took a quick shower and changed into fresh clothes before leaving my room again. I had to go see what my dad was doing since I doubt he was setting up his room still. He was one of those impulsive, set up-three-weeks-before type of guy.

When I reached his room, I was surprised to find him not alone. He was laughing with a woman. My stomach clenched, what if mom was right? Would my dad forget about Jeffery? Would he forget about me? What about my mom? How could he just leave her alone? I mean I would be moving out soon and Jeffery only has a few more years, but still I thought our family was going great. I was always happy with the fact that my parents are one of the few couples that didn't get divorced. It would kill me if they did.

I studied how relaxed he was with the woman. She was tall, skinny, and had the perfect body with all of her curves in the right places. She has long beautiful hair that looked like Ariana Grande's, yet a bright blonde. She was the typical image of a woman who a man that's having his midlife crisis would cheat with. I frowned as he gestured for her to sit down and handed her a coffee. So those morning when he would leave early and we wouldn't see him till about 11 p.m. he was with some other woman.

Don't jump to conclusions. He may just be having a conference.

That's a good point, but what conference does a teacher offer coffee? Why not a cup of water? Coffee was some expensive stuff.

"What are you doing?" I jumped and placed my hand on my heart that felt like it was moving a hundred miles per hour. I looked up at the voice and frowned when I saw it was only Caiden.

Great, the ass is here.

"Shh," I said and pulled him down on the ground and peered in the window and sighed in relief when I saw they were still just talking, their conversation undisturbed.

"Stalking can bring you to prison," he said, his face blank of emotion as always.

"I'm not stalking," I said defensively, sending him a glare before peeking through the window once again.

"Yeah, sure," he replied rolling his eyes. When his leg accidentally touched mine I jumped a little.

"You shave your legs? You are weirder than I thought," he was about to stand up but I pulled him back down.

"I thought it was pretty obvious I only do girls," Caiden said looking annoyed and I scoffed.

Make that a cocky asshole.

"I don't want to have sex with you."

"By the fact that you're still holding my hand doesn't make your statement very believable," Caiden said and I felt myself frown when I looked over and saw his face hard.

He's like a rock with only one look.

I only rolled my eyes and quickly let go of his hand. "Can you um not tell anyone about this?" I asked awkwardly.

"About you trying to hold my hand or about you stalking the English teacher?" Caiden questioned and I clenched my fists, stopping myself from punching him like I wanted to.

"I wasn't trying to hold your hand," I said looking at him with narrowed eyes.

"Whatever, freak," Caiden said coldly before standing up and heading down the hallway. Rolling my eyes, I peeked through the window to see the lady standing up. My eyes widened, quickly realizing she was probably leaving and I was still sitting in front of the door. I quickly did some ninja roll and moved from in front of the door.

Ninja roll?

Okay, maybe I just moved to the side, but same difference.

I stood up and rushed down the hallway.

That was too close.

I placed my hand on my stomach when it growled loudly. The noise making it sound like there was a whale swimming around in there. I cringed from the noise and decided to head over to the cafeteria. Walking in, the cafeteria was pretty empty since most people were either eating off of campus or were in class. I scanned the room for a good and empty table. I felt pretty content when I found one in the back of the room. I filled up a plate of food and after paying I went and sat by myself, enjoying the taste of pasta. University food is definitely better than that high school crap they give you.

It was much nicer too. In the front of the room there was an area where they were cooking the food right in front of you, not like hibachi, but you'd be able to see them making it as you're getting your food. They also served you too. My favorite part of the whole thing was if you went to the next section they had a whole setup of desserts. All different types of cake sitting on plates on the nice stand. Then another area a few feet away was just different types of drinks. It looked like a restaurant with all the tables having white cloths over them.

Definitely an Ivy League school.

I looked up from my food when I saw Leon and a few other guys joined me. I swallowed the food in my mouth and looked at them curiously, avoiding eye contact from Leon specifically,

"Hi?" I said awkwardly as I took a spoonful of rice and teriyaki chicken, stuffing it in my mouth. I chewed slowly as I watched a wide smile slide on Leon's face.

"Jason, I don't know if you remember me or not, but I'm Leon," he said taking a sip of his pop.

"Yeah, I remember you," I said moving my spoon around and playing with my food.

"This is Ashton and Cam," he introduced his friends and sent them a nod.

"Sup." Ashton said sending me a nod back.

"Do you live around here?" Cam asked me and I hesitated, did I? I don't know how far my lie was supposed to go.

"Yeah."

"You know you look familiar. Do you have a sister by any chance?" Leon asked and I quickly shoved some rice in my mouth to stall. That question was random. Taking a sip of my Lemonade, I shook my head.

"Nope," I responded and he nodded, not dropping his gaze. My phone vibrated causing me to jump a little. I took the chance to avoid a conversation and pulled it out of my pocket. I smiled when I had a text from Mia.

Always the lifesaver.

-----To: Claire From: Mia

Liam is back. Just saw him @ the store in LA.

My face paled as memories of a familiar midnight blue haired boy popped in my head. I clenched my fists angry that he was back in America and didn't tell me.

-----To: Mailroom: Claire

Tell him to go to hell.

Chapter 8

"Are you okay?" Cam asked me and I nodded stabbing my fork into my food making it hit the glass plate, probably leaving a scratch.

"Just ex problems," I plastered a fake smile on my face. Liam was an ex-boyfriend of mine. We dated for a while and it ended badly. His job wouldn't let him date anyone outside of work. Weird? I thought so too, that is until I found out he worked as some agent for his government or whatever. I didn't get much information on the topic so I really don't have much to share besides the fact that it's over for good.

Ashton quickly noticed I didn't want to talk about it and decided to change the subject. "So what's your major?"

"Business management," I said honestly. Business management was something I had always wanted to do.

"So, why are you guys here?" I asked them curiously, hoping I didn't sound too intruding.

"Well, you probably know by now this school started allowing students at age sixteen to enter. I came here at that age since my father wanted me to go to an excellent school and this just so happened to be the one," he said and I scrunched up my nose, was this school really that good.

"An all boy's school is probably the best you can go to; the education is excellent and you stay focused on your major without distractions," Leon said and I bit my lip thinking over everything he said. It was probably true, but if that's the case then why am I here attending instead of Jeff. He's sixteen, he's old enough.

Your father teaches higher classes and your dad would recognize him.

Right.

"I thought you got sent here or something I didn't know this school was that great."

"It's still a university, you apply and they'll let you know if you got in. The only difference from this university and the rest is that you find out immediately. They honestly pay people to just sit there and decide whether people are accepted or not. But believe it or not, it's still number one Ivy League boy's school in the country," Ashton said, looking almost smug by the fact.

"Why would your father send you here at age sixteen?" I asked him while unconsciously moving the ice around in my drink with the straw.

"I have to be prepared to take over my father's company at age twenty one," Leon said like it was obvious.

"Same here," Cam pitched in and Ashton nodded agreeing.

"So does everyone here take over their parents company?" I asked and Cam snorted.

"Obviously, I mean they would be stupid not to. This school is the top school and in order to get in it costs thousands of dollars. There are only a few students here that have scholarships everyone else is paying the full price. It's pretty cheap if you ask me," Cam said, shrugging and I looked at them curiously.

"How much does it cost to go here?"

"You sure do ask lots of questions, Jason. Didn't you look up anything before you applied?" Ashton questioned and I gave him a sheepish smile while shaking my head. "For every month it's some high payment in the upper thousands. I don't pay attention to how much comes out since my payment is just automatically taken out, but it's not bad. Maybe around \$20,000 or so," he explained and I couldn't help but choke on my own spit. How on Earth did my mom get me in here? There is no way my father would agree to pay that much every month. I mean yes, we're not poor, but we're not exactly rich either. She must of got me a scholarship or something but I don't know exactly she would do that since there are no school records anywhere for a guy name Jason Lockwood.

Remind me to have that conversation with her another day.

Yeah, whatever.

"You okay?" Leon asked me and I nodded giving them a thumbs up, clearing my throat from all the coughing I just did after almost choking and dying.

Dramatic much.

Ignoring my conscious, I took a long sip of my drink, letting the liquid sooth my sore and now scratchy throat.

"Hey, um, I have to go call someone. So maybe I'll see you guys in one of my classes?" I said in an almost questioning tone as I stood. The only nodded and said their goodbyes before filling their face with food.

I quickly exited the cafeteria, throwing away my food on the way out. I took the short walk and found my way outside. I took time to observe the campus, looking for a quiet reserved place. It didn't take long to find a nearby tree that was a decent distance. Taking out my phone, I

immediately called Mia. My hands drummed against my leg anxiously as I waited for her to pick up.

"Hello?" Mia's voice sounded through the phone and I sighed in relief at hearing one of my best friend's voice.

"What the hell is he doing back in America?" I asked through clenched teeth, glaring at the building.

"I think he was working on another mission or something since he was leaving court," Mia said, and I narrowed my eyes.

"He couldn't bother to come say hi?" I said and Mia sighed.

"I understand you miss him, C, but you are doing better off without him. He's just another hoe," she told me and I scoffed, but still smiled slightly as I imagined my friend chewing her gum loudly and snapping her fingers while saying that.

My eyes caught sight on a familiar figure and my smile dropped. "Mia, what college did Nathan say he was going to again?" I asked and I could imagine her shrugging as she said, "I don't know, did he even tell us?" she asked and I bit my lip, squinting my eyes at the figure walking to the door.

"Well, it doesn't matter now because I just found out," I said, slightly surprised at his appearance. Instead of wearing a pair of shorts and a shirt with some sports team on it like he usually did; he was wearing grey trousers and a white buttoned up shirt that was tucked in with a black blazer.

"What?" Mia said, sounding like she was chewing on a piece of gum, a usual thing for her.

"Nathan is at this school," I told her watching as the door shut behind my other close friend. "He was dressed all nice and just got out of a freaking limo."

What the hell? Are we talking about the same Nathan here? The I'm-too-cool-to-wear-anything-but-my-boxers guy? You know the one with the beat up cavalier that he's been driving since freshman year?" Mia asked.

"This school is for the rich, Mia. You know the people that are on top of the latter. I thought he was having financial problems," I said with a slightly questioning tone.

"Really? I thought it was some boarding school?" Mia said and I hummed in agreement.

"That's what I thought until today. It's just like any other university except it starts accepting students at a younger age. It's like some program they can join or something," I said closing my eyes and leaning my head against the tree.

"Are you going to go after Nate?" she questioned and I shook my head before quickly remembering she couldn't see me.

"No, he can't know I'm here," I told her and she sighed.

"Good luck with that. Nathan knows you better than you know yourself. It'll take him less than a minute to recognize you. The boy's seen you half naked, in your underwear and has even slept in the same bed as you," Mia said and I nodded, knowing she was right. She didn't mean sexually, of course, but we were close friends. The change in front of each other and sleep in the same bed type of friends.

Mia suddenly gasped loudly, gaining my attention. "Shit, Claire! Liam just hugged another girl," Mia said and I scowled remembering why I originally called her.

"Are you stalking him?" I asked curiously, and I heard nothing, but a crunch of some type of food.

"Of course, I'm your best friend. Do you really I think I'm going to just let your ex hang around LA and not spy on him? C'mon, C, you should know me by now. Plus Beth is busy, so I'm chilling by myself at the moment," Mia said in a duh tone before gasping again. "Oh, oh, oh!"

"What?" I asked her, feeling slightly nervous.

"He just gave her a kiss on the cheek!" she told me furiously.

"He's from Europe. That's not that uncommon there. I mean some people kiss their friends on the cheeks just as a greeting," I said, remembering what I learned in French class years ago. The phone went silent for a minute before she responded with an 'oh' making me shake my head at her all while chuckling lightly to myself.

"Oh, wait he is- damn watch where you're going you ass," Mia yelled and I raised an eyebrow, a smile making its way on my lips at my crazy friend.

"You okay?" I asked and she huffed.

"No, some ASSHOLE just bumped into me." I laughed knowing she yelled that only so he could hear her. "Wait you spilled something on me! I just got this shirt you mother fu-"

"Mia!" I yelled into the phone, trying to get her attention but she only ignored me, continuing to go on at the guy.

"Get back here you ass! This is a white shirt; whatever the hell you just spilled on me is going to stain! Hey!"

"I'll talk to you later Mia," I said, still completely amused.

"You son of a-" I ended the call, rolling my eyes. I'm sure everyone has a crazy friend like her. I headed up to my dorm room and I opened it just as Caiden was stripping off his pants.

"Hey," I said, awkwardly making sure my voice was deeper, as usual. He looked up at me and rolled his eyes, going back to what he was doing. Climbing into his bed, he turned on his TV and changed the channel to The Walking Dead making me gasp.

"Hey, I love this show!" I said sliding off my shoes and hopping on my bed excitedly. Caiden didn't even acknowledge my comment and kept his eyes on the TV while eating some popcorn.

"I don't need you anymore. I'd be fine if you died." My jaw dropped at the TV. How could he say something like that to his father? I mean Rick was in a coma on the couch while there were walkers outside.

I glanced over to see if Caiden had any emotion to Carl but he was staring blankly at the screen. I noticed he never put any pants back on. Was it normal for guys to just sit on their bed in nothing but their boxers and watch TV? I mean girls do just walk around in their bras and underwear when they're by themselves but we don't do that when there is someone we barely know is in the room. Well, at least some of us don't. Sighing, I laid down and continued to watch my favorite show thinking this day is almost over.

Chapter 9

One thing I didn't miss was the sound of beeping at six in the morning.

"If you don't shut that fucking thing up then I'm going to," Caiden growled and I ignored him and put the pillow over my head. I was finally falling asleep again but then the sound of shuffling by my bed and something hitting a wall had me up.

"What the hell?" I yelled, looking at my now silent phone that was broken into pieces by the wall. He raised an eyebrow and I coughed fixing my voice. "You're buying me a new phone, man."

"Okay, let's get a few things in your head. One, you're a freak. Two, go buy your own damn phone," Caiden sneered. If looks could kill I would be six feet under.

"Are you always so cold?" I asked him and he narrowed his eyes and responded with,

"Baby, you haven't even seen cold yet." My eyes narrowed at the statement.

"Baby? I'm a guy and I don't roll that way," Caiden only rolled his eyes before going into the bathroom. I got out of bed stretching my body up; I cringed as some of my muscles popped. "I really need to start working out," I said. I wouldn't be playing basketball anymore and I couldn't join a sport here because I'd only kick all the guys' asses.

I got dressed and started collecting my notebooks and all that crap and put it in my book bag. I didn't even realize I was humming the doctor who theme song until something hard hit my head causing me cry out in pain.

"What the hell?"

"I will get you kicked out of this school if you don't stop being an annoying little shit," Caiden snapped making me frown, rubbing the back of my head from the impact of the remote.

"Why do you hate me so much?" I asked him watching as he tied his black combat boots.

"Because you're an annoying little fucker that doesn't believe in silence."

"Must you swear in every sentence?" I asked and he walked over to me his fist connecting straight with my eye. My eyes teared up at the pain and gasped lightly touching my eye. "Okay, ow ow ow."

"Maybe next time you'll learn to keep your mouth closed," Caiden said before 'accidentally' stepping on my finger and leaving the room. I stuck my tongue out childishly before tears welled up in my eyes and I won't lie, I cried like a baby for 15 minutes. Don't judge it's the first time I've ever been hit. I winced at the pain as I gently touched the spot.

What an ass.

Welcome to the world of males.

Yeah, that doesn't help the pain.

I brushed my teeth and hair or well my regular hair and my wig before I grabbed my bag and kept my hand on my eye, deciding to go to the nurse first. It seemed the guys across the hallway were walking out too as they all laughed loudly together over something. One of them made eye contact with me and frowned. My eyes widened in realization at the sight of Nathan. Of course, because that's my luck!

I quickly tried to rush off to the elevator but it seemed they were also coming this way as well. The elevator opened and I tried to quickly press the elevator close button but the three guys made it in just in time making me cringe. I avoided all eye contact and looked at the ground with my right eye, the one I could actually see out of, as my hand still stayed covering my left eye, which was closing as it started to slowly become swollen. The pain made me want to go back in my room and cry for another twenty minutes but I didn't really want to be late for my first class of the day which just so happened to be my dad's, so as soon as the elevator opened I rushed out or well tried to as I was stopped by a hand on my shoulder.

Damn it.

"Do I know you from somewhere? You look very familiar," Nathan said, narrowing his eyes he noticed my hand on my eye and raised an eyebrow." Are you okay?" He added and I just nodded and tried to walk off.

"Is there a reason you aren't talking?" he asked me and I bit my lip, shaking my head. His eyes followed the movement before they widened suddenly. He looked at me carefully, his gaze holding curiosity. "What are you doing here, Claire? In an all-boys school?"

"Hey, Nathan," I said giving him an awkward wave before looking around to make sure no one to close to hear our conversation. I sent him a sheepish smile as I pulled him to the side of the hall.

"What the hell are you doing here dressed as a guy!" he exclaimed quietly and I didn't respond, not sure if I should just jump into the explanation. He removed my hand from my eye and frowned, a worried look replacing his look of amusement.

"Oh, Claire-bear, what happened?" he asked, running his finger along the side of my bruised eye making me wince a little. He immediately removed his hand away, seeing my flinch from the contact.

"I pissed off my roommate," I told him and he shook his head a lazy smile playing on his face, yet his eyes still held worry.

"Of course, you did. Let's get you to the school nurse and on the way, you can explain to me why you're here and dressed as a guy," he said looking at me, his eyes sparkling with amusement.

"Well, it started with my mom," I said before explaining the whole story, by the end, he was laughing so hard he had to kneel over his hands on his knees due to the fact that 'it was a classical Claire's mom thing'. His words, not mine.

"Don't laugh," I hissed and he stood up straight, wiping the small tears of laughter out of his eyes. I lightly touched my eye and Nathan's laughter disappeared as he grabbed my hand a sudden intense look on his face.

"What happened to your hand?" he asked and I scowled.

"He accidentally stepped on my hand." I made quotation marks with my fingers and Nathan's fists clenched.

"My fist is going to accidentally connect with his face," he said and I nodded.

"You can't tell anyone about this, Nathan," I said making him promise not to tell.

"You can trust me, Claire-bear. But punching you and trying to basically break your fingers is too far. Don't put up with his shit," he whispered to me before we headed inside and I only nodded. Honestly, you can't get better friends than Nathan and Mia.

"Oh my, what happened?" the nurse asked rushing over to me.

"I ran into a door," I lied, for some reason, I felt like I would get in big trouble if I told her it was Caiden and I didn't mean in trouble with the teacher I meant in trouble with him.

"You don't have to lie to me," she said with a small frown ushering me to the bed. "What's your name?"

"Jason Lockwood," I told her and she nodded typing it on the computer.

"Do you have any headaches and how bad is the pain on a one to ten scale? One - you feel like you're on cloud nine. Ten- you feel like you're dying." I stared at her for a second. What she serious? Why would I be here if I felt like I was on cloud nine?

"No and a five," I responded flatly.

"Okay, you're over eighteen, correct?" she asked and I nodded. She looked at the sheet to double check. "I'll give you some ibuprofen and an ice pack." She handed me a couple of pills and a glass of water before turning around to get an ice pack.

I looked out the door to see Nathan still waiting- his hands tucked in his trouser pockets and his right foot on the wall behind him. I put the pills in my mouth and they easily slid down my throat with the help of the water. "Here you go, if you start to feel dizzy, nauseous, or any more pain then just come straight back. The ice should help the swelling go down and you will probably have a purple eye for a day or two." I thanked her and made my way out of the nurse's office and went straight to Nate.

"You good?" he asked. Suddenly a huge smile appeared on his face he hugged me.

"Claire-bear, I missed you so much," he told me, wrapping his arms around my waist and I rolled my eyes. A silly smile lit up on my face as I dropped my ice pack and book bag and let my arms wrap around his neck. He pulled me as tight as he could to his body.

"You know someone's going to think you're gay," I told him pulling back a little my hands still on the back of his neck as my forehead touched his.

"It's okay you'll be gay too. We can be gay together," he said smiling down at me. He was only about two or three inches taller than me but it didn't bother me, much.

"You're such a dork," I said hitting his chest lightly with my right hand.

"Me a dork? No, never," he said, a playful smile on his face and I couldn't help but return the smile.

"I'm supposed to be mad at you," I pouted and he raised an eyebrow, clearly showing his amusement.

"Oh? Why are you supposed to be mad at me?" he asked.

I bit my lip before saying, "Because you canceled our trip to New York for a trip to LA and you didn't even tell me you were going here."

"You never told me you were going here either," he pointed out.

I narrowed my eyes. "You never asked and I told you a hundred times I'm sorry. My mother forced me to stay with my dad while he was in LA."

"Well then I'm mad at Cole," I told him as his grip loosened as I bent down to pick up the ice pack.

"You know he was only here for a short time before he went back to his lovely country," he told me and I nodded, a small frown forming on my face as we pulled away making our way to class. I always felt bad for Nathan when I found out about his parents. When he was younger they got divorced and his dad left the country going straight to London, never saying goodbye. He eventually came in contact with him again and they talked it out. His mom did get remarried to some guy named Jordan and his father now has a girlfriend plus a kid, but I'm pretty sure she is adoptive since she is about eighteen or nineteen.

"How'd that go by the way?" I asked him clearing my throat and making my voice go lower as we walked into a more crowded hallway.

"Well, he is the reason I'm here. He expects me to just drop my life and take over some agency he owns. He even tried to convince me to fly back with him so he could introduce me to everyone at some award ceremony," Nathan said sounding irritated. "He signed me up here and also a few different fighting classes and also shooting classes." He ran a hand through his hair frowning.

"Did you try telling him you didn't want to take over?" I asked and he nodded.

"He freaked out on me giving me a long speech how happy I should be and he has people fighting over this position. "He mocked his father making faces making me lightly laugh. "It took forever for us to come to an agreement, but he will have his adoptive daughter, Riley taking over, but I'm just going to tell her to take it over for good."

"I'm sorry. But hey, when school's done I'll come with you to London to sort it all out. I've always wanted to live there! I'm sure Mia would come too," I said, smiling brightly and he returned the smile.

"I'll hold you to that," he told me, elbowing me with a playful smile.

"Trust me, that's something you won't have to hold me too," I said and he shrugged.

"I don't know, you may fall head over heels for some guy here," he said and I scrunched up my nose.

"Definitely not," I said and he only rolled his eyes, showing he didn't believe me.

"Nathan, you know my heart only goes to you," I said dramatically and he snorted.

"Please take your heart and bury it. I got eyes for something else. It's called food," he said and I placed my hand on my heart while pouting.

"You suck."

"Yeah, but you love me," he said smiling down at me, sending a flick to my nose.

I returned the smile and scrunched up my nose a bit. "Lies," I muttered.

He chuckled. "Whatever you say, Claire-bear."

Chapter 10

Surprisingly Nathan and I had the same first class and I was extremely nervous because of my dad. I mean if Nathan could find out this easy then my dad will know right away.

"How did you know it was me?" I asked Nathan before we walked in.

"Well, your face and by you biting your lip. You always do that when you're nervous or thinking hard about something," Nathan told me, and I frowned making a mental note not to do that in front of my dad. "Sit in the back with me." We made our way to the very back of the classroom and talked quietly.

"Well, the whole thing with your dad explains why you look so nice," I said and he grinned.

"Yeah, he keeps sending me all this money and now I have a personal limo driver," he told me.

"I'm coming in that limo with you one of these days," I said seriously, and a lazy smile appeared on his face.

"Of course, you are," he said and we were interrupted by an all too familiar voice.

"Nathan? Claire didn't tell me you were going here," my dad said when he scanned the room.

"Uh, yeah it was a last minute decision," he said giving my dad a tight smile. Clearly feeling awkward about the sudden attention.

"Well, I'm glad to have you in my class. Did Claire tell you? She got into a great school in Chicago," he said and Nathan raised an eyebrow at me before letting out a light laugh.

"Yeah, she was really excited. "I could tell Nathan was starting to feel awkward talking about me as the class started to fill in.

"Now, I know you two are good friends and all but when she comes home for a vacation you aren't stealing my baby girl away the whole time."

He did not just say that. I imagined that, right? I mean why would he say something like that in front of the whole class? I looked over at Nathan to see him holding back his laughter.

"Who's Claire?" Tom suddenly asked.

"My daughter," my dad said narrowing his eyes at Tom.

"Do you have a picture?" Tom asked and my dad scowled.

"No." Just as he said that the bell went off and he flashed a smile on his face.

"Hello, class! I know you all don't want to be here but you don't really have a choice in the matter unless you aren't taking a business management class or something like that," he said while writing his name on the chalkboard.

"So, why don't we start off on a good note? How was your guy's summer?" my dad asked and no one answered. I could see from the corner of my eye Kyle raised his hand and my dad smiled. "Yes."

"What time is this class over?" My dad's smile turned into a scowl.

"If you don't want to be here then the door is right there. No one is stopping you," he said seriously and Kyle thought about it for a moment before grabbing his bag and walking out.

"Anyone else?" He said not looking even a bit amused nor shocked. When no one moved he began talking about the reading that was supposed to be done for today. I let my eyes wander around the room since I never got a chance to read anything before coming here.

"Based on the moral you found for the story, you will write a research paper surrounding that theme. If you didn't read what you were supposed to then you've got a week. If you don't finish it by then, well, don't even bother showing up in my classroom," he snapped as he turned on the airplay for the TV and his MacBook.

"Is that your daughter? Damn, she is hot!" Tom suddenly said and I looked up from my desk and at the flat screen that was air playing what's on my father's computer.

Why would he put a picture of me as his desktop?

At least it's a decent picture.

True.

It was a picture of me after graduation. I was wearing a pair of blue ripped shorts that looked like they were cut at the bottom and a black shirt that said Jack Daniels on it with my signature pair of black vans. Over the top of my clothes, I had my blue graduation gown. But, of course, those don't close so basically everyone saw my creative outfit for graduation. My blonde almost white hair has a messy look to it because I decided to sleep in a little on graduation day and had to throw on my clothes and use my skateboard to get there. Let's just say my principal wasn't very happy and neither were my parents when I just barely made it when they called my name.

Yeah, don't go out the night before and party. It only creates bad news.

"Do you really want to get kicked out of here on your first day?" my dad asked glaring at Tom before pulling up a PowerPoint making my picture disappear.

"I'm surprised he even has that as his background. I remember the steam he had coming out of his ears from me wearing that outfit," I whispered to Nathan and he chuckled nodding. My parents

really wanted me to look nice and wear a dress but they didn't force me because last time I had to wear a dress to my aunt's wedding it got ripped because I was skateboarding and went through a mud puddle and tripped when I was doing a trick. I personally thought the pink dress looked cool ripped up with some mud on it. It looked like it has some splatter paint on it.

"Your poor dad almost had a heart attack at the sight of you," Nathan whispered and I sent him a cheeky smile. We stopped talking for the rest of class and listened to my dad's lecture taking notes. When the class finally ended I was relieved to leave since my next class didn't start till three. "Let's get some breakfast," he suggested and I agreed as did my stomach as it growled. I made it through day one without getting caught. I guess I'm not that bad of an actress after all.

"Eddie!" I said surprised, running into him.

"Jason," he responded, smiling widely.

"What are you doing today?" I asked him suddenly causing him to raise an eyebrow.

"I have a date with my TV. Why?" he asked and I shook my head.

"Not anymore. I need some time away from this university. Want to go somewhere fun?" I asked and he ran his hand through his neat hair.

"What do you have in mind?" he asked and I thought about all the different places we could go.

"Bowling," I said determinedly.

He looked at me carefully, "Bowling with just the two of us," he said slowly, making sure he understood and I nodded.

"Yeah! I mean you can invite your friends if you want," I told him and he quickly shook his head.

"No, it's okay. Just the two of us sounds fun," he said and I smiled causing him to stare at me for a minute, a long minute. "I'll drive," he said and I shrugged.

"Sounds good to me. Let's go," I said dragging him toward the parking lot. We got into his small Volvo and headed to the bowling alley twenty minutes away. "Now, I just want to forewarn you. I absolutely suck at bowling and I'm probably going to get killed, brought back to life and then killed again. I guess I should've asked you beforehand how good you really are because now it's going to be completely awkward if I can't even make it five seconds without getting it in the gutter. You know what? Maybe we should go do something else like get ice cream, go out to dinner, anything but bowling," he said.

I put my hands up. "Eddie, Eddie!" I yelled, cutting him off.

"You'll be fine. I suck at bowling too, don't worry," I reassured, causing him to sigh in relief.

"Let's get started then," I said smiling as we went to pay for a lane and get our shoes.

Eddie stared at me for a minute before nodding his head. "You're not a guy," he said shaking his head and I paused in my steps to the counter.

"Sorry, what?" I asked and he pursed his lips staring at me, walking all the way around my body.

"You're not a guy," he repeated. "You're definitely a girl," he said and I felt my heart stop. "I'm not judging. I mean that's fine with me. Is it a transgender thing or?" he asked genuinely curious and I bit my lip, shaking my head.

"My mother thinks my dad is cheating and asked me to go undercover to find out," I said in my normal voice, cringing at how bad this probably looked. He stared at me for another solid minute before bursting out laughing.

"Definitely the craziest thing I've heard yet, but I believe you," he said smiling widely and I couldn't help but want to hug the ginger-headed boy. "Why are you here with me now? Shouldn't you be spending all your free time trying to find out?" he asked and I nodded.

"I mean yes, but I'm not spending my first year of college spying on him. He's a teacher, he spends majority of his time grading papers and going to meetings. I never wanted to do this, so I'm enjoying the college life. Although, if I was myself I'd probably be out partying like crazy right now, but I wouldn't have met you, so I'm thankful. I can see us being good friends if you can look past this," I said giving him a hopeful smile.

"What is your real name?" he asked.

"Claire Martez," I said and recognition of the name immediately showed. He put his arm on my shoulder and looked at me,

"Well, Claire, consider us already best friends." He grinned and I couldn't help but return it.

"So you still want to bowl with me? I'm not the best, but I'll always be here," I said holding up the ball with another hopeful smile.

He rolled his eyes, "Is that even a question," he said already slipping on his shoes. We decided on me going first. I looked at the pins determinedly before I swung the ball back and letting it go in front of me. I watched as it rolled down the lane and I quickly jumped up and down cheering as my ball hit the pins. I did a small shuffle in front of the lane and Eddie tapped my shoulder. "Claire, you got one pin," Eddie said with an amused smile. I stopped jumping and looked at the lane before cheering again. I grabbed his hand and twirled him around. "You're honestly crazy," he said and I didn't disagree. I rolled the second ball, doing it granny style and I couldn't help but laugh as it went straight into the gutter.

"You're already going down," I said pointing downward. I looked up to see his smile and I stopped my crazy attitude and looked at the kid like grin. He looked so carefree and happy; I didn't want to ever see that smile fade.

"Okay, okay, my turn," he said rolling up his dress shirt sleeves. "Here we go," he said tilting his body a certain way before he released the ball causing it to go flying backwards. I stared at the ball with wide eyes and he did the same, looking completely mortified. We both fell into a fit of laughter and I loved every second of it. That feeling of pure happiness you could only have with a good friend. I only just met this boy a couple of days ago, but I knew it and he knew it, we were going to get along well. "No one can be as bad of us. This is just sad," he said grabbing the ball and I nodded in agreement.

"This is just sad," I said sitting at the table nearby. "I love it," I said in all honesty, watching as he threw the ball the proper way this time and it started rolling slowly down the lane. "Was I really that bad of an actress?" I asked after a while of us bowling.

He shook his head, "I wasn't even a little attractive to you. No offense, you're missing some masculine bulges and an Adam's apple," he said and I bit my lip, realizing he was right.

"Is it really that noticeable? Because I need to last at least another week," I said and he shook his head.

"You'll survive, but you really have to let some hair grow on those legs," he said and I cringed at the thought.

"Yeah, I'd rather be made fun of for shaving them. Trust me, I already gave up getting my eyebrows done," I said and he rolled his eyes.

"Girly girl or tom boy? I can't figure you out," he said and I shrugged with an innocent smile.

"I'm not really sure anymore either," I said taking a bite of cheesy fries we ordered. I jumped up from my seat and pointed at him dramatically. "That's it, I have an idea. We're joining a bowling league," I said and he snorted.

"Yeah right. We can go bowling every week, but we're not joining any type of league. I like myself at least that much," he said rolling his teeth over his lips, a habit I noticed he had when thinking. I thought about it carefully.

"Fine, every Monday. Bowling here at six o'clock," I said firmly and he got up, handing me a ball.

"You're on."

Chapter 11

My eyes watched as the huge spider crawled across my floor and I squealed going under my covers. One thing I hated more than anything was spiders. Those things acted like they owned the place. This spider was like the size of a baseball. Spiders had families and if you killed someone in their family those things came after you. I couldn't stay under there forever and I had the chance of losing the spider so I really only had a few options,

A.) Go hide in the bathroom.

B.) Call Nathan and make him come over here and kill it and then the spiders family could go after him.

C.) Put the spider on Caiden's bed and then kill it.

D.) All of the above.

Considering all of my options, I decided with D and grabbed my phone running to the bathroom and locked the door. I called Nathan and he answered the phone after two rings.

"Nathan! My favorite friend. My best best friend. Do you know how much I love you," I said and he scoffed.

"You only want me to kill a spider don't you?" Nathan said and my eyes widened. Abort mission! Abort the mission!

"What of course not," I scoffed.

Who am I kidding?

"It's probably crawling on your bed as we speak," he said and I shivered at the thought.

"I lovee yooouuu," I said dragging out the last letters and he chuckled.

"I'll be over in a minute."

"Wait! You have to leave the body on Caiden's bed!"

He'll kill you for this.

I know.

"Anything else?"

"Can I stay in your dorm room tonight?"

"Yeah, my roommate should be gone for the weekend doing who knows what and plus I'd rather not find you dead on your bed bleeding out because of Caiden."

"This is why we're best friends," I told him and I could only imagine him rolling his eyes.

"I'm walking in now. Where is it?"

"By the TV," I told him before biting my lip.

The phone was silent for a moment before Nathan yelled, "It's dead on Caiden's bed. You may come out." Hanging up the phone I unlocked the door and walked out slowly.

"Again this is why you're my best friend," I said while grinning before grabbing my carry on and filled it with some girl clothes and some guy clothes. It would be nice to change into my usual shorts and tank top. I can't sleep with these long shorts and t-shirts anymore. I get too hot with this many clothes on.

"We're watching *Les Misérables* first," I said and he chuckled.

"I figured as much," his arm rested on my shoulder as we headed across the hall to his room. The second the door closed I had my wig off and let my blonde hair cascade down my back. Nathan got the popcorn and movie ready as I changed into my grey Softe shorts and a purple tank top.

"Oh. You don't know how much I missed your beautiful blonde hair," Nathan said dramatically, pulling me into a random hug and putting his face in my hair.

"Are you smelling my hair?" I asked, scrunching up my nose and he pulled away with a cheeky smile on his face. We walked over to his bed and laid back in our usual positions where I was sitting in between his legs with my back rested against his chest with the popcorn bowl in my hands as the commercials played. My thoughts went back to that spider in my room and I couldn't help but feel bad. Life would be easier if I could talk to spiders.

But then they could be whispering creepy nothings in your ear while you sleep.

Right, right. But I could still ask him politely to leave without having to take his life.

Imagine how weird a spider would be if it could talk. The world would go crazy.

True, true.

"I sometimes feel like I should take you to get some help. Most people don't talk to themselves," Nathan said chuckling, and I gave him a curious look.

"Was I thinking out loud again?" I asked sheepishly.

"For once, no, but you had that constipated look again which means you were talking to yourself." I threw a piece of popcorn at his face which he easily caught with his mouth.

"That movie makes me cry every time," I mumbled releasing a yawn and closing my eyes while snuggling closer to Nathan's hard chest.

"I know it does, we have only watched in a billion times," Nathan said with an unamused look, leaning over to turn off the light before laying back down.

"I don't know how we're friends. I mean you don't ever shed a tear. Mia at least sobs with me," I told him, blinking a few times before keeping my eyes closed.

"Mia is a girl and I'm a guy. Girls are just sometimes naturally more sensitive especially when you're on your period and you just crave everything," Nathan said, wrapping his arm around my waist and grabbing a hold of my hand and intertwining them.

"I would hit you with the popcorn bowl if I wasn't so tired." He let out a soft chuckle.

"I know you would."

"You know it's not our fault we're stuck with hell and get all sensitive and shit. And it's not like I ask you to bring me two tubs of Ben & Jerry's ice cream with bags of gummy worms and chocolate," I said and I didn't have to turn around or open my eyes to know he was smiling.

"Well, you're my best friend and I feel bad for you when you're stuck lying in bed crying because of your cramps," he said softly.

"This is why I love you, Nate. You understand girls and listen to our feelings even when we feel like crap."

"I blame my mother. She raised me to be a big softy and to respect girls."

"Trust me when I say, It's definitely not a bad thing," I mumbled before shifting my body around a couple of times before I was completely comfortable.

"Goodnight, Claire," he said softly, lightly kissing my forehead.

"Goodnight," I mumbled just as softly before letting the darkness take over.

Chapter 12

"Claire-bear," a voice sang in my ear. "Wake up it's already eleven and I'm not wasting my Saturday. I've had classes almost every day this week," Nathan said and I groaned obnoxiously. "Plus for the past hour I've heard continuous things being smashed and shattered across the hall."

"What?" I asked sitting up. I swear if Caiden did anything to my stuff. My eyes widened at the sound of something shattering and I quickly stood up rushing to the door. Right as the door opened it was slammed shut.

"You may want to rethink that?" Nathan said gesturing to my attire.

"What?" I looked down and my mouth made a little 'O' shape.

"Right," I muttered, walking over to my bag. I took off my tank top and grabbed my wrap stuff and wrapped it around my chest.

"Claire-bear, how many times do I have to tell you that I am a guy," Nathan whined and I rolled my eyes throwing on a guy's shirt that said some basketball team on it. I put on a pair of blue jeans and a pair of converse.

"Nay-Nay," I whined back. "You're coming with me. I can't do this alone," Nathan just shook his head.

"You're going to need this," he said grabbing my wig and bald cap thing from the table next to his bed. I put the bald cap on, making sure my hair wasn't sticking up anywhere and then put on the brown wig.

"Don't give me that look you know I'm still half asleep," I muttered now opening the door I took out my key and put it in the door. I didn't open the door right away but instead took a quick glance at Nathan to see him only in his boxers.

Lazy bum couldn't even change.

I rolled my eyes at him before letting out a deep breath. I bit my lip nervously as I twisted the door handle. I didn't hide the scowl at the sight of my room. The place is a complete mess. to see my room was a mess.

I cleared my throat, preparing myself to kick some ass all while yelling a few swear words in between it all.

"What the hell?" I snapped, looking at him. His menacing look reappeared. Caiden walked over slowly, almost tauntingly. His black boots stepping on a broken lamp. He looked like a lion going after its prey.

"What the hell?" Caiden repeated after me his words sounding deadly. His eyes looked so dark I wanted to just walk right out of the room.

"Man, it was just a spider," Nathan said and Caiden's eyes snapped to his. I cringed knowing that he said the wrong thing to him.

This probably was him just taking his bad mood out on me. I doubt it was the spider.

"How cute," Caiden said ominously, his sinister look not leaving. "Your boyfriend sticking up for you. Listen to me and listen well, you don't know who you're dealing with so you better stop with these fucking games," I took a very obvious step back and he took more threatening steps forward.

"It's only a small spider," I responded awkwardly, suddenly not feeling that great about it all.

"I don't give a shit about the spider. Keep messing with me and you will be begging the dean to transfer your stuff over to another school. Actually, I can't even promise you will make it that far. You may just drop school altogether," he said inauspiciously.

"You little fuc-" I started but Nathan put a hand over my mouth, stopping me. I removed his hand and decided to say instead, "What did I do to you?"

"You know I always hear that question." He let out a baleful laugh, backing me up to the door. His fist connected with the same eye as last time. When my body hit the door I winced. The overall impact hurt like a bitch. He added to the pain by picking me up by my shirt, "I don't like questions," he spit out.

Nathan pulled Caiden off of me and my hand automatically went to my eye to hide as tears begged to come out.

"You may want to get a new boyfriend. It looks like your boyfriend is into girls," Caiden said, smirking as he walked over to one of my drawers on the ground picking up my gray bra with white polka dots on it and a pink bow in the middle. He started to make his way to the door making sure to step on anything that was already broken, his black boots making the glass pieces turn into even smaller pieces. He slammed the door behind him and I immediately fell to the ground and started to sob.

"I can't stand him."

"Claire," Nathan whispered pulling me into a hug. I cried into his shoulder my whole body shaking.

"I'm going to the dean. I can't stay here anymore," I said my voice shaky and he nodded.

"You should," he agreed before letting his own fists clench. "How can he just punch you?" Nathan said angrily.

"He doesn't know I'm a girl," I told him quietly standing up. My eye hurt like hell but I didn't want to sob in front Nathan like a little girl.

"Just try to calm down," Nathan soothed and I narrowed my good eye.

"Telling a girl to calm down is like trying to baptize a cat," I said and he help up hands in surrender.

"Right, sorry," he said standing up with me. I looked at the room to see it wasn't that messy. Two of my dresser drawers were on the ground and my blankets were thrown on the ground along with my lamp that was on the side of my bed.

"That ass he only messed up my part of the room," I said pursing my lips, irritation clearly showing on my face. "First things first. We're going to have to go out and buy a broom."

"We?" Nathan asked raising an eyebrow and I narrowed my eyes daring him to tell me he's not coming.

"Let me get dressed and we can go." The door shut behind him and I put my drawers back in the dresser and picked up my bra and any other clothes laying around the room. My eyes widened when I picked up a pair of black boxers from my bed.

Great so he uses my bed when I'm out.

I threw them over on his bed and a frown appeared on my face. I wonder why he is so heartless. I mean I'm not clueless I know that something made him this way but the question is what?

Nathan walked into the room and I turned my head to see him now fully clothed with a pair of black trousers and a white buttoned up shirt. "I'm not switching rooms."

"Okay, I know he hit you but I didn't think it was that hard," Nathan said lightly rubbing his thumb underneath my sore eye that felt like it was almost throbbing and probably swelling up again. "This isn't going to be a debate. You're going to get your room switched."

"You're right it's not a debate. Therefore, I changed my mind and decided not to change rooms. Deal with it," I said walking over to the mirror and adding a bit of cover-up. When I saw Nathan looking at me through the mirror with disbelief I only rolled my eyes.

"I'm serious, Nay-Nay."

"I'm serious, Claire-Bear."

"Don't mock me."

"Don't mock *me*."

"I will put you in a lake," I threatened and he snorted.

"Should I be scared?" he retorted and I pouted, sticking my tongue out at him and he only copied me in response before his face went serious.

"Listen, it's not a joke or a debate. You're not staying with him."

"Yeah, yeah," I said waving him off. "Let's just go," I grumbled and he scowled before opening the door like a gentleman.

"Ladies first," he said putting out his hand as if to say go. I went to go through the door but he stopped me. "I said ladies first. Obviously, there are no ladies around so I'll just go."

I glared at his back as we walked to the elevator. "Ha. Very funny," I said sarcastically and he sent me a bright smile.

"Thank you, you're not the only one who tries," he sent me a wink just as the elevator doors slid open.

"Oh hey, Jace," Tom greeted as he walked out of the elevator. I only awkwardly waved in response. Nathan lightly tapped my back causing me to look at him. The look on his face basically screamed, 'Act like a man'.

"Hey, bro!" I said and Nathan snorted at my awkward greeting.

"Tom, this is Nathan. Nathan, this is Tom," I introduced and they sent each other a nod.

"Is Caiden in?" Tom asked and I shook my head. "I'm guessing he is the one who gave you that." He pointed at my throbbing eye and I gave him a tight smile. He moved aside letting us into the elevator and Nate pressed the lobby button.

So much for that cover-up.

"Yup," I said with a tight smile.

"Caiden gets mad easily. Try not to let his mood swings bother you. He isn't exactly used to having a roommate, he only has bed mates."

"Bed mates?" Nathan asked and Tom chuckled.

"You know, extremely hot and sexy ass girls."

"Right," Nathan said trying to hide his distaste about Caiden's way.

What a loyal hoe.

"His roommates don't last very long due to his fun and anger issues, but I think you can find a compromise and try to stay. You seem tougher than his old roommates," he encouraged but it looked like he's said that speech a hundred times. I bit my lip just thinking.

"Hey, sit with us at lunch, your friend can join us too. Maybe if you just get to know him," Tom said as we exited the elevator and went into the lobby.

"I doubt we'll be back for lunch," I lied and he nodded.

"Just whenever," he said turning away to leave. But, he stopped a few steps away and turned back to look at us. "One tip, if you want to get on his good side then stop talking to Leon," I noticed how tense he looked just by mentioning Leon. Leaving it at that, he walked off.

"I'm guessing he is a part of Caiden's group?" Nate asked and I nodded. We left the building deciding to take the twenty-minute walk to the store.

"I wonder if Mia is enjoying LA," Nathan said randomly and I laughed remembering our call the other day.

"I'd say so, but she got into a fight with someone on the street. He spilled some mysterious liquid on her." I laughed and Nathan joined in.

"That sounds like her," he said shaking his head and I nodded.

"Oh, while we're out I have to get a new phone," I remembered.

"Why? What happened to the phone you have now?" he questioned curiously.

"Last week Caiden got irritated with my alarm going off on it and decided to throw it at a wall and it completely shattered."

"I'm starting to hate this guy more and more every day," Nathan said and I nodded, silently agreeing.

No, I don't hate him. That's a lie.

I just have to get to know him first. I can't hate someone I don't even know. For all I know, he could have a hard past or he may be struggling with something no one knows about every single day.

Still, doesn't give him an excuse to punch you.

Very true, but once I break that shell around him then maybe I'll know what exactly I'm doing wrong to get him to punch me.

Yeah, you know what, I'm gonna get through to Caiden Anderson and I'm going to make sure that shell of his shatters.

Chapter 13

"Why didn't you tell me you were stopping home? I would have made a big dinner for you!" my mom said, glaring at me wiping her wet hands on her apron she used when she's cleaning or cooking before pulling me into a hug. She looked to see Nathan and a huge smile appeared on her face and she pulled him into a hug.

"I really don't know if I want to know the answer to this yet but is he you know . . .," she trailed off a sad look on her face. I noticed she had bags under her eyes and I felt bad.

"No, not yet. Sorry mom," I said and she let out a sigh, tears forming in her eyes.

"I should be the one saying sorry! I'm so selfish asking you to hold on your life dreams and goals just for me!" she said, sitting on the couch putting her face in her hands and I shook my head.

"Mom, you do know that this is the best school in the United States, right? I am getting the best education a person can get! You aren't being selfish I mean I want to know if dad is cheating too," I told her and she sniffled pulling me into a hug.

"Trust me when I say I will pay you back for doing this. Maybe not with money but with something even better," she said before looking over at Nathan. "Sorry you have to see me all emotional Nathan."

"It's fine Mrs. Martez, I understand." he said, giving her a sympathetic smile.

"You two can stay for dinner I should have enough. Claire, why don't you go get changed before your brother comes down and starts asking questions," she said and I nodded.

"I'll be right back," I told Nathan and he nodded. I went into my room and took everything off putting it in a bag and changed into a pair of blue jean shorts and a red plaid shirt that I tied around waist and then put on a black half shirt. I put a black beanie on my head after brushing my blonde hair and slipped on a pair of all black vans and left my room leaving my bag in my room.

"Claire? I thought you left for college. Why are you back; did you already annoy them?" Jeffery asked and I rolled my eyes.

"No, I just came for a visit," I said and he gave me a blank stare before saying, "Why?"

"Jeez I sure missed you too, bro," I said sarcastically.

"Jeff! You didn't tell me your hot sister is home?" Sam said, hugging me. I didn't hug him back but he continued to hug me his hands touching my butt. I pushed him away giving him a fierce glare.

"You're a pervert," I told him and he scoffed.

"Sam, dude that's my sister! She is two years older than you!" Jeffery said and Sam shrugged.

"You're a guy you of all people you should know I have needs," he told my brother causing me to just walk away. I didn't need to listen to them be idiots.

"Sorry!" I told Nathan joining him in the kitchen, "I didn't mean to leave you with my mom."

"What's wrong with me?" She asked offended.

"Nothing mom," I said smiling at her and she rolled her eyes.

"So Nathan. Is my daughter being a prude?" my mother asked causally and Nathan choked on his glass of water.

"What?" he asked and my mother explained the story she told me before I entered the school. By the end of the story Nathan had his hands on his knees with tears falling from his eyes.

"First of all, you do know your daughter is pretending to be a boy in this school right? Second, that's definitely not what prude means and third, I can't believe how naive you are. I'm sorry Mrs. Martez but this is just hilarious." Nathan said tears brimming his eyes.

"I am a grown woman! I am not naive!" my mom said, her cheeks growing red. I couldn't help but join in to the laughter.

"Mom!" Jeffery yelled coming into the kitchen. "What's so funny?"

"Nathan!" Jeffery yelled excitedly giving Nathan a bro hug or whatever they call it. "You haven't been here in forever!"

"So you're excited to see Nathan but not me? Okay I'll remember that next time you want me to take you somewhere," I told him with a scowl and he hugged me.

"Claire, I've missed you," he said dramatically and Sam hugged me again once Jeffery pulled away.

"That hand better not go any lower," Nathan told Jeffery's friend. But of course he didn't listen and squeezed my butt. My knee connected with his, as he calls it, Sam Junior.

"Shit," he yelled falling to the ground holding his area.

"Claire!" my brother yelled at me and then looked to Mom to see if she would do anything. "Are you going to do something?" My mom just snickered with a smirk on her face.

"Sam, that will teach you to stop touching my daughter inappropriately," she said, mixing something she has in a silver pot on the stove. Sam groaned in pain and Jeff grabbed some ice handing it to his friend before he helped bring him over to a chair. "Plus, Jeffery there is nothing I

can do. She is eighteen. I can't ground her or send her to her room. She is only here for the day so can you please get along with her."

"But she is a bitch."

"I know but try to ignore her bitchiness for a day." My jaw dropped at my mother and Nathan chuckled.

"You know Jeffery you should love having an older sister! I mean I'm cool unlike some sisters who only care about going shopping and ignoring their siblings. I mean I'm the one who taught you how to play basketball!" I said and Nathan nodded in agreement, "Mia doesn't take her younger sister anywhere."

"Well if you want to be a really cool sister then take us to the basketball court," Jeffery said and I hesitated. I looked over at Nathan and he shrugged not really caring.

"Fine, but only for an hour," I agreed reluctantly and Jeffery smiled.

"Give me one minute!" he yelled taking out his phone and calling some other friends and ran upstairs to get his basketball.

"Claire, sweetie, what the hell is on your face?" I swore under my breath. I tried covering it up with makeup before getting here but obviously it's still showing.

"Oh look at the time! Nathan we have to go!" I said grabbing Nathan's arm to drag him out but my mom stopped us and I winced at the glare she had.

"What happened?" she demanded and I smiled sheepishly.

"My roommate got a little angry at me once or twice," I said and she shook her head.

"I know you know how to beat a guy's ass so why did you let him punch you!" my mom said with a frown.

"I need to stay in this school plus my roommate is pretty scary," I said honestly and Nathan agreed, "This guy has major anger issues. I thought I was gonna piss myself when he spoke to me."

"I don't care. You will not let this young man beat you up," she said sternly and I nodded.

"C'mon Claire!" Jeffery yelled from the front door and I rolled my eyes.

"Be back before dinner," she said and I nodded grabbing my keys from the key ring. I put my keys in the ignition of my black 2012 charger and smiled at beautiful sound. I got this car when I was seventeen from my grandma it took a lot of begging and I had to do a year of yard work for her.

Once we got to the park my brother and his friend got out and quickly met up with their other friends. "Isn't that Caiden's group?" Nathan asked me making me look straight toward the basketball court.

Shit. "We should probably go now," I trailed off about to start my car again.

"You can't run from this guy forever. Just be the normal Claire," he suggested and I nodded. He's right I need to be myself. We stepped out of the car and headed to the basketball court. I confidently walked over to my brother and his little friends playing basketball not even sparing a glance and he who shall not be named.

"Hey do any of you have an extra ball?" I asked and Jeffery rolled his eyes tossing us one. I thanked him and I started to dribble the ball over to one of the other hoops.

"Hey!" a familiar voice yelled.

Ignore the shithead.

Chapter 14

"Nathan!" Tom yelled walking over and Nathan scowled making me hold back a laugh at his irritated expression. "I thought since you're new to this school you would like to meet my friends." Tom said smoothly before his eyes moved over to me.

"Why don't you introduce me to your friend over here first?" Nick said, a charming smirk appearing on his face.

"You see I would but I don't even know your names. All I know is you're from that douche's group," Nathan said as I threw the basketball to him and he threw it in the hoop. It circled around the rim before falling in. I grabbed the ball and dribbled it a little before throwing it in. The ball was grabbed by Kyle before I could get to it making me scowl.

"Ball," I demanded holding at my hand making him snort and roll his eyes.

"Why do you look so familiar?" Max asked and my eyes widened at the sound of Max's voice. I've never really heard him say anything. His voice was smooth and I noticed he had a small British accent.

"Hey are you that girl from Mr. Martez's computer screen?" Kyle asked me and I scowled.

Dad, you will pay for this.

"Mr. Martez is my dad. What exactly is on his computer screen?" I narrowed my eyes acting as if I had no idea.

"It's just a hot picture of you from your graduation," Kyle responded.

"Well as long as it's hot I don't care." I shrugged, hitting the ball out of his hand and passed it to Nathan who started to dribble it around a little.

"I like you," Tom said throwing an arm around me.

"Too bad the feeling isn't mutual," I said patting his chest before removing his arm from around my shoulder.

"Am I ever going to get to know your name?" Nick asked flashing me another charming smile.

"Nah," I said shaking my head.

"No?" he asked obviously surprised.

"Did I stutter?" I asked and he shook his head.

"Who is this fine babe?" Caiden asked coming up and I tried not to scowl.

"Do not call me a 'fine babe' again unless you want a black eye." I sneered and Caiden rolled his eyes not at all affected.

"Will it look as bad as yours?" he asked and I held back the urge to hit him where it hurts.

"Claire!" Jeffery yelled coming over to me and I sighed.

Now he wants to bother me.

"Yes, Jeffery?" I asked turning around to look at the sixteen year old.

"We need that ball," he told me taking it from Nathan and walking away.

"You're welcome," I yelled. "Asshole," I muttered.

"Will you marry me?" Nick asked me and I snorted an amused smile playing on my lips.

"What?"

"You're the perfect girl."

"Are you on drugs?" Nick got on one knee and grabbed my hand.

"Marry me," he said and I sighed dramatically.

"If I have to," I said with a dramatic sigh and he stood up hugging me.

"Boys! I'm an engaged man!" he yelled out and I snorted crossing my arms.

"I said if I have to," I said. "And I don't have to," I added.

"Well, then I'll just have to tell everyone you're my wifey anyway," he said sticking his tongue out at me.

"You're a dork."

"I'm your dork."

"No, you're really not."

"Yes, I really am."

"Is he always so annoying?" I asked Tom and he shook his head.

"Nope."

"I swear to god if you don't let me go I will personally shove your balls down your throat," I threatened and he let go of me taking about five steps away.

"So your name is Claire?" Caiden said. To me it sounded more like a statement than a question.

He isn't as grumpy when he's with his friends.

That's because he wants to get laid.

Right.

I actually had that problem a lot, a part I hated about being a skinny, blonde. I was proud of my looks and I felt confident, but people just saw a girl for fun. A toy even. I liked to have fun, but it was always the same types of guys I attracted.

"Well, her brother did just call her Claire," Nathan said rolling his eyes.

"Watch your mouth," Caiden said his face going hard.

"So baby, you want to meet up sometime?" Caiden asked me his eyebrow raised giving him a cocky look.

"What did I say about calling me babe?" I said my eyes narrowing into slits.

"I said baby, but I'll call you whatever will make the baby doll happy?" he asked rolling his eyes.

"Do girls actually find this attractive?" I asked no one in particular.

"Sadly yes," Nathan responded.

"What you don't want to see big Caiden?" he said winking and I laughed amused.

"Big Caiden?"

"Yes, big Caiden. I mean he definitely isn't small," Caiden said and I snorted.

"You're a pig."

"A hot, sexy pig that you won't be able to get enough of." I rolled my eyes at his arrogant attitude.

"Caiden, are you really hitting on my wife?" Nick asked placing his right hand to his heart a hurt expression on his face.

"Nah bro I think your wife is a whore," Caiden responded and all of my amusement disappeared. I walked straight over to him connecting my knee with his 'Big Caiden.'

"I hope 'big Caiden' likes that." I sneered and grabbed Nathan's arm. "Let's go we're leaving."

"Another problem with being a natural flirt who just so happens to be blonde, you were assumed to be a slut or a whore."

"Wait! Can I at least get your number?" Nick asked me, and I turned around glaring at him and held out my hand for his phone. I entered my number and made my contact name just Claire. I also handed him my new iPhone 5C. When we switched phones back I frowned when I saw he made his contact, The Fiancé.

"You're not my fiancé. I mean you do realize I'm only eighteen," I said and he shrugged.

"Age is just a number. I'm only twenty about to be twenty-one. When's your birthday?" he asked me.

"October 6th," I responded and he nodded.

"Okay, so your birthday is only about a month away. I'll wait till you're nineteen to give you the ring so no one is freaking out," Nick said seriously and I rolled my eyes. "The wedding will be in December. Does that sound good?"

"I can't tell if he's actually joking or not," I said to Nathan, amused.

"See ya later, wifey!" Nick said his lips pressing against my left cheek before winking and walking back over to an angry Caiden.

"Well, I think that went great," Nathan said and I raised an eyebrow.

"Yeah, apparently I'm engaged now."

"I better be invited to the wedding," Nathan joked and I rolled my eyes but didn't respond and just got lost in my thoughts for a minute. For some reason to me it's just easier to get along with boys than girls. At least, until they wanted more. Mia has been my only friend that's a girl. It's almost impossible for me to be friends with other girls since most of them saw me as a threat. I wasn't sure why, but I had a feeling it's the way I attracted most of the stoners. I could deal with the girls who could only care about their next manicure or their next outfit. They weren't nearly as bad as the hateful ones. Okay I could rant for days about why I don't like girls these days but then I would probably come off as a complete bitch so it would be best if I didn't. Plus I'm speaking as if I'm not girl. Don't worry, I am trust me.

"Jeff, we're leaving," Nathan yelled and he nodded quickly saying goodbye to his friends.

"Isn't Sam coming?" I asked and Jeffery shook his head.

"No his mom is going to get him later," he told me and I secretly didn't a mini dance when he wasn't looking. Okay maybe not secretly since most of the basketball court - including Caiden's group - looked at me as I shook my butt and did some cha cha thing with my arms.

"You're such a weirdo. How are you my sister?" Jeffery said, running his hand over his face and I ruffled his hair.

"Ya know you l-o-v-e me," I said and One Directions song, I would popped in my head.

Would he say he's in L-O-V-E? Well if it was me, then I would, I would.

Good song, good song.

"Whatever," Jeffery grumbled hitting my hand away as we got in the car. He didn't have to tell me I already knew what his unspoken thoughts were, I'm a pretty damn cool sister. I slipped on a pair of my black shades and leaned back one hand on the wheel. Yeah, you can't get any cooler than this. Gosh, why am I like this? I swear I hate myself. I thought shaking my head at how weird I was.

Chapter 15

I woke up to moaning and quietly groaned knowing it was Caiden. Not even turning his way I tried to go back to bed but my hand went to my stomach as I felt cramps starting.

You've got to be kidding me.

I grabbed my phone off the stand next to my bed and checked the calendar, September first. Opening up my messages I sent a text to Nathan that said, "Pads and chocolate? Maybe some Midol? Love you"

I didn't get a response for a few minutes and guessed he was still sleeping. Checking the time I seen it was 4:57 a.m. I checked my bag and sighed in relief when I found one pad. I stuck it in my pocket so Caiden wouldn't see it and grabbed a new pair of underwear and headed to the bathroom ignoring the moans. Doing my business, I washed my hands and headed out of the bathroom. I didn't spare a glance at Caiden afraid of what I would see. I fell on my bed and closed my eyes trying to ignore the cramping. Why must girls go through hell?

"Get out," she heard Caiden's voice say. His voice was void of emotion as usual as he spoke to the girl making me peek an eye open to see he now had on a pair of black briefs and the girl was standing there stark naked.

"But I thought you said we could have a round two," she whined.

"I don't do seconds especially with sluts," he said before stretching his arms above his head.

"B-but," she stuttered tears welling up in her eyes.

"Can you get fuck out of my room?" he said glaring furiously at the girl and her eyes widened. She quickly got all of her clothes and left the room.

"You couldn't let her get dressed first?" I said with a raised eyebrow and he didn't respond and just sent me a menacing glare.

"Ya know you're different with just me around compared to the basketball court when my friends are around," he said and my heart stopped.

"What?" I said, my voice wavering a little.

Shit he knows.

"When you first came to this school you were all confident and now you're just a scared little freak," Caiden said, his dark eyes narrowing when I let out a sigh of relief.

"Oh, well you see that's um just-"

"Does it honestly look like I give a fuck? It just shows me you're finally learning your place. You're nothing more than an ant on the ground," he snarled and I tried to control my anger knowing I'll end up with something broken if I try to fight him.

"Why are you an ass?"

"What did you just say to me?" he snarled.

"That I had sex with Leon."

What?

"What?"

"You look hot in briefs?" Okay, so when I'm nervous I sometimes just say random things that come to my head. It's honestly a curse.

"What the fuck are you talking about?" he said, looking irritated.

"I have no idea," I said honestly. He didn't say anything after that and only laid in his bed facing away from me.

"Why are you so closed up?" I asked quietly. His cold eyes snapped to mine and I bit my lip nervously waiting for his answer.

"You don't need to know shit about me so mind your own damn business." He got up putting on a pair of jeans and left the room slamming the door behind him. My alarm went off at five thirty making me groan. Turning it off, I got up grabbing a towel and clean clothes before heading toward the bathroom.

"Good morning, class!" my dad said his eyes skimming over the hundred or so students in the room. He began his lecture and most of the class started taking notes while others, more specifically Caiden's group started to throw paper airplanes and had their feet on the desk. Before class started Nathan gave me a bag of everything I asked for with a few extra things. I ended up taking the Midol before so my cramps have started to disappear making me feel almost normal. I frowned when my phone started to vibrate and seen it was a text from Nick. Letting my eyes scan the room to see him with his feet up on his desk and his phone in his hand. Opening the text it read,

"Hey, wifey! You still in town? I was thinking a date tonight?" Nathan looked over my shoulder reading the text and frowned.

"Didn't you say he was a player?" he asked, whispering.

"Yeah, but you know I can handle myself," I whispered back smirking slightly.

"I hope those of you texting and talking in my class get a high score on your exam this Friday," my dad said giving us all a stern look.

"I'm texting someone important," Nick said, holding his phone up and my dad's eyes narrowed.

"Oh really? Who is more important than this class?" my dad asked crossing his arms over his chest.

Don't say it. Don't say it.

"Your daughter."

"Excuse me?" My dad glared fiercely at him and Nick only smirked. "How do you know my daughter? Actually, we will discuss this tomorrow morning."

"Why not now or after class?" Nick asked and my dad gave him a wry smile.

"Because you are dismissed from class for the day. Don't return until you have your act together and are ready to learn," he told him. Kyle, Tom and Max all laughed and made the loud obnoxious ooh thing that boys do when someone gets in trouble.

"You three can join him," he told them and they all stood up leaving the room. As soon as they left a smile appeared on his face again,

"Okay, I shall continue."

"Holy shit. Did you see his face?" Nathan whispered after a minute and I nodded with wide eyes. He looked ten times scarier talking to Nick then he did talking to my first boyfriend.

"He was livid," I whispered before quickly responding to Nick's text saying I was free and I'd call him in a little bit.

Two hours later I was standing outside next to Nathan on the phone. I was waiting for Nick to answer since I had fifteen minutes till my next class started.

"Hello," his deep voice said causing me to bite my lip.

"Hey, it's Claire," I said in my normal voice.

"Oh, hey wifey!" he said enthusiastically. "Wanna meet up for some lunch?"

"Sure, what time? I have class till twelve," I told him.

"Wait, I thought your school was in Chicago?" he said confused and my eyes widened.

"It is. I'm just studying till twelve," I corrected easily.

"Oh okay. So then we can meet at one at steak and shake. Does that sound good?" he asked me

"Yeah, see you then," I replied and hung up.

"Why are you going on a date with him?" Nathan asked me.

"He's hot and plus I want to see what I can find out about Caiden," I said and he nodded understandingly.

"Hey, Nathan! Just the man I was looking for," Nick called out.

"Oh hey, Nick right?" he asked, giving me a look and Nick nodded.

"I just wanted to make sure you don't have anything going on with Claire because I don't want to ruin any sexual tension or anything," Nick said holding up his hands in surrender. Nathan and I busted out laughing. I bent over when my stomach started to hurt from laughing so hard.

"Sorry man that killed me. No, nothing is going on between us and there is definitely not any sexual tension. She's my best friend, that's it," he said, still chuckling.

"Good to know because I asked her on a date a few minutes ago," Nick said looking at Nathan. His eyes moved over to my amused smile on my lips and his eyes narrowed for a second before widening. His eyes skimmed my face before my body and he looked surprised like he couldn't believe something. "Well yeah I'll see you around Nathan and . . .," he trailed off his eyes still not leaving me. "Jace," he finished off and started to walk backwards. Nick took one more glance at me before turning around and heading back toward the school.

"That was weird," I said looking at his retreating figure and Nathan nodded, "Very weird," Looking at the time I noticed I had to go to one of my business management classes and quickly said a goodbye leaving Nathan. When I entered the room, it seemed to be mostly full. Finding a seat closer toward the front I sat down waiting patiently for the professor.

When class started my eyes skimmed the room and I realized Caiden wasn't here. This is one the only classes I have with him. I have English too but he didn't show up to that either.

Was he really that mad?

Ignoring my thoughts I tuned in to the lecture. "In order to keep a business going you have to know all about financials. You may have went over this a little in one of your high school classes, but today we are going to go more in depth," he started. "I definitely suggest you all take notes

during today's lecture." Grabbing my pencil I opened my business management notebook and started to write.

Chapter 16

I exited the bathroom of Steak and Shake dressed in a pair of black high-waisted shorts and a grey shirt that had a black heart on it which matched my grey beanie that was sitting on top of my naturally straight blonde hair. I sat down at the booth that a waiter brought me to that had my skateboard and now my bag. I waited patiently for Nick since I came a little early. I was thankful that my black and blue eye was slowing going away. The chair across from me screeched making me look up at a smirking Nick. He took a seat across from me and crossed his arms over his chest.

"So Claire," he started off, dragging my name a little, "I'm happy you accepted my request for a date today."

"Yeah, well I had nothing else to do." I shrugged and he just rolled his eyes. "You know since you are going to be my wife I think we should get to know each other better."

"I'm Nick, age twenty and I go to Johnston Boys University it's an all-*boys* school. What school do you go to?" I didn't comment on how he emphasized on the boys part.

"I just go to a community college in Chicago," I lied.

"Do you have an apartment up there?" he asked and I nodded my head.

"What's your major?" he asked me and I raised an eyebrow. "What is this twenty questions?"

He shrugged. "Sure, it can be."

"Business management. Now my turn, I get to ask you three questions," I told him after thinking for a minute I finally came up with one. "What's your reasoning to asking me out?"

"I think you're hot and I like you." We paused for a moment to give the waiter our orders before continuing.

"Your mysterious friend that was an ass, why is he such a jerk?" I asked, and Nick bit his lip not responding right away.

"He just has his reasons." Disappointed that his answer wasn't as I hoped for I continued curiously,

"Why do you go to an all-boys school?"

"I've been going there since I was about seventeen. It's the best school in the country for business management. At age twenty-three I will be taking over my father's electric company." He shrugged.

"Why aren't you going to the girls' school next to mine?" he asked me smirking.

"Because those schools remind me of boarding schools and they let anyone who has the money in there."

"They let anyone in community college," he pointed out.

"Touché."

The date ended up going well and we got to really know each other while also sharing a few laughs. If he doesn't shag girls every hour then things may actually work out.

"Hey, how was class?" Nathan asked me, interrupting my thoughts as I stepped out of the building.

"Boring as usual. But surprisingly our only homework is to study for the exam Wednesday," I said.

"Do you want to come with me to Starbucks?"

"As tempting as that sounds, I have to decline your offer I'm really tired," I replied and he pouted but nodded.

"Okay, I'll see you later," he said pecking my cheek before heading toward Starbucks.

"Hey Nathan, have you seen Caiden?" I asked hesitantly.

"Nope, I think he's been off campus all day," he responded. I could tell he was curious but I waved him off telling him goodbye. I took the short walk over to the dorms and got in the elevator, making the way up to my floor. My eyebrows furrowed when I saw Nick leaning against the wall next to my door.

"Looking for Caiden?" I asked and he shook his head and I ignored the glint in his eyes.

"Nope, actually I was looking for you," he said with his hands in his pockets. I slid my key in, unlocking the door and turned the handle. I looked back at Nick and raised an eyebrow, "Why me?"

"Because I just wanted to do this," he responded his lips pressing against mine. His hands holding my face to his. At first I was surprised and didn't respond but after a minute I gave in. Moving my lips against his. When he noticed I was responding he moved his hands but kept his lips on mine before quickly pushing me against the wall. He smiled a little when a small moan left my mouth.

His hands moved down my body holding on to my waist. His soft, pink lips moved roughly against mine. He bit my lip asking for entrance and I eagerly granted access making his tongue enter my mouth tangling with mine. When I pulled away a minute later breathing heavily. His lips continued going across my jaw and down my neck. I quickly brought his lips to mine as soon as I got my breath back and kissed him again with the same intensity, my hands running through his

short dark hair. He pushed us inside my dorm closing the door with his foot. I brought us down on my bed and moved my lips across his jaw and kissed the small spot behind his ear making a loud groan enter the silent room.

Realizing I didn't check to see if Caiden was here and pulled away looking over toward his bed. I sighed in relief when I saw he wasn't there. Nick tried kissing me again but I turned my head a little making his lips come in contact with the corner of mine. He continued to trail his lips over my collarbone and let his hands travel underneath my shirt making me gasp at realization. Nick thought the gasp was from pleasure and moved his lips down to the bottom of my stomach after pulling up my shirt half way up my stomach.

"What are we doing?" I said my voice husky. I still managed to make it sound a little bit like a guys.

"Making out," he said before moving his lips up my stomach.

"I'm a guy. You're a guy," I said breathlessly sitting up even though I knew the act was definitely over.

"And this is a bed and that's a wall," he replied, pointing before looking into my eyes and I shook my head.

"We can't do this," I said and he smirked.

"You honestly think I would kiss a guy? I only like girls, I thought that was clear with the secretary downstairs. But let's be honest here, you and I both know I'm the only guy in here, Claire," my eyes turned into the size of golf balls as I started at him.

"How did you know?" I asked after a moment using my regular voice.

"I noticed the little things. Your laugh, your eyes, your smile and I noticed how you would get nervous and bite your lip whenever I brought up the school topic. I was a little worried I would be wrong about this but obviously I'm not."

"You can't tell anyone," I said and he shrugged.

"I won't as long as you tell me the reason why you're here tomorrow and personally I find this exciting. You being the only girl in this school and I only know. Or well I'm one of the only ones who know since I'm sure your friend Nathan knows," he said and I rolled my eyes an amused smile forming on my lips. Eddie knows too, but I left that small detail out.

"You know I think I'd like you better without a shirt," he muttered, his lips kissing my cheek. He then kissed my nose and after started to kiss all over my face making me let out a small giggle. His lips moved back onto mine and soon we were back on my bed heatedly making out. Like I said before, I'm a confident girl and I didn't mind a friendly makeout session every once in a while.

I sat against the door of the English office. I wasn't looking in, too afraid of being caught, but I was listening carefully to the phone call my father was currently having.

"You're going to have to be more specific," he said sounding slightly angry. "Do you need the money by next week or not? I can't take out a large amount like that last minute. My wife will notice," he said making me frown. How much are we talking here? And why was he hiding it from Mom?

"No, you never mentioned this when we started whatever you want to call what we have going on here," he snapped and my eyebrows went above my fake hair line. "Please elaborate, what exactly do you have going on there, Mr. Martez?"

"Fine, fine. You're right, I'm overreacting. This will all stay quiet and she won't know," my dad said and I peeked to see him leaning back in his chair, wiping off the wrinkles of stress on his face.

"Yeah, I'll call you later," he said before hanging up the phone.

Sighing, he stood up and I quickly looked for a place to hide. I crawled away from the door before quickly hiding behind a wall in the next hallway. I watched as he shut his door, walking the opposite direction. Once he left, I checked all directions before I entered the English office. I went straight to his desk, my heart pounding in my chest, fearful of what I may find.

I saw his family photo and picked up the frame. Jeffery and I were both being held, me sitting on my dad's shoulders and Jeffery in my mom's arms. I felt my shoulders slump after putting the photograph down. We were all smiling so wide, it showed how truly happy we were in that moment. When did that all go away?

I looked at all the notepads sitting on the desk and immediately recognized his scribble, I bent down, looking a little closer to try to read the almost illegible writing. "1,267," I read out loud before I almost tripped as I stepped back in surprise. Who is he paying that much to? Why is he hiding it from Mom? I didn't bother taking a picture, knowing it wouldn't do very good as it was only a number. I sifted through everything on and in his desk and the many, many folders and found nothing besides plenty of future assignments, and I'm not gonna lie, I found my rubric for an assignment I did as well. Your girl scored and A.

I sighed frustrated; he really couldn't keep anything in this office? I suddenly heard voices coming closer and immediately dropped to the ground, crawling over by a cabinet. I peeked out to see it was nothing but students passing. I wiped my forehead in relief and went through a new drawer.

As soon as I slid it opened, I paused. Sitting at the very top of everything was a long red scarf, one that definitely wasn't mine or my mother's. I looked at my phone, which lit up on the desk, and

knew I had to get out of here. I quickly smelled the scarf, inhaling the cinnamon smell before quickly shoving it back in and leaving the office, phone in hand. Just as I started walking down the hallway a voice called out to me. "Jason, I'm surprised to see you around this hallway. You don't have class for another few days," I heard my father's voice and I cringed.

"Yeah, I was trying to find another teacher for some help, but I found him, so I'm good. Nice seeing you," I said not turning around as I quickly started walking away. Once I was far enough, I stopped walking and slid down the wall with only one thought. Whose scarf was that?

Chapter 17

"Where have you been?" I ask tiredly rubbing the sleep out of my eyes.

"What are you my keeper?" Caiden slurred, falling on his bed.

"Are you drunk?" I asked sitting up. Caiden hasn't been in class or in our dorm in five days. I'm not going to lie, I was worried. If something would have happened to him I would blame myself. I asked him that stupid question and then he became all closed up. He didn't respond and only put his arm over his eyes. I ended up getting up knowing I had class today and quickly got ready. I didn't try to say anything else to Caiden and just quietly left the room. Once I was alone in the elevator I called Mia since I haven't talked to her in two weeks.

"Hey bitch! How've you been?" Mia's happy voice chirped through the phone.

"Great. Should I ask why you're so happy at seven in the morning?" Raising an eyebrow even though she couldn't see me. When the elevator opened I quickly exited the building.

"Remember that guy that spilled something all over me? Well after I chased him down we talked and bing bam boom now we're dating," she said.

"What's his name?" I asked.

"Damien Richards," she said into the phone. "He is the ex to that model Lucky. I was worried at first but he said everything is over between them and they have no feeling for each other."

Why does everyone keep bringing up this lucky chick?

"Well that's good. Are you sure he's a keeper?" I replied, honestly happy for her but worried he would hurt my best friend.

"I think so. I mean he used to be in the navy. But I'm just still a little worried. I mean I looked up the model Lucky and found out her real name is Clover Thompson. She's really pretty and by really pretty I mean drop dead gorgeous. But I think she is in a relationship."

"Good! Then you have nothing to worry about and if he hurts you then I will drive all the way over to Long Beach and beat his ass."

"Enough about me. So tell me how has your life been?" she asked, changing the subject. I quickly explained to her everything that happened with Nathan and Caiden then about Nick recently finding out and what happened between all of us.

"You little slut!" she yelled into the phone. Static filled the phone for a minute and in the background I could hear her ordering her usual Starbucks order.

"I can't believe you had sex with his rival!"

"I know. But he doesn't know that," I said awkwardly.

"So are you two together yet?" she asked.

I wish.

"I don't know things are confusing right now between us."

"Yeah, I understand with you being a girl that is acting as a boy and him being a boy that is actually a boy," she said, I could imagine her smirking and slurping her Starbucks loudly.

"Funny. It's confusing because we have to like hide our relationship here at school and out in public because I'm supposed to be in Chicago to everyone that knows me," I said with a sigh sitting at the empty picnic table near the basketball hoop.

"Ah I gotcha. What about the fucker of a roommate you have?" she asked.

He just came back today drunk as hell and he's still all pissy," I said, rolling my eyes.

"Oh hell no. He is not," Mia suddenly hissed, sounding angry.

"What's wrong?" I asked her.

"Your roommate isn't the only ass around," she said and I can imagine her eyes narrowed in slits.

"I'm guessing this has to do with Damien?" I said and when she didn't respond I knew she nodded instead.

"Oh yea. He just made out with some other chick," she said seething. "They just went their separate ways, stay on the phone momma is gonna go talk to this bitch. Stay quiet." A little bit of rattling and static was heard before I heard talking.

"Hello! I'm Mia," Mia said faking friendliness.

"Hi! I'm Katy!" she said with the same amount of enthusiasm.

"I was sitting in Starbucks and I couldn't help but notice you and your boyfriend. I'm curious, how long have you been together?" Mia asked.

"A few years now. I've was having troubles with my best friend, Clover. She was doing these awful things to me. I mean blackmailing me and lying and he has just been here for me the whole time,"

Katy said sadly. I couldn't help but notice how fake she sounded. Mia may have picked up on her being fake but she didn't comment about it.

"Oh my, that's terrible. What's Clover's last name?" Mia asked.

"Clover Thompson, don't trust her. She may be a model but she is just acting all sweet and innocent. She even cheated on Damien and sent me creepy notes for weeks about things she's gonna do to me if I don't do what she says," Katy said bitterly.

"Wow that's just terrible. I'm always here for you if you ever want to talk. Here's my number," Mia said. It was silent for a moment so I guessed she was writing it down.

"Oh thank you! You're so sweet Macy," Katy said.

"It's Mia," she corrected.

"Sorry I'm terrible with names," Katy apologized, not actually sounding sorry.

"Oh it's fine. Good luck with your relationship with Damien. You two just seem perfect together!" Mia said her voice sounding tight and was void of any emotion. Making me think she had a fake smile plastered on her face.

"It was nice meeting you, Mia! We should get together sometime and hang out."

"Yea, sure. See you later," Mia said before I heard more static and ruffling. "That bitch was so fake. If only you could have seen her. "

"I'm sorry Mace," I said and Mia growled like an animal.

"Real funny. I'll talk to you later. I have to have a nice chat with Damien," she said and we quickly said our goodbyes. I was thankful I wasn't there or else I probably would have attacked the crazy bitch.

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"What a dick!" Nathan said glaring at the ground after I explained the story of what happened with Mia.

"This is why you should be dating her!" I said taking a bite of my burger.

"You know she doesn't like me like that," Nathan said, his angry look disappearing into a sad look.

"You have to tell her or else you will regret it because next thing you know she'll be telling you if you like it then you should of put a ring on it while standing next to her husband and ten kids," I said giving him a stern look. He gave me an amused smile and shook his head.

"Who would be this husband of hers that let her have ten kids?" he asked me.

Well obviously not you if you don't get dat ass.

"I don't know. We'll find out in a few years if you don't do something about these feelings. I mean c'mon you've liked the girl for four years!" I said, throwing a fry at him.

"Hey babe," Nick said taking a seat next to me.

"Nick? What are you doing here?" I asked, surprised.

"Come sit with me today. You can come with if you want to Nathan," Nick said and I bit my lip.

"Only for today," I said standing up with my lunch once Nathan agreed.

"Deal." We headed to Nick's table, but once we sat down someone entered the cafeteria. The whole cafeteria went quiet for a moment making us look up to see Caiden enter. Not at all affected by the looks, he made his way toward the table I was currently sitting at with all of his friends.

Aw shit.

Chapter 18

"How come you didn't tell me Caiden was back?" Nick asked.

"He was pissed with me," I said shrugging taking a bite of a fry.

"Why the fuck is this bitch here?" Caiden snarled taking a seat in what I'm guessing is his usual spot.

"He is here because I invited him," Nick said simply and Caiden turned his glare to his best friend. He really needed to get that glaring problem fixed.

"Why?" Caiden asked between clenched teeth.

"We've become good friends, Nick said. Underneath the table I could feel his hand on my thigh.

"Well don't bring your fuck face of a friend here," Caiden said, and Nick rolled his eyes not at all fazed by Caiden's attitude.

"Hey man look," Kyle said nodding his head toward the entrance where Leon just walked in. Caiden clenched his fists looking where Leon now sat with Ashton and Cam. Sensing his glare he looked up and smirked when he noticed me sitting with them he waved at me along with Cam and Ash. He put his hands to his mouth and yelled,

"Hey Jace! Why are you sitting with those losers you should come sit with us." I didn't respond and felt Nick's hand tightened on my leg and I looked up at him.

"You're friends with Leon?" he asked me and I shrugged.

"Not really. But him, Ashton and Cam are pretty cool."

"We don't talk to them. If you wanna hang with us then you don't even associate yourself with them unless it's beating the shit out of them," Max said, I was honestly surprised to hear his deep voice talk but I nodded my head slowly.

"Why? Why are you guys like rivals with them?" I couldn't help but ask.

"Why is he sitting here again?" Caiden asked with a scowl and his hand sliding down his face, showing his irritated expression.

"Is someone facing a hangover?" I said putting on a fake pout and Caiden narrowed his eyes at me.

"Let me beat the shit out of him," Caiden said standing up making his chair fall to the ground. The loud cafeteria turned into only small chatter so everyone could hear what was going on.

"What the hell did I do now?" I asked, throwing my hands up.

I should get this guy a consoler.

So then he actually has a reason to beat the shit out of you?

Well duh and to help his anger problems.

"There will be no beating the shit out of anyone today," Nick said calmly standing up. "You are done hitting him," he pointed at me. My black eye has basically disappeared besides a small tiny bruise underneath my eye which should be gone by tomorrow.

"Nick, you may be my best friend but that won't stop me from punching you," Caiden was livid now.

"Ladies, ladies. Please," Tom said now standing up with Caiden, Nick and me. "Now, what the hell has gotten into you?" he asked looking at Nick and he only rolled his eyes.

"This poor kid has come out of his room supporting a new bruise. He isn't paying to stay in this school just to be best up daily," Nick defended and I narrowed my eyes. Now I'm a kid?

"I think we should just go," Nathan suggested standing up.

I nodded. "Good idea."

"I'll join you guys," Nick said.

"What the fuck?" Caiden said walking right up front to Nick.

"Why are you really all buddy-buddy with these freaks?"

"They are normal people, Caiden," Nick said rolling his eyes again.

"Wow it's like we aren't even here," I said sarcastically looking at Nate.

"You stole the words right out of my mouth," Caiden ignored us and suddenly smirked. I was surprised by the little bit of emotion he showed since he is usually always void of emotion and cold.

"You only want to fuck his friend," Caiden's smirk dropped replacing it with a smug look.

"Why would I want to have sex with his friend? She's already my girlfriend," Nick said a smirk making its way onto his face. Caiden's face turned cold again. I raised an eyebrow at this new information. I don't remember discussing this. Nick didn't look my way instead he looked at Tom who burst out laughing,

"Nick has a girlfriend? I have to see this to believe it. I mean you're the fuck and dump type of guy."

"I can have a girlfriend," Nick said defensively.

"Your slut of a friend will be coming to you in a day or so talking about how he broke her heart," Caiden looked at Nate.

"I doubt it. Claire's stronger than that," Nate said amused. "This just proves that you don't know shit about her because she can kick all of your asses." I could have hugged Nathan right then and there.

"I'm bored. Can we go now?" I asked, not at all amused with this conversation.

"We only met her once of course we don't know shit about her," Tom said.

Not bothering to listen, I headed toward the cafeteria door after grabbing my food. What? You can't go wrong with food. Especially this places school. They make food better than my own mother.

"Sorry. It irritated me how they were talking about you like you're some toy," Nathan said catching up to me.

"It's fine." I shrugged leaning my head on his shoulder as we walked. Once we were outside sitting at the picnic table Nick joined us.

"I'm sorry," Nick said kissing me. My eyes widened but before I could respond he pulled away.

"Someone could have seen that!" I hissed hitting his chest lightly.

"No one did."

"Can you not be all mushy in front of me?" Nathan asked rolling his eyes. We sat down talking about random things. Nathan was on the opposite side of the bench while Nick was on the same side next to me holding my hand. Maybe things aren't that confusing after all.

Chapter 19

I watched through the window as my dad laughed with the same blonde haired lady from last time. He wiped some frosting off the corner of her lip making me scowl.

Who the hell eats cookies at nine in the evening?

You dumb ass.

I looked down to notice I was indeed eating a cookie.

Oh.

But that's beside the point. If this doesn't scream cheating then I don't know what does.

"Is this a daily thing for you?" Caiden asked me and I nodded. After realizing how creepy that seemed I shook my head.

"Why are you talking to me?" I asked him honestly confused.

"Don't you hate me?"

"Yes."

Well then I see someone likes to be rather blunt.

"Cool." *Smooth, Claire. Real smooth.*

"We need to talk," he told me and I turned my head to look at him to see him with a blank look on his face.

"Do you ever smile?" I asked bluntly.

Ha, I can be blunt too.

"No," he responded with a scowl. Hearing a giggle I turned my head back to look in the window. The blonde lady was giggling while putting frosting on my dad's nose.

What the hell? Are they eight?

"Do you know them?" Caiden asked me. My eyes widen and my whole body froze.

Quick think of an excuse.

"It's my uncle. My aunt thinks he's cheating on her," I lied.

"Doesn't he wonder why you're in the school he works at?" Caiden questioned. I could tell he honestly didn't care what I was saying but I answered the question any way.

"He doesn't know we're related. He's new to the family." He rolled his eyes obviously seeing through my lie.

"I don't have time to wait all day so hurry the fuck up," he snarled. I was starting to get used to his mood swings so I only rolled my eyes. Looking in the window again I watched as she giggle not bothering to be quiet. I scoffed out loud at her annoying laugh.

"Is that your girlfriend or something?" he asked me with a raised eyebrow.

"No! I told you that's my uncle and I don't know who the hell that chick is!" I said, sending him a quick glare.

"I do." My eyes widened in surprise and I quickly turned to look at him. Standing up I walked over to him and narrowed my eyes. "Then what are we waiting for? Let's talk," he scoffed.

"I do what I want," he said still leaning against the wall with his arms crossed. He took out a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket and took one out lighting it up.

"What are you doing?" I demanded, watching as smoke came out of his light pink lips.

"Smoking? I didn't know you were this stupid. Are you sure you're not a blonde?" I glared fiercely at him now very offended.

If I didn't hate him before then I sure do now.

"I'm a brunette thank you very much and not all blondes are stupid! And you're blonde!" I said pointing to his blonde hair.

"Yeah, but I'm fucking hot," he said not bothering to hide his arrogance.

"Yeah, and I'm the president of the United States," I said sarcastically.

"Besides only *girls* with blonde hair are stupid," he said, starting to walk toward the door.

"You know I feel like my roommate is eight," I said after a moment of catching up to him.

"Just tell me who she is?"

"Who is?"

Asshole.

"That woman with my uncle!" Once we were outside he threw his cigarette on the ground stepping on it with his black boots.

"What will you do for me?" he asked not even sparing a glance at me. "Actually I know exactly what you'll do for me."

I should just walk away now.

He is actually noticing you for once.

But he's going to make do something horrible.

Or he's going to make you make out with him?

He thinks I'm a guy.

Show him you're a girl.

I can't, he'll tell.

Just do something with him. I have needs.

And I have a dirty mind.

"Deal?" Caiden snapped me out of my thoughts. Realizing I didn't listen to anything he said made me bite my lip nervously.

"What?" He huffed out an annoyed breath, his thumb and index finger holding his nose.

"This is going to be difficult working with a fucking idiot." I pursed my lips to stop myself from saying anything, "If you break your friend and Nick up I'll tell you who the woman is and I'll try to be a little bit more civil with you," he said and my jaw dropped.

"You want me to break up my best friend and your best friend?"

"I literally just said that." He rolled his eyes and looked up at the dark sky not bothering to hide his annoyed expression.

"No," I denied. I liked Nick. There was no way in hell I was breaking up with him when we've only been together for what? A week. "Why on Earth would you want me to do that?" I asked, honestly confused.

"This chick may change Nick."

"So? It would be for the better. He wouldn't be using girls every other day like you." His piercing hazel eyes snapped to my blue ones glaring at me intently.

"Every day," he corrected me a small smirk appeared on his face but it disappear as fast as it came. "And he wouldn't even go to a club to pick up girls with me because of that bitch," I simply shrugged.

"That means he is loyal to Claire," I said and he narrowed his eyes irritation quickly showing through his cold exterior.

"Are you going to break them up or not?" he asked me, kicking a stone.

"I'm not," I said and he nodded.

"Be prepared for hell," Caiden hissed. He stormed off to the building with our dorm and I slowly walked toward it, taking my time. Checking my phone I seen it read 9:57 and sighed knowing my dad was probably on his way home now. Realizing I forgot my key and the doors would lock at ten I quickly rushed in the building and pressed the elevator button a thousand times before it finally opened. After a moment or two I was finally standing outside my door and the time read, 10:02. Since I left all of my keys inside it had no other option but to knock. I put my fist up to the door and knocked a few times. Caiden opened the door and saw it was me and then slammed the door in my face. My jaw drop at his rudeness and I quickly knocked again.

"Caiden, I forgot my key! Just let me in you asshole!" I yelled, it took an hour of constant yelling and knocking before I finally gave up. I knocked on Nathan's door and after a few minutes of knocking Ashton opened the door.

"Ashton?" I said, confused. My guy voice almost faltered but I quickly fixed it with a cough.

"Hey Jace! I'm guessing you're here for Nathan," he said after doing the whole man hug thing guys do. Trust me, that's the most cringe worthy thing of my life, especially when you're trying to avoid your own chest from touching his.

"Yeah, what are you doing here?" I asked, confused.

"Nathan's my roommate." Memories of when I first found out about Nathan being across the hallway flashed through my mind, making me realize that Ashton was one of the guys walking with him.

"Oh I didn't even realize," I said and he let out a chuckle and opened the door wider.

"Would you mind if I stayed here for the night?" I asked Ashton when I noticed Nate was asleep.

"No, go right ahead," he said and I quickly thanked him. "Not trying to be rude or anything, but what's wrong with your room?"

"I forgot my key in the room and so he decided to be a jerk and not let me in, keeping me locked out," I say tiredly. Lying next to Nathan's sleeping figure in his bed.

"Just another reason to hate that guy," Ashton said shaking his head with his fists clenching. "He's always an ass."

“Tell me something I don't know,” I said, my eyes slowly drifting close. Ashton started to say something else, but I couldn't hear him due to the fact that I was already slipping into the state of dreamland.

Chapter 20

"Claire-bear, what are you doing here?" Nathan asked me, shaking my body. I groaned and snuggled into his warm bare chest.

"Shh," I ordered swatting away his hands. "Where's your roommate?"

"He had a class at seven."

"Good. Then let me sleep. I am free from those awful classes for the day," I told him before shoving my head into the pillow.

"Well you have fun sleeping then," Nathan got up and I groaned at the now cold feeling.

"Will you send Nick up?" I whined and he snorted.

"Sure, would you like a breakfast buffet too? Orange juice or milk?" he replied sarcastically.

"Go sleep in Nick's room. I'm guessing Caiden's being an ass-"

"As usual."

"But I have a job to get to and who knows what Ashton, Cam and Leon will do when they come up here and find you sleeping."

"They're coming up here?" I asked, surprised lifting up my head and squinting my eyes at the figure getting dressed.

"They usually come up here and hang out for a while after class," he said casually and I groaned for what seemed to be the millionth time and reluctantly got up. I slid on my shoes and flicked Nathan off before slamming the door. I checked the time on my phone to see it was only nine in the morning. I took the elevator and went down one floor. I knocked on Nick's door-well more like pounded.

"What the hell do you want?" Nick yelled before opening the door. When he saw it was me he smiled and pulled me in slamming the door. He pressed his lips to mine but I quickly pulled back with a scowl.

"Morning breath," I said and he rolled his eyes. "I only came here for your bed."

"You only use me for my bed," he said, pretending to wipe away tears.

"And you only use me for sex," I said flipping down on his bed like a fish.

"We haven't even had sex!" he said throwing his hands up dramatically pouting.

"Details, details," I said rolling my eyes.

"What a great relationship we have," he said putting his face in my stomach. I raised an eyebrow amused.

"What are you doing?" I asked him letting out a small laugh.

"I'm enjoying the feeling of your stomach. It misses me," his warm breath was now fanning my bare stomach.

"I love how you his start pulling up my clothes whenever you feel like it," I said with a smile.

"Please I know you like it. But if it's that big of a deal then you can do the same for me."

"You're only wearing boxers," I pointed out.

"I could be wearing briefs," he said wiggling his eyebrows, looking up at a smirk playing on his lips as I got up.

"I mean you're not wrong, but I have to go do my daily spying. My dad doesn't have a class at this time," I said grabbing a water out of his mini fridge.

"Quick question, why didn't you just go to your room and sleep?" he asked curiously.

"I left my key in the room and Caiden locked me out. He's being a complete ass and so I can't get in," I said scowling.

I wonder how many times a day I say the words ass and Caiden in the same sentence.

"Do you want me to go help you into your room and with your dad?" he asked me and I raised my eyebrows not hiding my surprise.

"If you want to. But we have to hurry."

Nick got into the room by tricking Caiden and then he me in. Caiden of course wasn't exactly the happiest person to be around when he found out. But overall Nick only ended up with a sore cheek. Before Caiden stormed out of the room he stopped in front of me.

"At this rate you will never find out who she is." He sneered, pushing me out of the way.

"I'll find out myself!" I yelled when he was halfway down the hall. He turned back a little and gave me a quick smirk.

"No, you won't," he said seeming almost smug like he knew something I didn't.

He does know something you don't.

Shut up.

I walked back into my room and slammed the door angrily. Nick gave me a weary look and I just shook my head and walked over to my drawers, quickly changing not really caring if Nick was in here or not.

"Just saying if you weren't in all that guy stuff you would be pretty sexy mad. I could just imagine your blonde hair moving back and forth as you angrily slam everything. With your cheeks how they are now tinted with a little red." I rolled my eyes and shook my head at my boyfriend. Oh right I should probably tell you how he asked me out a while ago. It's not really a long romantic story it's the simplest story actually.

He left a sticky note on every one of my books and a few of my clothes with a word on each one. Once I put them all together it said, 'Will you marry me?' (One even had a plastic ring attached to it with a smiley face sticker on the diamond.) Then the other part said, 'I didn't think so. Don't worry babe in a few years. But will you be my girlfriend? I won't take no for an answer' with a wink face. I found it cute that he took the time to do all that. I won't question how he was able to be in my room without Caiden or me in there.

"Well you know I'm not blushing because Claire Martez does not blush," I said to Nick when he kissed my red cheek.

"Not even once?" he asked me looking unconvinced.

"Nope, not once. Not even when I threw up during my basketball team picture on everyone in front of me."

"Ew," he said his disgust evident on his face.

"You're such a girl."

"Me? No. *You* yes. You have the parts and everything." He smirked and my hand connected with the same cheek Caiden punched making him wince.

"Don't be disgusting," I said grabbing my key for the room off my table by my bed.

"Sorry, wifey," he said before pressing his lips to mine but I pulled away.

"You may have already brushed your teeth before you left your room and but I have not," I said heading straight toward the bathroom ignoring his groan. I quickly brushed my teeth before exiting the bathroom and the room with Nick.

"Can I kiss you now?" he asked me and before I could respond he had his lips on mine. I responded for only about thirty seconds before I pulled away.

"No kissing in public while I'm dressed like this." We took the quick ride on the elevator and exited.

"Hey, there's your dad." Nick pointed to the parking lot where my dad was walking with the blonde woman again. He kept moving his hands making me roll my eyes. My dad was always one of those people that used hand gestures whenever he is talking.

"We're using your car," I told him. He took out his keys, wiggling them in his face. We ended up following my dad all the way to Mr. Hero.

"Mr. Hero? Really?"

"Hey they have good food," I defended.

"I think I'd rather eat a rat's ass," he said and I shook my head.

"You're lucky I like you," I said shaking my head as we walked in together. My dad was already sitting at a table talking with the blonde woman. I narrowed my eyes but looked away from the two when the guy to the counter cleared his throat.

"Sorry, can I have a seven inch Philly cheese steak sandwich with cheese fries? Oh and a fountain drink," I asked them, my eyes glancing back over to the table before returning to the guy. Actually looking him over, my eyes widened.

"West?" He looked at me confused.

"Do I know you from somewhere?" he questioned and Nick elbowed me and I quickly shook my head.

"No, I just read your name tag," I said awkwardly ignoring Nick's intense stare at the side of my face. Guessing Nick already ordered he told us the price and Nick ended up paying for the whole thing. I thanked West grabbing the cups from his hand and handing one to Nick. We walked over to the drinks and Nick looked at me with a frown after filling up his cup with sprite. He frowned as we took a seat.

"Who was he?" he asked me.

"He's just a guy that stole my yogurt," I said simply and Nick chuckled.

"Only you, Claire," he said and my eyes widen looking over at my dad's table. He didn't seem to hear anything making me sigh in relief.

"I'm Jason remember," I hissed, my eyes narrowing and he quickly apologized.

"She looks like she's taking notes." He pointed out changing the subject.

"I wonder what she's writing down," I thought out loud.

"I'll go find out," Nick said and I raised an eyebrow.

"How exactly are you going to do that?" I asked him curiously.

"Just watch and learn." He winked blowing me a kiss and standing up. He walked confidently over to their table and my father's eyes widened surprised to see his student.

"Hello, Nick," my father greeted politely. "What can I do for you?" He took a bite of his sandwich which I knew was the same as mine.

"Oh, I was just wondering if that was actually you. I mean I didn't know you had a social life. Well I'll be honest with you, Mr. Martez, I didn't know you even left your classroom," he said rocking back and forth on his heels. Nick suddenly picked up the blonde ladies drink and looked intently at it before taking a sip.

"Pepsi?" he questioned and my father glared at my boyfriend.

Another loud slurping sound sounded through the small food place. "Coke?" My father stood up from his chair trying to hold back his anger.

"Woah, simmer down," he said holding up his hand before removing the lid and taking one last loud sip. "I know it's actually Dr. Pepper." Nick rolled his eyes. He set the drink down but then accidentally hit it with his wrist making the large drink spill all over the table. The blonde's notes call soaked with pop. She stood up gasping as pop dropped on the floor from her skirt and I quickly rushed over. I didn't look at my father once and only looked intently at the lady as I talked.

"Nick, what the hell!" I said picking up the wet papers.

"It was on accident," he pouted.

"Let me go dry these off for you," I said being careful to not rip the papers.

"No, it's fine really," she said looking panicked. I shook my head and held the papers farther away from her,

"No, I insist. I'll fix it," I said heading toward the bathroom. Nick gasped and put his hands on his hips and standing straight.

"I'll help Jace! Don't worry blondie. I shall fix thou papers for you. Want to know why? Well I'll tell you why! I am batman," he put one fisted hand in the air and started running toward the men's bathroom like he was trying to impersonate batman. Once the door was closed I started to laugh so hard holding my stomach with my free hand.

"Nick, first of all, batman doesn't fly and second, this isn't the comics or shows or movies. Batman isn't superman," I said slowly and he gave me a sheepish smile. I hear the sound of a guy using the bathroom and turned my head to see someone watching us while using the bathroom.

"Get out of here!" Nick said his face turning hard. He got a look like Caiden but of course it wasn't as menacing. The guy quickly left in a rush while zipping up his pants. I rolled my eyes but walked over to the dryer and pressed the button making warm air blow out. I put the papers under it and held them tight so they wouldn't blow away. Remembering the door I quickly told Nick to lock it, which he did.

"So can you read anything on the paper while it's wet?" he asked rocking on the heels of his feet.

"I probably could make out most of the words but I don't want to," I said biting my lip.

"Why not?" he asked, coming closer to me.

"Because I'm afraid of what I'll see," I said honestly.

"Don't be," he said grabbing my free hand and holding it in his.

"I'll be here for you no matter what," he squeezed my hand and I nodded deciding to still wait until they're completely dry so I don't smear the words or rip the paper.

Chapter 21

Ten minutes later the paper was mostly dry and I was ready to read them, ignoring the pounding on the door.

"SPD, open up." A cop yelled making us both freeze.

"Hurry up and read it!" Nick whispered looking at the door nervously. I sat on the ground and looked at the papers hesitantly. I cleared my throat and rubbed my sweaty hands on my leg and started to silently read it.

"What does it say?" Nick asked me taking a quick glance at the rusty colored door that you can clearly see was once beige.

"It's notes," I said, slowly my eyes skimming the paper.

"Notes for what?" he questioned, watching as the door started to open a little as if it was being hit with something other than fists.

"A wedding," I said tears welling up in my eyes.

"No, does that mean . . ." He didn't finish his sentence but I knew what he was asking. The door looked as if it was going to break open any moment and so I quickly took a picture of the papers and moved into the only stall and leaned over the toilet. I tried not to gag and held my breath.

"What are you doing? What's wrong?" he asked, putting his hand on my back.

"We need a reason for not opening the door. Hurry and open the window. Our story is we came in here to dry the papers but I started feeling sick and threw up. But someone who was already in here locked the doors and started to try to fight you," I said, my words slurring together as I start talking faster. Once he opens the window and comes back to his spot before I let my fist connect with the same spot Caiden hit him and Nick's eyes widen wincing a little.

"The guy went out the window right before they got in here," I said and before Nick asked why we were making up a story I told him, "If we say this story then we may not get into too much trouble." The door burst open and I flushed the toilet and stood up slowly holding my hand to my forehead.

"Hands up!" a cop ordered keeping his gun pointed at Nick. He stands up slowly and slowly walks out of the stall. I do the same and we both keep our hands above our heads. "Face the wall." I was confused at which wall and the three cops focused their gazes intently on us. "Turn around and face

the wall. Keep your hands up," he said louder this time. We slowly turned around and face the wall and kept our hands up. I didn't dare to look anywhere else besides that wall. "On the ground."

We let our knees touch the ground and I could hear the cop's footsteps slowly coming toward us. My hands were grabbed and handcuffs were placed on them. Tightly, I may add.

"You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be held against you...." The officer said going through our Miranda rights. He had us stand up and we started making our way out the doors and Nick paused before leaving.

"So does that mean we don't get our food," I snorted and Nick winked at me. From the corner of my eye I could see my dad and the blonde woman standing and watching the whole scene. If only he knew it was his daughter being arrested right now or my bad, the officers have clarified that we were only being detained until the situation was fully understood. We were both placed in the back of the cop car with the door shut while the officers talked to each other and the manager. Well, I guess I should tell you this isn't the first time I've been in the back of one of these cars.

It was currently eight o'clock and I was no longer detained and I was actually far from it at the moment. We were let go with just a warning about causing disturbances even though the owner was dramatic, but it's all good. "You got a strike!" I yelled jumping up from the chair and Eddie turned around, looking at me with wide eyes as we finished the game. "Holy shit!" He said and my eyes widened.

"Y-you just swore!" I sputtered in surprise.

"I did! I just swore!" he said, throwing his hands up.

"Look, six or more weeks of bowling and we're already killing it. We should truly invest in a bowling kit, you know the one's with the fancy shoes and that really pretty, yet shiny ball," I said smiling suggestively and he gave me a tight smile and shook his head quickly.

"No, bad, bad idea," he said and I frowned.

"We come every week, though," he shook his head again, "Trust me, Claire. That would be a waste of money. Those things are expensive," he said and my jaw dropped.

"You totally already looked into it," I said pointing at him accusingly and he winced. "Maybe once."

"Edward Sterling, have you been playing me this whole time? Don't tell me, you can actually bowl," I said and he chuckled as he slipped on his regular shoes.

I leaned my head forward, gathering all my blonde hair up before bringing it back and putting it in a ponytail. "No, trust me, I honestly sucked from day one," he said and I let out my own laugh.

“Okay, maybe a little, but look. It took weeks and you’re already the first one of us to get a strike. I’m slightly jealous,” I said as we started walking out of the bowling place.

I paused, stretching dramatically, you know the whole break your back type of thing.

“Want to get dinner?”

I asked and he easily agreed. We headed next store to the Bob Evans and picked out nice breakfast meals for dinner.

“So how is everything?” I asked curiously, referencing his constant struggle he had with his home life.

He shrugged. “My parents keep making me think we’re okay every time I go over there for the weekly dinners, but by the end of the night they’re always screaming at each other, blaming each other for me being gay. Next thing you know, I’m getting told to leave and they’re telling me how their five seconds from taking me out from that school,” I felt my heart clench slightly, which it often did around Eddie. It seemed the only time there was always a smile on his face was our bowling nights. Every other time was filled with a slight sadness that I didn’t completely understand.

“What’s the point of taking away your education? You’re eighteen, they really can’t,” I said and he rolled his lip in his mouth.

“That’s debatable really. If they stop paying then I can’t attend there anymore. I can’t afford those loans,” he explained and I nodded in understanding. The only funds we had were the retirement fund my grandmother left me before she died. Why she left it to me? I had no idea, but it was definitely paying for all of my school loans. I frowned.

“Well, I would be very disappointed if you weren’t attending that university anymore. You’re the only bearable one,” I said and he snorted.

“Nick would say otherwise,” he said giving me a knowing look and I smiled innocently.

“Even so, you can never quite prepare for what will happen next,” he said frowning slightly and I couldn’t help but agree.

“You can’t pick what happens next, but if you keep going and fighting for what you believe in even while the world is against you, it’ll be worth it,” I said before sipping my drink loudly.

Chapter 22

I wrapped the sheet around my naked body making Nick groan, "Babe, come back to bed."

I rolled my eyes. "It's already noon and you said your roommate will be back by two and I can't be here if he decides to come early," I told him putting on a bra and wrapping the wrap around my chest before slipping on a black shirt with a basketball on it.

Nick wrapped his arms around my waist and brought my back to his chest, not bothering to put on any clothes.

"Let me just keep you forever. I'll hide you away," he whined, placing his head on my shoulder and I shook my head.

You give a guy one night and he suddenly wants to keep you.

"If this is how it's always going to be then no more sex for you," I told him sternly, pulling away and slipping on a pair of blue jeans. Believe it or not, but this is the first time we've had sex since we've been together.

"I won't hide you then," he said and I rolled my eyes. "Put on some clothes."

So I'm sure you want to know what happened with the whole cop situation. Well long story short, we ended up getting questioned at the police station and after some convincing they finally believed us and let us go. Luckily we aren't minors so they didn't have to call our parents. We just got left with a warning.

"Can I take you out to lunch today?" he asked, holding onto me again after he put on boxers.

"I promised Mia I would hang out with her today. She's visiting for the next few days," I said kissing his pouting lips.

"I see how it is, friends before boyfriends." He pulled away crossing his arms over his chest looking like a little boy.

"Yes, that's exactly how it is," I said honestly, shrugging. I wasn't going to lie. I was one of those people that valued friendship and I wouldn't ever let a boyfriend become between me and my friends.

"The fact that you value friendship just made you ten times hotter," Nick said kissing me his fake anger quickly disappearing. I rolled my eyes and pulled away before finishing dressing and grabbing my key and phone.

"I'll talk to you later," I told him, pecking his lips before leaving. As soon as I left and the door was shut I let out a sigh. I felt like something was missing from our relationship. I took the elevator up a floor and went to my room.

I walked into the room and I was surprised to hear no moaning. Cautiously I walked past the bathroom and I looked over to see Caiden sitting on his bed with books in front of him.

"You wear glasses?" I blurted out. He looked up surprised.

"Why are you here?" he asked me looking back down at his book.

"This is my dorm, too."

"Sadly," he responded his mouth biting the end of his pencil as he study the problem.

"So um what are you working on?" I was surprised he wasn't swearing at me or punching me so I took advantage of the situation.

"Fuck off," he snapped writing something on his packet of papers.

"You know it's okay to have feelings," I told him and his hand paused and he looked up at me.

"Why? Feelings can eat one human being up until they're nothing. They will all break you down. It's like setting termites into an all wooden house. You just stand there and wait till it falls into pieces," he hissed and I was surprised by his response. But I didn't even hesitate to respond.

As softly as I could in my guy voice I said, "That's okay though. You're human, at one point in your life you will break down and in those moments you will feel like nothing." His eyes pierced my blue ones not for a second for minutes. For anyone watching they would think this was an awkward situation. Me standing in between the small space between our beds just staring into Caiden's eyes as he did the same but instead sitting on his bed. "You can hide your emotions but either way you will have that breakdown eventually."

"You say it as if you experienced that," he said, his eyes cold with a smirk playing on his lips. You'd think the smirk would make him a tiny bit less frightening. But it didn't, he looked like the joker smirking. It was a cold, menacing, heartless smirk.

"Jason is it?" he asked and I tried not to scowl. "I find it fascinating that you speak of this break down and that it's okay to show emotions yet you so easily walk around with this fake persona. You call it a break down yet you and I both know the breakdown you are talking about is depression." I lost my voice for a moment but I tried to look like his words didn't affect me.

"I don't walk around with a fake persona," I said, glaring at him and he shakes his head, standing up while gathering his books. He removed his black glasses for a second and walked toward the door.

"Whatever you say, baby doll." Right before he left, he gave me one last look and I thought I imagined his cold look disappearing. "I won't be back tonight. Don't wait up for me, Claire." The door shut behind him. I was so lost in my thoughts from why he said earlier I didn't even realize or comprehend the words that he just spoke.

"Not even a hi or a hey?" Mia said, her hands on her hips. Her beautiful caramel brown hair shining in the sunlight. I squealed and ran up to my best friend pulling her into a hug. I took in the sight of her.

"I missed you and look at you! LA definitely did you good," I told her honestly, taking in her naturally tan skin and her beach curls.

"It looks like you haven't been a stranger to the sun either. I mean look at those tan lines!" She said pointing on my arm I narrowed my eyes and quickly looked at my arms and she let out a laugh, "I'm just kidding chill bitch."

"Aww Mia I missed you!" I say pulling her into another hug.

"I'm a little disappointed that you didn't dress up like a guy for me," she said and I scrunched up my nose.

"I say we should appreciate the few days you are here and celebrate your first night back!" I told her and she smirked.

"Did you think I was going to go lay on my couch and watch Netflix? Of course we're going to celebrate," she said, looking down at her heels I couldn't tell you the name of. They were those heels that kind of looked like tennis shoes. Now one thing I'll tell you now. Mia is one of those girls that will wear sweatpants and a t-shirt one day but the next she'll be in skinny jeans and some nice shirt like now.

Chapter 23

"Hey don't hate on my Netflix," I told her defensively.

"Whatever. Where's Nathan?"

"He should be getting out of class any second," I told her looking up at the building his lecture is in.

"So where is this boyfriend of yours?" she asked me looking around campus.

"Hanging out with Caiden," I told her and she smirked.

"Let's I visit him!" she said excitedly.

"No." Mia had always had a thing for bad boys. She always wanted to break their shells and figure them out. It was almost like a game to her but she actually liked the guy she doesn't just use the ones she dates.

"Why not?"

"Caiden, will fuck you and dump you," I told her bluntly and she shrugged.

"He can as long as he's hot." She winked and I shook my head a smirk appearing on my face.

"You little slut."

"Wifey!" I heard Nick's voice yell and my eyes widened.

"Who are they?" she asked me looking at a certain group of guys making their way toward us.

"They would be the ones I didn't want you to meet." I winced as she squealed.

"Don't hide your face! Why didn't you tell me you were visiting?" He wrapped his arms around my bare waist.

"Hey that's the hot outfit you were wearing for your graduation," Kyle said and Nick glared at him.

"I'm not going to ask why you remembered that."

"Claire." Mia coughed, elbowing me and I closed my eyes for a few seconds before reopening them.

"Nick, I would like for you to meet my whore of a Best Friend Mia. Mia, I would like for you to meet my sex addicted boyfriend," I introduce and Mia sent me a playful glare. While Nick acted offended.

"Wifey, I'll just pretend you didn't just say that." He crossed his arms over his chest sticking his nose up in the air.

"You're such a dork," I peck his lips.

"It's nice to meet you Nick. I'm not actually a whore," she said, shaking his hand. After shaking hands he pulls my body to his side.

"What do you have planned for today? he asked me not bothering to introduce his friends.

"We were going to get some lunch. Which I told you I was hanging out with Mia today," I said, narrowing my eye at him and he put on an innocent look.

"You did? I really don't remember," he said.

"Mia!" Nathan said, smiling widely and pulling her into a bear hug. "Damn I've missed you!"

"Well if you didn't act like such a stranger and actually called me sometime you wouldn't miss me so much," she said pulling away a smile playing on her lips. My eyes glanced away from the little reunion and landed on Caiden who was looking intently at me. I raised an eyebrow but he continued to look at me as if he was trying to put together a puzzle.

"Are you and your friends going to join us Nick?" Mia asked innocently and I turned my head glaring at her which she ignored.

"We would but I don't think Claire wants us to," he replied and I looked up at the surprisingly blue sky taking a deep breath.

"You can join us," I said quickly hoping they wouldn't be able to understand me and would take it as a no.

"This will be such a pleasant outing," Caiden suddenly said making all eyes snap to him.

"Indeed it will be," I responded, my eyes challenging.

"Hey no females on campus," a teacher yelled.

"Is there a rule for no cock blocks on campus too?" Mia yelled and we all froze. We could the teacher gasp and he quickly stormed over here.

"Dammit Mia," I mumbled.

"Who exactly are you? Do you belong to the neighboring school?" he asked, glaring fiercely at her.

"Nah. I would never go to some stuck up bitchy school."

"Language!"

"I'm sure you've said words a lot worse and this isn't elementary school."

"You're right this is an all-boys university so please remove yourself from here!" he demanded.

"How long have you gone without female interaction?" she suddenly asked.

"Excuse me but-"

"By female interaction I mean more along the lines of sexual intercourse."

"You better get your ass out of this parking lot before I call the police!" he yelled and our eyes widened at our business management teacher.

"I didn't mean to offend you. I'm just saying you look as if you're missing something from your middle age life and you look kind of red," she said, poking his cheek. We were all holding back our laughter as we watched this scene.

"How dare you! I am only twenty eight!"

"Who are you trying to convince me or yourself?"

"Me. Wait no! I meant you or-"

"Shh it's okay. Just stay calm. I don't want any heart attack in the middle of this parking lot," she patted his balding spot on the top of his head and he nodded. "Why don't you go back to your class?" He nodded again and started heading back to the front doors. We all bent over holding our stomach well everyone except Caiden who stood suppressing a small smile.

"Mia, this is why I love you," I told her hugging her.

"I know," Mia replied, smirking when the teacher realized what had just happened.

"Wait a second," Mr. Wills yelled and we all shared a look.

"We should get going," Nathan said.

"We have class in ten minutes sorry guys!" Kyle and Max said, and they both gave us apologetic looks before walking away.

"Caiden aren't you in that class too?" Nick asked.

"Yea, but I'll go some other time," he said carelessly. "Aren't you going to invite Jason?"

"Oh um he has class right now," he responded rocking back and forth on his heels something I noticed he liked to do a lot.

"Well most of the day's gone so let's get going!" Mia said, clapping her hands together and I silently thanked her for the subject change.

"Where are we exactly going?" I asked.

"Mr. Hero," she said opening her car door.

"NO!" Nick and I yelled at the same time.

"Why?" Tom decided to pitch in.

"I'm allergic to their tiles."

"I found a rat in my food," I looked at Nick and snorted at his ridiculous excuse.

Allergic to their tiles? Really?

"I'm not even going to bother pretending to believe that since those are both shit excuses but okay.

"Mia shrugged getting in. Nathan got passenger seat making me to sit on Nick's lap since Tom didn't want to for obvious reasons.

"How old are you guys?" I blurted out and Caiden rolled his cold, hazel eyes.

"You don't even know how old the guy you're dating is?"

"It never came up," I defended.

"We're twenty, but Caiden is twenty-two," Nick said and I nodded at this new found information.

Nick stared at Caiden for a few minutes and I was about to question it but he started to speak.

"Why are you so talkative today?" Caiden grunted. He glanced at his best friend and then continued to stare out the window at the scenery.

"I don't feel very hateful at the moment, but don't expect me to be like this for long. When your girlfriend opens her mouth I'll be back to normal don't worry," he said his voice monotone. My eyes narrowed into slits but I kept my mouth closed looking at the back of the black seat. Hearing bits and pieces of Nathan and Mia's conversation. Nick squeezed my hand that he's holding and shook his head.

"That's my girlfriend you're talking about. I'd watch what you say," he replied calmly. Caiden didn't respond and only glared out the window. I could tell this was going to be one interesting day.

Chapter 24

Two words to describe an outing with Mia, Nathan, Tom, Nick and the ass. Never again. Our lunch at seven in the evening was basically Caiden being his usual completely cold self throwing in a few curse words every now and then alongside Tom flirting with Mia next to a jealous Nathan. Yeah, it didn't go well. Currently we were getting ready in Mia's hotel room while the guys sat on her bed or around her room. "Take me back to LA with you," Tom begged and Mia snorted.

"Usually guys beg after you give them one night not before," she said rolling her eyes.

"Hey I said almost the same thing earlier to Nick!"

"No, you didn't."

"Shit I only thought it," I mumbled to myself. I gave Nick an innocent smile before slipping in my plain black earrings. I checked over my quick outfit I chose for the party and nodded. I was wearing a red skirt, and a black shirt with a black leather jacket over it. I decided to pair it with a cute pair of boots as well. Yes, I did own something other than vans. I wasn't sure what it was, but college made me actually want to try. Some people take this time to dress down and a break from makeup, but I never was that type of girl. College made me want to grow and be an adult.

"You're like opposites," Tom pointed out and Nathan chuckled.

"Their personalities definitely clash at times," he said and Mia and I rolled our eyes. I looked over at Mia's outfit to see her all dressed up in a tight dark blue dress matching the dress with the same color blue heels. Her makeup was perfectly in place while mine is the same as earlier.

"I'm not going to lie. I was hoping Mia would find a way to get you into a dress," Nick said pouting and I shook my head.

"I mean I'm not really minding dresses anymore, but I don't see the point in dressing up all nice to just go to some college party where everyone is going to be completely drunk," I said honestly and Mia scoffed.

"Let's face it Claire. You just don't want to dress up after the whole Lia-" I tackled Mia to the ground putting my hand over her mouth.

"Think before you speak," I hissed glaring at her and she rolled her eyes pushing me off of her.

"Are you trying to break my ankle?" She held out her hand signaling she wanted some help and I grabbed it pulling her up.

"It's fine." She moved her left ankle around a little and shrugged when she didn't feel any pain.

"Mia, don't pick on my Claire-bear," Nathan said hugging me close to him. He tucked my head underneath his chin and I saw something flash in Nick's eyes. I wasn't stupid and could easily detect it was jealousy. But I didn't pull away. Nathan is my best friend and would always come before anyone else. And the same goes with Mia she would always go before anyone else, they were family.

"Okay a little too comfortable right there," Nick said grabbing my arm and pulling me toward his body.

"Get used to it," Mia said, rolling her eyes. We all headed down to Mia's car and we took the hour and a half drive to the party.

"Why is it so far?" Tom complained about halfway through.

"Because this guy feels he shouldn't live close to wannabe wealthy people. So he had his own house built in like the middle of nowhere," Nick said rolling his eyes and making quotes with his fingers.

"He sounds like a prick," Nathan concluded.

"Who cares if he is a prick or not! We are going to celebrate me being here!" Mia said sending glares at everyone in the car. Caiden gave her a blank stare and Mia quickly focused on the road again. Seeing someone with no emotion is actually kind of scary for those who don't know.

Eventually we arrived at a huge house that was like the size of the White House and Tom jumped over my lap and exited the car rolling into the grass. I scowled at the fact that he could have easily jumped over Caiden's lap and Nick patted my thigh.

"As much as I enjoy this I would love it if you would get off now. My butt feels like it's permanently indented to the seat.

"Who's the designated driver?" I asked once we were all out of the car and no one answered making me sigh.

"I'll be it," Caiden's deep voice said after a moment and Mia squealed clapping her hands.

"Claire, let's go get wasted!" She yelled and grabbed my hand dragging me down the street and into the house the party was in. She dragged me straight to where the bar was in the house and got us each a drink.

"What is this?" I asked smelling the drink, it smelled familiar but I couldn't remember the name.

"I don't know I told him to give me his best and strongest," she said, gulping half of it down like a shot.

"Damn just one sip makes you buzzed! Let's dance!" she yelled, dragging me to the living room where the music was coming from. I shook my head at my crazy best friend and started to let loose. I moved the liquid around before deciding to take a small sip. I didn't really want to get drunk since I didn't trust the asshole to look after me. A few hours of dancing and a little bit of drinking Mia was completely hammered. Luckily, I was still okay since I didn't drink much.

"Tell her you want her but next week you do your own thing," Mia yelled in my face shaking her butt before taking another large gulp of her drink. "Why you do why you do that?" Mia continued to yell the song that wasn't even meant to be yelled.

"I can't explain it but just know it working for me. She text me I hate you I hate you I hate you I hate you, but how the fuck can you hate me when I ain't did shit, but be the real thing," I sung with her as we both point at each other, singing loudly. You know the DJ is drunk when 6Lack comes on at a party.

"It's true. I really do like that booty," Nick said in my ear grabbing my butt and I gasped in surprise, He, in response, smirked kissing the side of my neck.

"Have you been drinking?" I asked, smelling the beer on his breath.

"Of course," he said and started to dance with me. I took another small sip of my drink and my eyes widened when I realized why it was so familiar.

"Mia," I called, noticing she disappeared. "Nick, what is it that you had to drink?" I said worriedly.

"Some clear liquid, it was probably straight vodka." He shrugged, not at all worried.

"I don't think this is Vodka they're handing out. I'm pretty sure it's moonshine," I retorted.

"So?" Nick shrugged, his clouded mind obviously wasn't realizing what was wrong with this situation.

"Nick, moonshine is like poison. Too much of it can kill a person!!" I said snatching his drink out of his hand. I was thankful I only had a couple of small sips.

"We have to find Mia. She's been drinking that stuff all night. "I said pushing my way through the sweaty bodies. With my hand holding tightly onto Nicks. It didn't take long to find her since she was standing next to the little bar in the kitchen. I snatched the drink out of her hand the second it was brought to her lips.

"No more," I said adamantly. She burped in my face loudly and giggled.

"I'd say that was a good one mate," she said her words slurring together at the same time she tried to do an Australian accent. She was usually pretty good at the accent but due to the unfortunate intake of alcohol it seemed like she was trying to mock them or something.

"This good-for-nothing asshole has been serving you moonshine," I told her, and she gasped dramatically before bursting out in a fit of giggles. I throw the drink at the guy and ignored his comments that involved probably every curse word to ever exist.

"Let's go get you some water," I said as she stumbled a little standing up. I didn't even bother getting a water bottle knowing they probably were filled with something else.

"Hey Caiden said he's ready to go," Tom said.

"Did he drink a lot?"

"No, we played beer pong but he gave me all of his drinks." Tom shrugged, he seemed to be able to hold his alcohol very well. Tom helped me lead Mia outside after getting her a plastic cup with water. Nick easily followed us only tripping on his feet a few times.

"Finally," Caiden said when he seen us. I put Mia in the backseat of the car buckling her up.

"I am a grown adult!" Mia said and rolled my eyes.

"Yeah, a drunk adult," Caiden said checking the time on his phone. Impatiently.

"I'm drunk and I love it," she yelled throwing her hands up in the air. I didn't respond and shut the car door.

"In a hurry?" I questioned.

"He has a midnight hook up," Tom said pushing Nick in the car.

"No, I don't," Caiden retorted rolling his eyes. I ended up stuck next to him in the passenger seat. Right as he started the car I gasped opening the door and jumping out.

"What the fuck are you doing?!"

"We forgot Nathan!" I sighed in relief when I saw him on his way to the car.

"Where have you been?" I asked.

"Playing truth or dare," he responded I could tell he has definitely been drinking by the way he was walking. I smiled knowing all of my friends enjoyed them self also. It was nice to all get out and away from school. Once Nathan was in the car with Mia on his lap we were finally ready to go.

"Let me smell your breath," I say to Caiden before he starts driving.

"What?" he retorted and I repeated my statement before. He rolled his eyes and blew his breath in my face.

"You're too close for my liking," Nick said, sticking his head in between the seat and pushing our faces away from each other.

Caiden grunted, "Nick, I don't want your slut."

"I guess you're okay to drive," I muttered knowing he didn't have anything to drink by his minty breath and attitude. The car was quiet and I could easily sense some tension in the air between Caiden and Nick.

"Well I had a great time," I say putting on my seatbelt. Smiling slightly to myself as I turned up the music to hear one of Mia's Fall Out Boy CDs and quietly sung along. Nick and Tom started to talk quietly in the back but just like Mia and Nate they were both asleep about a half an hour later.

"Why do you hate me so much?" I asked quietly. "And don't say because I'm a slut. We both know I'm not," Caiden ignored me and continued to focus on the long, dark, empty road. I sighed but frowned when we started to slow down.

"Why are we slowing down?" I asked nervously, glancing over at the tall corn fields that surrounded us. I would never understand why one would want to live out here. Caiden started to check everything to see if the engine light was on or something once we were completely stopped. A scowl appeared on his face as he tried to start the car up again.

"What's wrong?"

"We're out of gas," he said between clenched teeth.

"What?!" I yelled and Tom jolted awake.

"What? What's going on?"

"We're out of gas."

"What are we going to do?"

"If you two say the word what one more time I'm going to strangle you. Both of you shut the hell up. Maybe she has a gas can in the back." Caiden got out, popping the trunk open and I sighed in relief when he came back with a gas can. I didn't notice the solemn look on his face.

"There's no gas in it," he said, obviously trying to hold back his irritation.

"So can we call someone?" Tom asked and Caiden turned his usual glare to him instead.

"We're out in the middle of nowhere. We are better off walking and getting our own gas we'll be sitting out here all night waiting for someone. There should be a gas station about thirty minutes away in walking time so I'll go get some gas and come back so we can get away from the slut and her fucking friend," Caiden said slamming the car door.

"Wait he can't go alone! It's like two in the morning! He could get raped by some creeper or stolen or even I don't know!"

"Well you can't take care of a bunch of drunks by yourself so I have to stay here either way. Why don't you go with him?" Tom suggested shrugging and I bit my lip watching a muscular back start to disappear into the dark.

"Fine, lock the doors and we'll be back soon," I say quickly rushing out of the car and running toward Caiden's disappearing figure.

"Why the fuck are you coming with me?"

"Because it's not safe to walk alone on a deserted street in the middle of the night."

"It's two-fifteen."

"It's almost the middle of the night."

"Just don't talk and we won't have a problem."

Chapter 25

"Aww young love," a lady says. She appeared to be in her sixties or seventies says.

"What?" Caiden and I both spit out, pausing our conversation and looking over at the road.

"How long have you two been together? You fight like a married couple," the gray haired lady asked sweetly. I didn't mention how odd it was that she stopped on the side of the road where we are to say that. It was almost like it was planned.

"Do you honestly believe I would be with this slut?" he nearly growled. "In her dreams."

That son of a bitch.

"Good, honey, run while you still can. Men are awful human beings. Look at 'em callin' ya a slut for absolutely no reason. They act like they are some king and like we women need to bow upon their worthless selves," she spit out and when I say spit out she literally spit right on Caiden. His jaw clenched as he kept his eyes closed and wiped off his face. Did I mention he wiped it off with my jacket?

"Good for nothing ass." She shook her head and continued to drive slowly as if nothing just happened.

"At least someone agrees with me," I said not even thinking and Caiden's eyes snapped to mine. His cold hazel eyes would bring me six feet under if they could.

"Wait! We need a ride please help us!" I yelled and she quickly stepped on her breaks.

"Are you trying to get us killed?" he hissed.

"She's a little old lady."

"You obviously haven't ever seen Hannibal."

"I would but you have this asshole with you so keep on walking." She pressed on the gas and sped off making me glare at her car. Caiden chuckled a little making my eyes snapped over to see a small amused smile on his lips.

"Baby doll you have a lot to learn in life."

"Did you just call me baby doll?" I asked, still staring at the smile on his lips. We completely ignored the fact that we were just standing on the side of the road.

"Does it bother you?"

"Yes."

"Good."

"What if I told you I like it?" I tried trying to see if it would irritate him. When he continued to walk I thought I succeeded and a smug smile appeared on my face.

"Listen baby doll and listen good. You need to drop your little better than everyone attitude. No one is buying this shit personality you're pulling so you might as well just give it up already. The only thing you will ever be is a slut. So go put on a skirt and hike it up some more I'm sure someone will pick you off the streets," I was completely speechless at what he said so seriously. He somehow managed to say that with his voice completely void of emotion as usual. He didn't even seem guilty that he just spoke so malign of me.

"How dare you! You don't even know me! You have absolutely no right to treat me how you are. I can deal with being called a slut since I've been called worse but for you to-" I cut myself off there and just shook my head. "You are despicable, Caiden."

"Trust me when I say you haven't seen the worse side of me," he said so darkly it sent chills down my spine.

"Let's just get this gas and go back to the car," I said before yawning. I rubbed my cold arms, the blue jean jacket I had on did nothing for me at this time of year. Caiden groaned when he glanced at my shivering figure.

"Stop wearing such slutty clothes and you wouldn't be cold right now." He threw his brown leather jacket onto my arms but it fell on the ground.

"That's expensive," he hissed. I picked it up and threw it over my shoulder not wanting to feel the warmth of it. I knew it would have only been warm because of Caiden's body heat. After a few more minutes of walking a huge gush of cold wind blew at us and Caiden grabbed his jacket off my shoulders and slipped his arms in it. I narrowed my eyes, I thought he was going to be sweet for the first time in his life. It amazes me how we can go from fighting to being civil to arguing again.

"If you're not going to use it properly then I'm taking it back. It's not July anymore and it's freezing," Caiden hissed, when the cold breeze came again Caiden made his face void of emotion again after taking a glance at me. "You act like it's in the negatives. It's only like fifty degrees."

"I'm in a tank top underneath this light jacket. Plus the wind makes it like forty degrees," I said pulling at my jacket.

"Like I said if you'd stop dressing like a prostitute you wouldn't be so cold," he said, his eyes showing irritation most likely from talking to me as usual.

"I'm wearing skirt, ankle boots and a jacket! If I was dressing like some prostitute I wouldn't be wearing anything! You are the one that brings thirty girls a day to the dorm!" I said stopping on the side of the street. Looking bored he stopped with me and turned facing me and shook his head.

"I don't know if you're ignorant on purpose or if you're just really stupid," he said.

"What do you mean?" I asked and he just shook his head, continuing to walk. My eyes landed on a building with lights and I sighed in relief when we got closer to see a few people outside of their cars pumping gas.

"I will kill Mia if she ever does this to me again," I mumbled to myself speeding up my pace. We reached the gas station quickly and I groaned as I realized something.

"What now?" Caiden demanded.

"We still have to walk all the way back," Caiden breathed out an irritated sigh and nodded.

"I'll handle it."

"How exactly will you handle it?" A fierce glare was sent my way and I shut my mouth taking the hint. He paid with the money he took from Mia's purse which he took since it's her car. After pumping the gas in the gas can Caiden started to look around the gas station.

"Hey!" Caiden yelled walking up to the two guys on their motorcycles.

"And you were talking to me about trying to get us killed," I hissed and Caiden just waved me off.

"Yes?" A guy that was probably fourth said his arms crossed over his chest giving us a fierce look that didn't seem to bother Caiden at all.

"Want to give us a ride?" Caiden said his eyes blank of emotion.

"Where do you need to go?"

"Just down the road. Our car is out of gas." He lifted up the full tank and shook it around to prove his point.

"Sure we'll take you."

"The girl will ride with me," the other guy pitched in. To make this easier I'll call him bandana since he's wearing a bandana and the other guy leather since he was wearing a leather jacket.

Caiden went to hop on leathers motorcycle but I stopped him putting my hand on his shoulder, "I'm trusting you," I whispered in Caiden's ear. He didn't hide his surprise and simply nodded.

"I'm warning you now if you touch her in any way that she's not comfortable with I will cut your fingers off and your dick," he hissed menacingly. Bandana got on the motorcycle ignoring the

threat and patted the seat behind him smirking at me. I got on slept my hands on my lap not bothering to hold on to some stranger.

My mother would kill me right now.

Not before my dad.

I didn't even want to think of that.

The engines started up and quickly sped off toward the car. Bandana decided to start conversation and said,

"Your boyfriend seems a little possessive."

"He's not my boyfriend," I reply curtly.

"Are you single then?"

"No, my boyfriend is back at the car," I responded, keeping an eye out for Mia's car. Bandana drove faster so he was driving next to Leather. I'm pretty sure it was illegal but they didn't seem to care.

"Well I don't know the guy you're dating, but you and blonde seem like a good match," he yelled over the wind. Caiden's eyes snapped over to mine to see my reaction or to maybe mentally call me a slut, I wasn't sure but what I did know for a fact was that the car was coming close.

"He would never date a slut like me," I answered for him which seemed to amuse Caiden. For most people, they wouldn't joke about such a thing and would get offended. Me, on the other hand, I have a best friend who I joke back and forth with, calling each other hoes. Caiden's killed any sense of meaning to the word, I just need to wait until I could read the underlying message with it.

"Not even in my after life," Caiden yelled, trying to hold back a smile. I was starting to think he did drink by all the smiles he was flashing. Although it was only two the first was genuine and unintentional but this second one was almost automatic. Was there actually a heart underneath that cold exterior? I guess the world would never know. But I knew for a fact I'd find out somehow. Did he flash smiles around just his friends? Did he joke around? No, I could answer that one easily. Caiden didn't seem like the type to ever make jokes.

"For some reason I don't believe that," Leather yelled and Bandana nodded in agreement.

"It seems like the girl wouldn't mind dating you. After all she never disagreed about you two being a good match," Bandana said as they both pulled over so they were right in front of the car. Shutting off the bikes I let out a small laugh.

"Nah I would never date him. He has too much baggage," I responded truthfully and Caiden immediately responded by putting up a facade expression. I wouldn't lie over that after all it was

the truth. He hides himself behind a cold exterior and just by that I could see he has plenty of baggage.

“That's a part of the job description. It's your job as his girl to help him take some of that baggage off,” Bandana retorted.

“You can stop talking about me like I'm not here,” Caiden said curtly getting off the bike. I followed his action and watched as he went over and unscrewed the gasp caps and started to fill up the car with gas. Tom walked out of the car and stretched his arms above his head.

Chapter 26

"Is this the boyfriend?" Bandana asked nodding his head toward Tom and I shook my head.

"No," I turned my head and nodded toward the car. "Did anyone wake up?"

"Only Nathan and he was a nervous wreck about you. He thought Caiden would kill you," Caiden snorted, "I had to convince him he wouldn't till he fell back asleep."

"I would never hurt a girl unless I had to," Caiden said his face showing he was completely serious.

"Hey you, don't ya think those two would be a good couple," Leather pitched in and Tom started to laugh.

"No, those two can't even stand next to each other for more than five minutes without call each other an asshole or a slut," he stated. "Plus she's dating my other best friend Nick."

"And I don't know why any girl would ever date him. He has a new girl in his bed every hour," I pointed out.

"How would you know that? Do you live with him or something?" Bandana asked. My eyes widened and I thought they were serious till they all started laughing.

"One of my best friends does and he tells me how awful he is," I said, shooting him a glare.

"Well then I have advice for you blondie, Keep the banana in its peel my boy and join me in a prayer because you definitely need Jesus." I burst out laughing and gave bandana a high five.

"You should be my new best friend," I said holding my stomach and Caiden grunted.

"I'm tired let's go." Caiden got in the driver's seat and started the car.

"Well it was nice meeting you guys and thank you so much for the ride!" I said, opening the passenger door.

"You can repay us by getting together with blondie."

"You do realize we're both blondes right?" I said slowly pointing to my curled blonde hair and to Caiden's blonde hair that was coiffed and curled.

"Yea, but he's blondie and you're his girl." I sent them a fierce glare. "Goodbye." I slammed my car door getting in and Caiden glanced at me.

"Took you long enough." I glanced in the back to see Tom already got back in the car. Once Bandana and Leather drove off we started to head home too.

"If you ever do that to me again I literally kill you with my own hands," I hissed. "We could have been kidnapped or killed!"

"You could have walked."

"You could of walked," I mocked him childishly and he raised an eyebrow amused. This may sound weird but he didn't smile when he raised his eyebrow yet somehow I could tell he was amused, whether it was just by his usual cold eyes or just by his face.

"Claire, thank god you're okay!" Nathan said groggily.

"How are you feeling?" I asked looking back at him.

"I could be better," he responded looking at me before looking down at the sleeping Mia on his lap. He was looking so intently and he didn't hide his affection much as he started to play with her hair. The love shined bright in his eyes and it made me smile slightly. I turned back around and decided to get some rest myself since we still had about an hour left. I closed my eyes and listened to the radio as it played Steal My Girl by One Direction. If I wasn't so tired I would be singing and dancing. The words became a simple hum as I fell into a light sleep.

I awoke slightly to my body being carried and I was too tired and couldn't think straight from the overwhelming sense to sleep and snuggle into the warmth.

"Agh," I grumbled incoherently keeping my eyes closed.

"You're less annoying when you sleep," I heard a deep, masculine, husky voice murmur. I squeezed my eyes tighter together as what seemed like bright lights shined on my face. I hid my face in someone's chest. The ding of an elevator sounded and I groaned irritated. All I wanted to do was sleep, trust me when I say you don't want to meet me if I haven't have much sleep. I turn into one sassy bitch. Hearing a door unlock and darkness met my closed eyes making me let out a sigh of relief.

"Where's Nick?" I mumbled, keeping my eyes closed.

"In a different hotel room with Tom," Caiden's husky voice grunted out. My boots were removed and I could hear them hit the ground. I decided not to comment on his rare kindness today.

"Tell him to come sleep with me," I said, knowing I was going to be freezing as soon as Caiden let go of me. My back dropped on the bed and I bounced a little landing right on the floor.

"You ass," I hissed against the carpet. His chuckle filled the room and he lifted me up and put me on the bed this time gently. I opened my eyes and let them scan the dark room after cuddling underneath the blanket.

"Wait this isn't Mia's room," I pointed out and Caiden nodded.

"Wow you're brilliant! Pointing out the obvious," he said sarcastically.

"It's like four in the morning. Your sarcasm isn't needed."

"Mia only had one single bed and Nathan took that her up to her room and stayed with her."

"I could have taken the couch."

"As heartless as I usually am I'm feeling generous today," he said, heading toward the door.

"Wait! Where are you going?"

"To my room," he said slowly as if I was dumb.

"Which room are you staying in?" I asked and he turned his head to look back at my now sitting up figure. His hand was clutching the handle to the door.

"I'm staying with Tom and Nick. Anymore questions?" he asked irritably.

"I actually have a statement, I don't want to stay in this room all alone." Call me weird, but I didn't like staying in an unfamiliar place by myself

"Go ask the guy at the desk to stay with you."

"For the billionth time I'm not a slut!" I said, standing up, completely forgetting about sleeping and my spot that was just starting to get warm.

"Can you just go to bed?" he asked, running his hands down his face.

"Someone could break in!" I said and he clutched his head with his hands tightly and irately

"I'll stay! But don't expect me to sleep with you baby doll. I won't hurt Nick like that," he said, moving toward the couch and I glared furiously at him. I almost brought up the time he asked 'Jason' to break us up but decided against it.

"Thank you and stop calling me baby doll." I jumped back on the comfortable bed and sighed in relief. I didn't get a response but I wasn't expecting one. Today was probably the most I've ever heard Caiden talk and the most I've ever talked to him. I wish I could say behind that cold exterior was a nice guy but I honestly couldn't.

"Good night, Caiden," I said, closing my eyes.

"Good night, baby doll," I heard him say after a few minutes. Maybe I could break his shell, but only by being me.

Chapter 27

"I'm really sorry," I told Mia while putting my bag on my back.

"It's fine, it wasn't your fault. I mean you weren't handing cups of moonshine out," she said lifting her head up from the bucket she had on her lap.

"Thank god I didn't stay at home. My mom would kill me if she knew I had been drinking, nineteen or not. I'm not of age." She rolled her eyes before gagging again.

"Don't worry I'll stay with her for the day," Nathan said, rubbing Mia's back and she gave him a weak smile.

"Okay I'm heading off to school. My class starts in a couple of hours," I said checking to make sure I had all of my guy clothes were in my bag.

"Bye Claire-bear."

"Bye Claire." We all bid our goodbyes before I left the hotel room. While taking the elevator down I checked my phone and I frowned looking at the date that read, Sunday, October 5th. Is it really October already? Thanksgiving break would be coming up soon. I started to unzip my brown leather jacket a little bit letting my white shirt and tie show. I decided yesterday morning that I was going to try to apply to the university next door. Johnston University for Girls. I called early yesterday and made an appointment with the dean.

Yes it's last minute, but that would be the only way I could get in since it's already past the first semester. Most colleges won't let me in and I didn't really apply anywhere besides my love which we shall not speak of. I needed to have a backup plan for when this was all over.

"Something wrong?" a voice said suddenly making me jump. I looked up quickly and I shook my head at the man.

"No, I'm fine," I said, leaving my jacket zipped up a little and gave the man a wry smile.

"What's your name?" he asked suddenly and I narrowed my eyes at the man.

"Claire Martez," I said after a moment and he smiled brightly holding out his hand for me to shake.

"I'm Jack Fredrick," he said releasing my hand. Why does that name sound so familiar? The elevator beeped and we both got off into the lobby.

"By any chance do you happen to be Daniel Martez's daughter?" My head snapped up looking over at the males figure.

"Yes," I responded pausing.

"I use to be the dean at the school where he works at." Staying calm I said, "Oh it's nice to meet you."

"I don't mean to be so creepy it's just you two look similar that's all." I nodded my head and flashed him a fake smile. My dad and I look almost nothing alike but I didn't comment on it.

"It's nice to meet you," I said, shaking his hand and he nodded gripping my hand tightly.

"Yes, it's nice to meet you too," he responded before checking his watch and saying his goodbyes before leaving.

"What were you two talking about?" Caiden's cold, husky voice suddenly said from behind me making me jump.

"What the hell? Why are you still here?" I said, holding my hand to my heart, he was gone when I woke up.

"Are you going back to school?"

"I was actually going home," I responded crossing my arms over my chest.

"You're in a school uniform," he pointed out.

"Yes, I am in one. How come you're not?"

"Because my school hasn't gotten their uniforms yet and I don't have class for a while."

"That's um great I have to go," I tried to leave but Caiden grabbed my wrist. "I'll drive you," he said.

"I don't want a ride!" I said glaring at him and attempting to pull my wrist out of his hands.

"Just tell me what you were talking about!"

"You're infuriating!"

"You little bi-"

"Is everything all right here?" a man asked. He was wearing a green uniform like everyone else who worked in the hotel.

"Yes, everything is fine," we both gritted out between clenched teeth.

"Okay, sir I'm just going to ask you to remove your hand from the ladies wrist then." Caiden took a deep breath looking up at the ceiling.

"You should have just minded your own business." He released my wrist and let his fist slam into the guy's jaw. The impact was so hard the man fell to the ground and I silently winced knowing almost exactly how that felt. My wrist was grabbed and I was dragged outside seconds after by the same ass.

"Did you really have to do that?" I wasn't surprised when I didn't get a response. I was pushed over onto of the hood of a car.

"Must you always cause trouble," he hissed and I shrugged.

"Trouble likes to follow me don't hate," I said shrugging, pushing myself up. If I wasn't on the hood of the car I most likely would've did that thing where you brush off your shoulders. Yea, I'm that cool.

"Now if you excuse me I have somewhere to be." Looking at the time on my phone I sighed knowing I was going to be late to meet the dean. Caiden's hand slammed down on the blue car making the alarm go off. He clenched his hands in his hair and started to walk off. I could almost see the steam coming out of his ears. I realized not even a minute later that I should have taken his offer.

The school was at least twenty minutes away. Of course the one time I forget my skateboard. Taking out my phone I found a taxi service and got myself a ride. It didn't take very long to arrive at the university that was only feet away from the school I was currently attending.

You can do this Claire. I mean what's the worst that can happen?

They won't let you in.

Great you're back.

I never left.

I let out a sigh and pressed the button. A buzzing sound sounded a sec after and I opened the door walking into the elegant school that was almost exactly like the boys university only a tab but nicer. The walls were painted a nice cream color with pictures of sorority girls hanging on the wall along with a bunch of girls in other clubs like, theatre, tennis, soccer . . . Etc. I continued to read the black signs with white lettering of the clubs names above the pictures taking plenty of time since I wasn't in a rush to meet the dean.

I looked over at the empty desk where I'm guessing s secretary was supposed to be if not that then security. Elegant flowers were sitting on top of the desk along with a note. Must be a secret admirer or a boyfriend/girlfriend. I walked down the hallway but paused in front of a door that had a small sign on it that said office. I took a deep breath and opened the door walking in slowly.

"Did you get lost? I mean honestly it doesn't take that long to get from the door to here," a brunette said snarky, and I shrugged.

"I prefer the word distracted but whatever floats your boat."

"I'm guessing you're here to meet the headmistress."

"Yes," I responded slowly having second thoughts, I was not even the slightest bit interested in being in an all-girls school.

"Right through that door," the brunette said nodding her head to the door to the right of her brown. I nodded but paused when I went to open it. Should I knock? An irritated sigh sounded throughout the room and the brunette went over knocking on the door. "Yes?" a stressed sounding voice said.

"It's Lelia."

"Lelia, what do you want? I'm busy this better be important."

"You have a wannabe student here."

"Tell her to leave. She's late and missed her appointment." My jaw dropped, I was two minutes late.

"Okay." The brunette whose name I now knew is Lelia turned to me. "You heard her, leave." I scoffed at this and push the door open.

"Excuse me!"

"I'm two minutes late and I spent one of those minutes talking to your bitch of a secretary."

"You two are not off the hook. Next time you'll be packing your bags." The headmistress hissed and two girls stood up one rolled her eyes while the other said whatever before stalking out annoyed.

"Well let's get this done and over with. Sit down." I looked over the headmistress to see she had blonde hair and was in a woman's suite looking professional but very stern. Something about her looked familiar but I couldn't put my finger on it.

"I'm going to infer you've been to a private school before based on your outfit," she said opening up a drawer and taking out a file. I opened my mouth to respond but she cut me off and continued.

"Although it seems that we have almost the same exact uniforms our school is and will always be the best in the United States, in order to be the best school you have to have the best. Based on your attitude I can see you are most likely another delinquent that's wants in so just hurry up and get what you want out and leave." I stood there flabbergasted.

“Just to inform you of something you may be interested in knowing. My father is one of the professors at the university next store so I’d appreciate it if you wouldn’t treat me like some scum,” I hissed.

“Let’s get on with this. You interrupted something important.” She cleared her throat before starting her interrogation.

Chapter 28

"We will send you a letter in a few days that will say whether you have been accepted or not. We will take in consideration that you did not have an essay prepared for us to look at, but that will be all so please remove yourself from my office." I put my bag on my shoulder and tried to fake a smile but I was sure it came out as a grimace.

"Thank you for your time." As soon as my back was to the woman I rolled my eyes.

"How'd it go?" Lelia asked me and I shrugged.

"Besides the part where she was bitch I think it went well."

"Well then since there is now a possibility that you may be going to this stuck up bitchy school I think I should introduce myself since you're going to need a friend, I'm Lelia." The brunette said and I looked at her for moment like she was crazy but something about her snarky personality reminded me of Mia.

"I'm Claire," I said walking out in the hallway and she followed after me.

"Aren't you a little young to work in the office?"

"This school hires students for small jobs like mine. In my case everything I earn goes toward the money I'll owe after college."

"How come these schools are separate?"

"Girls will distract guys if their shoulder are showing or their legs so they want to keep girls and boys separate so no one is distracting each other." She rolled her eyes at that and looked around before dropping her voice to a hushed whisper.

"At least that's what they say. Everyone knows the real reason is because the headmistress and the dean use to be married and had both schools combined so it was girls and boys together but when they got a divorce they had this school made next to it and you obviously can figure out the rest." I nodded my head at this new information.

"That's dramatic," I retorted.

"No kidding."

"Hello," I said and the guy jumped up surprised. When he looked up I let my eyes scan the familiar face.

"Oh um hi." He gave me a small smile. "Claire, I wasn't expecting to see you here," he said and I took a seat across from him.

"I was in the neighborhood as myself," I said smiling and he nodded. I noticed as he started to nervously pull at the collar of his shirt before folding up a piece of paper that he was writing on before.

"What's wrong?" I asked suddenly, noticing he wasn't acting like his usual self. He seemed fine when we went bowling a couple of days ago.

"I got in another fight with my parents," he said and I took in his appearance of his red plaid shirt that had a sweater vest over it. He slid off his dark grey jacket and gave me his usual small polite smile.

"Well, in that case, I'm glad I found you to sit with," I said and he stared at me. "How did I get such a great best friend?" he asked, shaking his head. "Usually when anyone finds out I'm gay they run for the hills. That's why I like to get it out of the way at the whole introduction stage," he said and my heart did the usual clenching for him.

"Well, don't worry you won't be finding me running. Never have, never will," I said smiling.

"You're stuck with being my friend at this point," I said smiling leaning closer. "Ever since the first time we went bowling, you signed yourself up for this." He grinned. "Careful, you may cause some people to go running in the opposite direction if they hear you. You're a little closer to society today," he said referencing the fact that the bowling alley wasn't as close to the school or people we knew.

I gave him a warm smile. "Good. They can know we were closer first," I said winking before my eyes glanced at the paper and pen by his bag. "What were you writing?" I asked curiously.

"Nothing," he said, stuffing it in his bag and I quirked an eyebrow.

"It's clearly something. A love letter maybe?" I said wiggling my eyebrows.

"It's nothing important now," he argued defensively, and his look caught me slightly off guard.

"Well, I won't force you to tell me then," I said slowly, feeling curious by how he was suddenly acting. Usually times with him were nothing but laughter and fun. I wasn't use to see this more serious, more sad side.

"Claire?" I looked up seeing Nick and another guy and I smiled waving him over.

"I should get going," Eddie said avoiding eye contact and I noticed how nervous he was getting now that Nick was here.

"Hello my lovely fiancé." He kissed my cheek before sitting down next to me while his friend took the seat next to Eddie. "Hey it's you," Nick said and I noticed Eddie was almost shaking in his seat causing my eyebrows to rise slightly.

"Why are you hanging out with this loser?" I narrowed my eyes at my boyfriend.

"His name is Eddie and he isn't a loser," I easily defended.

"Yes, he is babe, I mean even all of his friends left him!" Nick said, slinging his arm around my shoulder and his friend laughed.

"Since when is it okay to call me babe?" I questioned fuming. He knew how much I hated that word, it felt like such a degrading term to women, yet here he was calling me it.

"I should really get going," Eddie mumbled grabbing his black satchel bag.

"Yeah, you're not good for my rep," Nick's friend said leaning back in his seat.

"Who the hell are you?" I demanded glaring at him and glancing at Eddie with a look that made him stay.

"The name's Jax," he said, mocking Eddie while pretending to tip a hat. "But you can call me your date tonight."

"What the hell man?" Nick said and Jax rolled his eyes.

"Claire, can I um speak to you for a moment . . . alone?" Eddie asked me quietly and I nodded. We stepped outside of the noisy Starbucks and Eddie sighed in relief breathing in the fresh air.

"Jax is someone you don't want to mess with," he told me looking me right in the eyes.

"Why?"

"If you're dating Nick then I'm sure you know Caiden. Jax is almost like Caiden he's not as brutal with people but he thinks of girls as nothing but a toy. He's darker too. There's something about his mysterious past that gives me a bad vibe."

"Caiden treats girls like toys too?" I mentioned.

"Yeah, but there is a reason Jax just showed up suddenly. He had to of just got out of DH for sexual harassment or something," my eyes widened at this new information and I glanced inside at the two.

"Just be careful, Claire," Eddie said and I nodded.

"Don't worry I will be."

"Look what I found," Jax interrupted from behind us. I saw him holding the same paper Eddie had earlier.

"Don't touch that!" Eddie tried reaching it but Jax held it up higher. He cleared his throat after opening the note. He began reading it out loud, once again mocking him.

"I can't handle the pain and sadness anymore. My friends have left me and my parents find me a disgrace. I get bullied and I'm just alone. I do not expect any one to understand but please I do ask whoever finds this or well if anyone finds this do not blame this on yourself. I'll be in a better place. Tell the girl with the pretty blonde smile, thanks for everything. There was nothing you can do. Sincerely, Eddie"

Jax burst out laughing after. He has his hands on his knees and everything. I'm sure my heart was broken into two right now on the floor but I didn't bother to check as I took in Eddie's ashamed face. I didn't give him pity and I didn't tell him everything was going to be all right I simply gave him a hug.

"I'm sorry," I whispered, wiping his tears with my thumbs. "No one ever deserves to be treated that way. I've felt alone before but I eventually got through it and I believe you will too. Maybe not today and maybe not tomorrow but eventually you will. It's only a bump in the road that you're facing right now," I tell him and Jax snorted loudly.

"Nick, how are you dating this chick? She's more sensitive than my cat." I let go of Eddie and didn't even hesitate to let my fist make contact with Jax's eye.

"You are such a fucking prick and a douchebag. My god, and I thought Caiden was bad. If you don't get out of my sight in the next five seconds I will snap your neck myself," I hissed menacingly before turning to Nick.

"How are you friends with this dick?"

"Just go," Nick walked off after his friend and I shook my head in disgust.

"I'm going to grab our stuff then you and I are going to hangout. We can have an extra bowling adventure this week. It looks like you're in need of some fun," I told him offering a smile and he nodded.

"Thank you, Claire. I have seriously appreciated everything you've said and done." I gave him one more hug before going in and grabbing our stuff.

Chapter 29

"Wakey wakey Claire-bear!"

I grunted keeping my eyes closed.

"Claire if you don't get your ass up I will pick you up myself and drag you by your hair to get food. I'm hungry and decided to be nice and let you sleep in till eleven now get your ass up."

"I hate you," I grumbled throwing my pillow at him. He purposely opened the curtains letting the small amount of sunlight shine in the small dorm room. I got up stretching and threw my wig on the bed and let my blonde hair flow down my back. Nathan blew me a kiss and I scowled pretending to grab it then stomp on it.

"This is why I'm your only friend."

"You are not." I rolled my eyes opening the suitcase that was under my bed. I grabbed a pair of black leggings and a nice shirt before going into the bathroom to get ready. After taking a quick shower and blow drying my hair I returned to the room to see Nathan sitting on Caiden's bed. Shaking my head I muttered, "Dumb ass." I slipped on my black boots and my cute coat along with my blue scarf and black gloves before turning to look at my friend.

"I'm ready," I said doing a small turn.

"Well I see someone's looking all cute for their birthday," he said throwing me my phone and key which I put in my bra. Nathan peeked his head out in the hall and nodded his head that it was clear.

"Where to?"

"I think I'm in the mood for some Denny's," I told him as we pressed the lobby button. I sighed when the elevator paused at the floor right before the lobby.

"Well look who it is," Jax said smirking.

"Who are you?" Nate asked.

"He's a conceited dick."

"Now why let such foul language come out of that pretty little mouth of yours?" The elevator doors opened and I didn't hesitate to walk out knowing Nathan was right behind me.

"I see she isn't going to introduce me properly. I'm Jax you may know me actually. I'm one of Caiden's good friends," the douche said catching up to us.

"That explains it all," Nate said rolling his eyes.

"Jax?" another familiar voice said and I threw my hands up in the air pausing.

"C'mon," I yelled. "Why is everyone bothering me! This is the one day I just wanted a break."

"Someone is in a bitchy mood again," Jax said before turning to look at Nate.

"Is she always like this or is it just that time of the month?" he asked and I clenched my fists.

"Well this isn't amusing. I'm bored," Caiden said and I narrowed my eyes at his blank face. He started to head toward the elevator and Jax chuckled.

"I see you haven't changed at all Caiden." He paused looking over his shoulder and stares for a second his hazel eyes were void of emotion like always. "Shut the fuck up," he said coldly.

"Okay let's go," I said grabbing Nathan's arm and pulling him out the door. About halfway to the car Nathan stopped making me stop with him. Grabbing my hands he leaned his forehead against mine looking me straight in the eyes. "As your best friend I have vowed to myself to make this day absolutely fantastic," he told me and I smiled pulling him into a long hug.

"Thank Nay-Nay," I mumbled closing my eyes and enjoying the embrace. "I really did need this."

"I know." We both pulled back and headed to his car.

"Denny's here we come," I smiled getting in and right away drowning out the car with music.

"Oh my god." I bent over holding my stomach from laughing so hard. "I can't believe you remember that," Nathan smirked. "How could I forget? I mean only you would fall asleep while pranking the principal." I should probably explain, my sophomore year I decided to help the seniors during senior prank day since everyone knew how great I am at pulling pranks. But since it was a late notice and I was really tired I kind of fell asleep while filling the school with cows and chickens. Let's just say some got loose onto the streets and one thing lead to another and in the end I ended up in a holding cell and the next with a suspension. I won't lie and say that wasn't the best part of sophomore year though. That was one of the ways I became known around the school. That prank made my name spread around like wild fire.

It was nice having a peaceful brunch with my best friend. I thought as I took my last bite of pancakes. I may have been a straight A student but that doesn't mean I was exactly perfect. I was the one that always did the pranks in the school. I have always been the adamant yet confident one. Nathan and I slid our coats and scarves back on and made our way out since we already paid.

On our way back to campus an idea popped in my head. "I want to take a visit to my lovely father at work." Nathan's eyebrows furrowed but he nodded deciding not to question it. It didn't long for us to reach the campus again and with my head held high I made my way into the lecture hall. I knocked on his class room door and he paused whatever he was saying making his way to the door. I watched as his eyes widened in surprise.

"Claire?" he questioned and I smiled, hugging him.

"Hey dad!" I said pulling away a few seconds later.

"You flew all the way back here for your Birthday?" my dad asked and I nodded. "Happy Birthday sweetie!"

"Thanks. Sorry I didn't know you would have a class," I apologized. He waved off my apology saying it was fine. His eyes landed on Nathan who was standing awkward behind me.

"I don't appreciate you skipping my class." Nathan gave him a closed mouth guilty smile.

"Sorry sir. Claire needed a ride from the airport," he lied. I let my eyes scan the room and seen Nick sitting next to Caiden who actually showed up for once and Jax. Nick's eyes pierced mine with a guilty look in them.

"Want to get lunch when I'm done?" my father asked making my eyes snap to him.

"I just came from lunch with Nate," I told him and he frowned scratching his beard.

"Well how long are you staying?"

"Not very long," I muttered glancing back at Nick again. My dad followed my sight of vision and scowled.

"Those boys are not ones you should be around. I don't like your relationship with Nick but there is nothing I can do now since you're already nineteen," he said making me give him a small smile.

"Um sir I think you have another class," Nathan said and my father's eyes widened taking in the sight of students piling by the door, "Oh right thank you. If you have time later stop by at the house. We can have a family dinner. I'm sure Jeffery misses you also." I nodded we quickly hugged before he faced his students. Everything seemed normal but I couldn't tell if it was an act of not.

"I want that essay on my desk by next Monday," he said to his class sternly. "That will be all for today." Everyone stood up and started heading toward the door making me stand outside as everyone started to file out.

"I have a feeling you're going to want to have a chat with Nick." I gave Nate a sincere smile and he rolled his eyes walking a few feet away. I turned to see the pack of wolves and right away knew it was time to get serious.

Time to get serious with you.

Serious

Gotta wake up and take out journey. Serious.

No, focus, no legally blonde.

"Waiting for me love?" Jax said interrupting my thoughts and my eyes narrowed at him. Nick clenched his fists while Caiden just stared blankly at me.

"I have better things to do then listen to your lame ass apologies," Caiden stated before starting to walk away.

"Must you always have a stick up your ass," I hissed and he didn't respond as he kept walking.

"Oh Caiden you haven't told your best friend's girl about what happened to you?" Jax yelled and Caiden froze and turned around glaring at him.

"I will bury you alive if you even think about mentioning my business to this slut," he said menacingly. I wouldn't deny the fact that I was curious but I decided to not to question it.

"I'd like to see you try," Jax said with an arrogant smirk. I think I temporarily forgot how scary Caiden could be. It became deadly silent and a sinister look still was placed on his face as he made his way toward where we were standing.

"Hey douchebag and asshole why don't you go handle your shit somewhere else. I don't need to talk to you so you can go fight your problems elsewhere," I snapped before grabbing Nick's hand not even looking at the rest of their group. I pulled him into an empty lecture room and shut the door. Taking a deep breath I hesitated before facing Nick.

Chapter 30

"I'm sorry, Claire," Nick murmured wrapping his arms around my waist. I turned around in his arms so I was facing him.

"I know."

"I shouldn't have walked off with Jax or acted like a total dick, but you have to understand he basically controls us. The only one who he doesn't control is Caiden. I can't be this lovesick puppy when he's around," he murmured and the look in my eyes hardened.

"I never said you had to be some lovesick puppy," I said pushing myself out of his arms. I walked over leaning on the desk in the front of the room. I looked off at all of the empty desks with a hushed voice I continued, "Why does Jax control you?"

"I know you didn't. I just get mushy and I try my hardest to treat you like a princess." Nick hesitated before continuing. "Jax has enough power to shut down all of our company's. No one knows exactly what his parents do but we all know he has power." By this point he was next to me.

"So that means you can't be yourself?" I asked, crossing my arms over my chest. I was way too stressed on my birthday.

"Yes, If I have to be a dick just to make sure I have a future and to make sure my mother will continue to have a happy life then I will," he said seriously. "But Claire, I don't want to lose you along the way. I really like you, hell I may even love you! We've been together for over a month now almost two. And I don't want to throw that all away because of Jax." He stood in front of me now and I could easily see he was telling the truth.

"I don't want this ruined either. We just have to make sure Jax stays out of this," I murmured looking into his striking blue eyes as he looked into mine.

"Does this mean you'll still be my fiancé?" he asked and I nodded. A huge smile appeared on his face and he grabbed me by the waist twirling me around.

"That's great because I have something for you," he said setting me on my feet. He got down on one knee making me roll my eyes at him being dramatic. He pulled out a white ring case thing and opened it.

"Claire Martez, will you please do me the honor and accept this ring and officially be my fiancé," he asked me. "Of course, since neither one of us are ready for marriage and we haven't been together that long. So I mean just officially be my girlfriend I guess," he whispered not even a second after as if someone was videotaping this.

"Although I've been your girlfriend for like two months now I guess I can be your fiancé," I told him and he smiled slipping the ring on my finger. He stood up and kissed my lips and I tried not to laugh in the kiss as I wrapped my arms around his neck.

"Did you really just do a fake proposal?" I asked pulling back a little with a small laugh taking a look at the ring. "Wow this is beautiful," I told him.

"Well we have to prepare for the future," he said with a cheeky smile and I removed my arms from around his neck lightly hitting his chest.

"Happy Birthday, Claire," he said kissing my forehead and I murmured a quick thank you. He put his arm around my shoulder and we both left the room.

"I'm getting married!" he yelled throughout the hall and my eyes widened.

"Nick!"

"We aren't actually getting married Nick is just trying to be funny," I said after Nathan gave me a look that said, 'what the hell.'

"I see Caiden beat the hell out of you," I said smirking as I walked over to where Jax was groaning in pain.

"Fucking bitch," he spat out before coughing up some blood. I was sure his face was going to hurt like hell along with other parts of his body. And I thought getting hit in the eye was bad. He managed to get up slowly but only by holding onto the wall.

"Need help getting back to your room?" I asked him. I may be a bitch sometimes - if not all the time but I knew how to be nice too.

"That would be great," he hissed through clenched teeth.

"If you get any blood on this jacket you're paying for it," I muttered putting his arm over my shoulder. He actually wasn't very heavy.

That's because you are in shape and workout.

Must you always interrupt my thoughts?

Yes.

"After you're done with helping him we are going to finish making this the best day of your life," Nathan told me and I nodded. "You can go with us if you'd like," he told Nick and he nodded. I made my way out of the building only having to stop a few times.

"Why are you helping me?"

"Because as much of a douchebag you are Caiden is still a billion times worse," I said honestly. Now don't get me wrong I feel absolutely no sympathy toward Jax. I'm sure he deserved it since whatever he was about to say made Caiden look murderous.

"Caiden may be an ass but if you lived his life you would understand. I personally think he will never be the same again," Jax said honestly as I opened the door to the lobby.

"What made him like this?" I asked not being able to hold back my curiosity.

"It's not my business to say." I scoffed at this, "You didn't have a problem with almost saying that earlier."

"If it wasn't obvious I like getting under people's skin," he said and I rolled my eyes pressing the elevator button.

"That's why you don't have any real friends," I said and he shrugged.

"I've learned the only thing you need in this world is yourself. Your so called friends wouldn't even hesitate to throw you under the bus if they had the opportunity," he hissed. The elevator door opened and we walked in slowly.

"What floor?"

"The last one." I internally groaned as I realized he was on the same floor as me.

"You probably know about Nick's past so what made you date him?" He question curiously changing the subject.

"That's none of your concern," I said as we made our way out the elevator.

"I'm room 327," he said and I paused for a moment.

"Oh okay," I said between clenched teeth. I was room 326 right as we started heading there Caiden walked out of our dorm room and his eyes turned into ice when he seen me helping Jax.

"Did you tell her anything?" He asked slowly and we both shook our heads.

"Good keep it that way."

"I'm curious, Caiden -"

"Curiosity killed the cat."

"Yes, but satisfaction brought it back," I retorted before continuing, "Why don't you want me to know about your past?"

"You have no reason to know. It has absolutely nothing to do with you," I didn't respond and only continued to help Jax to his room.

"That's it? You aren't going to continue to pry?" His deep voice said after a moment. I turned to look back at him and shook my head.

"You're right, it's not my business," I said walking a few more steps till I was in front of the room 327.

"The sexual tension between you two is real," Jax said unlocking his door.

"I hate him just like he hates me. There is nothing more," I say helping him to a bed.

"My bed is the other one."

"That sucks. You can walk over to it yourself," I said before leaving and shutting the door behind me. I jumped when I saw Caiden next to the door.

"What are you doing?"

"Why were you helping him?" We asked at the same time. Our replies were just glaring at each other. Of course mine wasn't as menacing though. I decided to just ignore him and head back toward the elevator.

"Stop doing that," Caiden said grabbing my arm making me stop.

"Stop doing what?" I asked looking at him.

"Stop ignoring me," he said and I was going to reply before I noticed the stressed look on his face. For some reason with Caiden I could tell exactly what he was feeling just by looking into his eyes. It's the only place his emotions sat.

"Why? Does it bother you?" I retorted.

"Yes," he didn't even bat an eye when responding. "Especially when it's a slut like you."

"Is it ever tiring trying to get everyone to hate you? Or how about just in general pushing everyone away?" I asked him and he released his hold on my arm taking a step back from me. He didn't reply and this time he didn't try to stop me as I walked toward the elevator. Even when I was leaning against the wall inside while the doors were slowly closing he was still standing there just staring at me. Once the doors were officially shut I let out the breath I didn't even realize I was holding.

I just got the last words with Caiden and those words even left him speechless.

Chapter 31

"Happy Halloween!" I shouted throwing my arms around Nick. He staggered back surprised before hugging me back.

"Happy Halloween. I love you," he responded kissing my cheek and pulling back just a little, keeping his arms around my waist.

"As I love you," I responded pecking his lips and smiling excitedly. Halloween was my favorite holiday well besides my birthday of course.

"I see someone adores this holiday. I mean I probably should have taken the hint when you started talking about it weeks ago."

"You know I like this outfit," he says smirking. I was currently wearing a black scarf with a white lace shirt that was tucked into a black skirt with a pair of black MK van like shoes.

"I do look hot in it," I say smirking arrogantly and doing a little twirl causing him to roll his eyes.

"Let's go to breakfast!" I say suddenly and Nick nodded.

"Just the two of us?" He asked and I shook my head.

"I invited Nathan and his friends," I said and he nodded. "They're going to meet us downstairs."

"Where are we going exactly?"

"The Waffle house," I responded.

"How exactly did you get over here without getting in trouble?"

"I said it was an emergency," I shrugged before pouting at Nick.

"Enough questions let's go," I say and he slips on his shoes and grabs his phone and keys before shutting the door. On the way down I look at the pretty details on the ring Nick gave me for my birthday. I thought back to when I first met Nick as myself and how he said he would give me a ring for my nineteenth birthday. When we finally reached down stairs I seen Nathan and smiled widely again.

"Nate!" I say excitingly and I didn't hesitate to run over. I jumped up wrapping my arms around his neck while he automatically responds by grabbing my waist.

"Happy Halloween Claire-bear," he said smiling before dropping me on my feet.

"Claire?" I froze at the sound of Leon's voice. Shit. Turning around I seen Leon, Ashton and Cam standing there while Nick glared fiercely at them.

"What are you doing here?" Nick and Leon asked at the same time. I could see Nick was pointing the question at him while Leon was pointing his question at me. I cringed and gave him a wry smile.

"Leon," I say slowly and Nick's eyes tried to meet mine but I avoided his stare.

"What are you doing here?" He repeated.

"Nathan's my best friend and Nick is my boyfriend," I responded slowly.

"How do you two know each other?" Nick demanded.

"Your girlfriend and I hooked up," he said and I sent him a glare.

"Please tell me he's lying and you didn't actually hook up with this douche."

"If it makes you feel any better you were a billion times better," I try biting my lip. I've never been in this situation so I didn't know what to really say or do. I mean Leon is Nick's arch enemy of course in my defense I didn't know that at the time.

You should have told him when you had the chance.

I thought I got rid of you.

nah.

"It doesn't."

"Hey just like you have a past with who knows how many girls I also have a past with a couple of guys that's it and it was only one night," I said and he sighed.

"All is forgiven," Nick said after a moment. Making my good mood return and my bright smile.

"Now that that's all settled can we go." Ashton patted his stomach and Nick shook his head.

"You little dumb fucks are not coming anywhere with us."

"Nick!"

"You don't know them Claire," Nick hissed through clenched teeth making me roll my eyes. I grabbed Nathan's hand and dragged him outside having confidence that they were all following.

"I miss Mia," I say truthfully. Although she's been gone for a few weeks now I still missed her cheeky and sarcastic personality. But I knew she was having the time of her life in LA. I looked up at the cloudy sky feeling the cold breeze on my skin. Goosebumps crawled up my arms and legs but

I didn't let it bother me since this outfit was basically what I was wearing to the Halloween party tonight.

"Hey Claire?" Nick asked me and I paused for a moment letting the group walk ahead.

"Yeah?"

"Can I invite Caiden to spend the day with us today?" Nick asked me and I raised an eyebrow.

"I get it he's your best friend -"

"It's not just that. Today is a hard day for him and I'd rather him be with us to make sure he doesn't do anything to rash or self harming," Nick said ominously. I noticed how he made sure to leave out all the details about why today is hard for him.

"He self harms?" I asked not hiding my concern.

"Hell no. But he's known to not think straight on Halloween. I doubt you seen him today since you don't stay at our university as often now that you're in at the girls university too," I knew it probably wasn't his business to tell so I only nodded my head. I may have forgotten to mention that I got in but it's only because the school thinks I'm a talented artist, so the only way they let me in was if I joined their fashion program and I did. It may seem like a big, but in reality it wasn't. I was taking only a couple classes there since I was already taking all the classes that go with my major at the boys' university as Jason. I was still sleeping at the boys' university, but some nights I'd go to the girls when I really couldn't put up with Caiden and his "friends."

"Yeah, sure invite him," I said and he smiled pecking me on the lips. "Thanks Claire," he ran back toward the dorm building to go find his friend.

"Hey, where is he going?" Nate asked me.

"He's going to invite Caiden."

"What? Why?"

"Caiden needs a friend today," I say, shrugging before glancing back at the building. It only took a couple of minutes for Nick to bring out his stumbling friend.

"He's drunk!" I hissed to Nick and Caiden snorted.

"I can hear you slut," he said which we both ignored.

"Yeah, he has probably been drinking all night."

"We are going to sober you up," I said helping Nick bring him to the car since he was tripping so much over his own feet.

"We'll meet you there," Nate told me as they all got in his car and I nodded as we got into Nicks. I was stuck sitting in the backseat with the asshole since a certain someone was worried he'd throw up in his car.

"I hate how you smell," Caiden murmured to me over Nick's loud music in his car. I responded by looking down at his head on my lap and giving him a glare.

"You smell like them, like vanilla," my eyebrows furrowed since he was spot on. I was wearing vanilla lace perfume.

"Uh sorry?"

"Yeah, well prostitutes never smell that great so I figured you would smell disgusting," he said and I clenched my fists. "Dammit Nick, are we almost there?" he yelled.

"Almost," he yelled back. You'd think he would turn down his music but nope he just let Falling in Reverse continue to blast in the car. Although since I liked them I didn't mind much.

"Who do I smell like and why do you hate that I smell like them?" I finally asked. The curiosity was starting to eat me alive not knowing who he was talking about.

"I may be drunk but I'm not stupid. I won't tell you that. "He hissed out before squeezing his eyes shut. The car stopped and we all got out slowly.

"Took you guys long enough," Nate teased.

"Oh whatever," I say rolling my eyes.

"Table for seven."

"Right this way."

"Hey babe I have a bed for two if you get off early," Caiden said winking.

"I have a boyfriend." The waitress said putting down our menus. After writing down what we wanted to drink to left. There was an awkward silence as no one said anything.

Chapter 32

"So . . .," I mumbled.

"Claire I never got a chance to tell you how great you were in bed," Leon said and I slammed my menu down on the table.

"Really?" I hissed out and Caiden leaned back in his chair with his arms crossed over his chest.

"Oh this is great. I've been going out on a limb. It's nice to know that you really are a slut/prostitute," he said.

"He's just pissed that he hasn't experienced great sex."

"Stop! This is my girlfriend that you two assholes are talking about! I will be damned if I continue to sit here and listen to you all speak such nonsense," Nick hissed out and Ashton chuckled.

"Says the man whore."

"Nathan." All I had to do was say his name and he understood.

"Right, never again."

"Here's your drinks." The waitress interrupted.

"Thank you," I said and she nodded.

"You're welcome. Have you guys decided what you wanted?" And we all shook our heads." Okay, I'll be back in a few then to take your order."

"Who the fuck invited this dumb ass?" Caiden hissed out glaring at Leon.

"Who invited you?" Leon hissed back.

"If you all don't stop hissing at each other I'm going to put you in a cage. You aren't cats so shut the hell up." A familiar voice said. I looked up and gasped as I seen my best friend.

"Mia!" I jumped up, hugging her.

"Well who else did you think it would be?" She retorted hugging me back. Nathan pulled her in a hug too and after they released their embrace she pulled over a chair and took off her coat and scarf.

"How'd you know we would be here?" Nathan asked and Mia took off her sunglasses smirking.

"It's Halloween. I knew you wouldn't be anywhere else," she said stealing Caiden's menu out of his hands.

"Annoying bitch," he grumbled and Mia raised an eyebrow.

"I'd watch what you say to me," she said seriously before throwing the menu back on the table and snapping her fingers in the air to get the waitress's attention.

"Oh I'm sorry I didn't know there was another guest. What can I get you?" Mia told her whole order - drink included before we all told her our orders. She scribbled it all down and headed to the kitchen.

"Give me some aspirin," Caiden demanded and I raised an eyebrow.

"You aren't getting a please so I'd hurry up before I get anymore irritated with you," I gave him some from my purse before turning to Mia.

"How come you're here?"

"Do you really think I was going to miss spending Halloween with you two? I already missed your birthday," she said before she gasped as if she was suddenly remembering something.

"I couldn't resist. I got you a new skateboard, it's in my car," my eyes widened and I let a smile appear on my face.

"I love you," I said giving her another hug. Nathan decided to pause his conversation with Cam and join ours again.

"What did you get me?"

"Nothing. Your birthday already passed like eight months ago dumb ass."

"Love you too Mia," he chuckled and she blew him a kiss.

"Do you think they have any Whiskey?" Caiden asked Nick.

"It's like ten o'clock in the morning. What is wrong with you?" Mia asked looking at him with a raised eyebrow.

"Does this chick ever shut the fuck up?" He muttered and the whole table chuckled.

"Well this is a pleasant Halloween. We should do this more often," Nick suggested and the whole table yelled No, causing us to get some looks from neighboring tables," I was kidding. No need to yell," he said holding his hands up in surrender.

"So I'm curious. Who are those three attractive guys and why is this dumb ass here?" She asked nodding her head to Leon, Cam and Ashton. Caiden simply rolled his eyes knowing she was talking about him at the end. Nathan's eyes flashed with Jealousy and I gave him a sad smile.

"Well babe, I'm Leon and that's Ashton and Cam," Leon introduced a smirk making its way on his face.

"Call me babe again and you won't live to see tomorrow," If it wasn't obvious Mia and I hate the three B's, babe, bae, and baby. We've both agreed those aren't forms of endearment. Babe is something a player would say while Bae actually means fucking Danish poop and baby just makes you sound like you're four.

"Sorry babe," he said winking and Mia didn't hesitate to stand up and grab his arm pulling him up from his chair.

"I'm not joking," she said through clenched teeth grabbing his shirt. I rolled my eyes, they never learn.

"Sorry for the wait." The waitress aid awkwardly noticing the scene as her and one other person started to put our meals in front of us. Mia let go of Leon's shirt and they both sat back down in their seats. Shooting each other glares every now and then.

"If you guys need anything just let me know," she said with a bright smile before leaving.

"You know you almost remind me of Caiden." Everyone's eyes snapped to Cam who quickly realized he said the wrong thing and winced," Never mind," he mumbled starting to shovel food in his mouth.

"You obviously don't know Caiden," Nathan said while cutting his waffles," he's heartless and wouldn't even think twice about making someone feel like they're nothing."

"I seriously don't think today is a good day to talk abou-" Nick started.

"What the fuck did you just say to me?" Caiden hissed his face was dark and he looked so menacing as he stood up I almost went and hide in a corner. No one made any sounds and stayed perfectly still almost as if we were all frozen to our seats.

"I don't even know why the fuck I'm here. I'm obviously not welcomed," he said his cold hazel eyes looking straight at me as he said the last part.

"Caiden, man-" Nick started but he shook his head.

"It amazes me how one slutty girl can turn you against your best friend, you know the one who've you known for over 20 years." Anyone with eyes could see how deep Caiden cut Nick with his

words," I'll leave you all to enjoy yourselves," he said calmly before making his way toward the door.

"Oh and Happy fucking Halloween," he said before leaving the restaurant. I didn't care that people were now looking at our table since I was now deep in my thoughts. Caiden's face showed he was heartbroken. He may be twenty something years old, but it didn't matter even someone with a heart and soul as cold as ice needed someone to be their fire. At that moment I knew I couldn't be that fire. I may have confidence and I may be stubborn at times, but those small qualities definitely don't mean I can be that flame.

Hate to break it to you but someone like him is fireproof.

Not even Caiden Anderson is fireproof. It's all only a facade. Wiping my mouth with my napkin slowly I stood up.

"Excuse me," I mumbled to the silent table. I exited the restaurant looking for a certain someone. My eyes caught a figure heading toward the park. I watched for a moment as he walked down a path slowly disappearing. Everything about him screamed stay away, but that didn't stop me as I ran down the sidewalk a little before I ran straight across the street just barely missing an oncoming car. I continued to run and didn't stop till my arms were wrapped around his waist.

"What the-" He paused when he saw it was me and scowled. "Why the f-"

"I'm sorry," I mumbled cutting him off. "I may not know what made you like this but I do know whatever happened to you, you didn't deserve it. It's taken me quite a few months but I get it now. You push people away because you don't want to let them in. You don't want them to see that small flame, that small speck of hope. But it's too late."

"Caiden Anderson, I've already seen that speck of hope and I'll tell you right now there is nothing you can do to push me away right now. Especially when I can see how much you are hurting," his arms wrapped around me and squeezed me tightly, but not so much to where it would hurt. But in the next moment something happened that I didn't expect to ever happen. Something so strange and foreign.

One lone tear fell onto my face.

The thing was the tear didn't fall from my eyes. What added to my surprise was there were more after.

Chapter 33

"I should have all of your essays back to you by next week," my dad said looking around the classroom," I hope those of you who didn't do the assignment get it in by our next class."

"You're all dismissed," he said after checking his watch. Standing up from the old creaky desk I looked over at Nick who was already heading my way.

"I have to get to my next class. I'll see you later," Nathan said and I nodded giving him a quick hug. Nick and I exited the classroom not exchanging a word at first.

"I feel like shit," he said once we got out of the building," Caiden hasn't talked to me in a week after the whole Waffle House situation," Nick said running his hand through his dirty blonde hair. My thoughts ran back to Halloween at the park after Caiden and I, released our embrace.

No words were shared between us and to most it probably looked awkward as we just stared at each other in the middle of a path in the park. My thumb lightly wiped the remaining tears on his cheeks making him jump as if the just the touch was foreign. Right as I was about to remove my thumb he grabbed my hand placing my whole palm on his cheek. I didn't hide my surprise and instead spoke on it," What are you doing?" I mumbled my voice soft, almost as if I was afraid to break the silence.

"Tomorrow I'll go back to hating you but right now I'll enjoy the fucking comfort," he said his eyes no longer the coldness and hostility. Instead the beautiful colors turned soft. I felt as if I just watched his facade - his wall drop.

"Why don't we go back and finish eating?" I suggested and almost automatically he became defensive again and removed his hand.

"I'd rather go to hell."

Perfectly good food going to waste. Why do they always take it out on the food?

Ignoring myself conscious I sighed and headed toward the bench. I didn't look having a feeling he would follow.

I picked a flower that was next to bench letting a small smile appear on my face as I looked at the long white petals and the yellow middle. It was innocence, happiness and purity all in one flower.

"Whenever I see a daisy I always think about my childhood," I said aloud twirling the flower with my fingertips. Not once taking my eyes off of it.

"Why?" I could feel his eyes burning the side of my face but I still didn't look up.

"A daisy represents innocence, purity and your childhood. I remember when I was fourteen and had what I thought was my first love. I found a meadow not too far from here and all there was were daisies. Everywhere you turned you would see white and yellow. I would go there after school and just picked the petals. "I grinned at the memory causing a small chuckle to come from Caiden. My eyes snapped to his watching as he rubbed his chin making me notice the small prickles of hair.

"So you were one of those little school girls," He said smirking. It was weird seeing his smirk not look so threatening. "He loves me, he loves me not," he mocked at the end making my jaw drop. I smacked his hard chest huffing.

Definitely a six pack underneath that grey shirt.

"I was not! I just liked picking the petals."

"Yea and I like going dress shopping," he said sarcastically.

"Whatever," I say playfully glaring at him.

"You know, Martez I never thought you could be so deep."

"Well Anderson, it's not like you've actually taken the time to get to know me."

"Hm what's there to know?"

He had a point. My life is about as interesting as a brick.

A very dull brick.

"Not much," I agreed. "Only the little things."

"Okay, baby doll. What's your favorite color?" I raised an eyebrow on the nickname, but didn't comment in it. Oddly enough it didn't bother me much.

"Red. Yours?"

"Black."

"I don't even know why I asked. I could have easily guessed that," I shake my head grinning, "siblings?"

"None. You?"

"One younger brother," I replied scrunching up my nose.

"Do you have a thing going on with that friend of yours?" I raised an eyebrow at the random question.

"Nathan?" He nodded.

"No? We've been friends for years. We're just really close."

"Do you even get tired of going through girls like candy?"

"Never," he responded without hesitation. I narrowed my eyes.

"Why?"

"Girls are about as innocent and evil as any male," he said ominously. He must have known I wasn't going to comment because he asked another question.

"Why do you like Halloween so much?"

"I never told you I liked it," I said with a raise eyebrow.

"Even a blind man could tell you like it."

"In general I just like the season," I said looking at the red and yellow leaves on the ground. "The plants may start to die but as sickening as it is to think this it's beautiful. The death of plants oddly have its beauty," Looking at the daisy in my hand before looking back at the man next to me, "It seems as though only the strongest survive though," I said and something flashed in his eyes.

"Why do you hate Halloween?" I knew it was a touchy subject, but I couldn't help it. His eyes noticeably darkened as he let out a bitter laugh, "It's such a long story that may even just turn your heart into stone just by hearing it," my curiosity heightened.

"How so?"

"Baby doll my life story isn't roses and daisies. It dark, haunting, callous," his dark smirk returned, "Did I mention merciless?" I bit my lip removing my eyes from his face and looked up at the sky.

"I don't know if I want to know," I said honestly, "I may be curious but I don't know if I'm exactly ready to hear about it yet."

"Curiosity killed the cat but this time there isn't anything satisfactory to bring it back."

"Claire?" Nick interrupted my thoughts. "You've been silent for a while," I frowned realizing we were now sitting on the grass not that far from our dorm building. I was so lost in my thoughts I didn't even realize we walked over here.

"I think Caiden is just being cranky. He's probably afraid of losing his best friend," I say rolling my eyes and he put the palm of his hand on my cheek.

"Dammit, Claire." I raised an eyebrow giving him an amused smile, "how is it possible that you're so beautiful?" I couldn't help but bursting out laughing.

"So I look attractive dressed as a guy? Well then I should really change my wardrobe. Maybe that's why a girl tried asking me out the other day when I was with Eddie!" I said and it was his turn to roll his eyes before he shook his head.

"You know what I mean," he said removing the cupping my checking and flicking my nose causing me to scrunch up my nose a little.

"Well you are very handsome," I said smiling and he smirked.

"Please tell me something I don't know," he said in a posh voice before grabbing my hands and intertwining them with his. He brought them to his lips and placed a light kiss on them. He suddenly smirked moving his body over mine so we were laying on the grass with him on top. Our hands were by our heads still intertwined. He lightly kissed my lips before pulling back smiling.

"Nick, we're in public," I mumbled after he placed another light kiss on my lips.

"No one's around," he said before placing butterfly kisses all over my face.

"Nick," I giggled trying to move my face to get him to stop.

"Well this is an interesting sight." We both froze at the very familiar voice. Shit.

Chapter 34

From Caiden's Point of View

I sat in the corner rocking back and forth my whole body shaking. I didn't dare making a sound to afraid that they would find me. I've been here for two years now and knew this was probably a stupid thing to do. But I couldn't think of a better plan since I was only eight. I knew they'd find me, they always do.

Click.

The sound of the basement door unlocking made my head snap up to the part of the stairs I could see.

Creak, creak.

My body only started to shake more as I tried to hold back my sobs.

"Oh Caiden!" She yells in a sickly-sweet voice throughout the basement as she stepped on the cold concrete floor," I don't appreciate my toys hiding," she hissed out angrily as she walked slowly around the basement her heels clicking against the floor with each step she took," sweetie I told you I'd take care of you. When have I ever broken a promise?" Her voice turned from angry to sweet once again and I could only imagine her sickly smile. I almost scoffed out loud as I looked at my bruises and scars on my arms and legs.

"Boo." A whispered said near my ear making me jump up. I ignored the pain it caused me and looked over at the woman," I found you," she whispered her eyes were as cold as ice as she looked at me.

I sat up gasping for breath as I looked around the empty dorm room. I was glad Jason wasn't here to witness this. I was tangled in my bed sheets and I was sweating and gasping for breath trying to calm myself down.

"It was only a dream," I muttered to myself before letting out a dark chuckle. Who was I kidding? That was no dream and it definitely wasn't any nightmare. No, it was darker than any nightmare. It was a memory. After untangling myself from my sheets I grabbed the bottle of whiskey from under my bed and took a swig from the bottle. Checking the time I notice it read 2:54.

I didn't even sleep for an hour, I thought wryly. I rubbed the stubble on my chin before sitting against the headboard with the bottle in my hand. I needed to be numb again. I couldn't get lost in my thoughts. My memories seemed to control my thoughts every second of every day. It doesn't matter that it's been seven years. Today was the day when I was taken seventeen years ago. I seem to still relive those ten fucking years of captivity every single night.

After the whole scene at breakfast I was now in a situation I never thought I'd be in. Claire's thumb lightly wiped the remaining tears on my face making me making jump. I started at her, my eyebrows furrowed. The gentle touch was foreign. It reminded me when I was younger and my mom would wipe my tears. I was surprised at the good memory that just flashed in my mind. I haven't had one good memory in I don't know how long.

I grabbed Claire's hand placing her whole palm on my cheek. Her eyes widened at the gesture and didn't hesitate to speak on my actions." What are you doing?" She mumbled her voice was so soft I almost didn't hear her.

"Tomorrow I'll go back to hating you but right now I'll enjoy the fucking comfort," I told her letting myself relax and breathe.

"Why don't we go back and finish eating?" She suggested and I immediately released her hand and tried to stop the urge to glare at her.

"I'd rather go to hell."

I watched carefully never once taking my eyes off of her petite body. She picked a flower that was next to the bench and I watched as she flashed a beaming smile.

"Whenever I see a daisy I always think about my childhood," she said aloud twirling the flower with her fingertips.

"Why?" I mumbled. I decided to not let her know how much I hate my childhood.

"A daisy represents innocence, purity and your childhood. I remember when I was fourteen and had what I thought was my first love. I found a meadow not too far from here and all there was were daisies. Everywhere you turned you would see white and yellow. I would go there after school and just pick the petals. "A small chuckle escaped my lips. I rubbed my chin as I pictured a small girl on a meadow picking flowers and taking off the petals.

"So you were one of those little school girls," I said smirking before mocking her, "He loves me, he loves me not," I watched as her jaw dropped and held back another chuckle when she smacked my chest.

"I was not! I just liked picking the petals."

"Yea and I like going dress shopping," I said sarcastically before rolling my eyes.

"Whatever," she says playfully glaring at me.

"You know, Martez I never thought you could be so deep," her last name was foreign on my lips.

"Well Anderson, it's not like you've actually taken the time to get to know me."

"Hmm what's there to know?"

"Not much," She agreed. "Only the little things."

"Okay, baby doll. What's your favorite color?" She raised an eyebrow at the nickname, but seemed to side against commenting on it.

"Red. Yours?"

"Black."

"I don't even know why I asked. I could have easily guessed that," she shook her head while grinning, "siblings?"

"None. You?"

"One younger brother," she replied scrunching up my nose. I couldn't help but notice that she looked cute while doing that.

"Do you have a thing going on with that friend of yours?" The question came out of my lips without much of a thought about it. Great now the slut is going to think I like her.

"Nathan?" I responded by nodding my head.

"No? We've been friends for years. We're just really close."

"Do you even get tired of going through girls like candy?"

"Never," I responded without hesitation. She narrowed her eyes but my answer still didn't change. Woman will forever and always be nothing in my mind.

"Why?"

"Woman are about as innocent and evil as any male," I said before asking another question so she wouldn't question me about my answer

"Why do you like Halloween so much?"

"I never told you I liked it," she said, raising her eyebrow.

"Even a blind man could tell you like it."

"In general, I just like the season," she replied, not looking at me. "The plants may start to die, but as sickening as it is to think this it's beautiful. The death of plants oddly have its beauty," Looking at the small flower in her hand she continued, "It seems as though only the strongest survive though."

But do they really? I thought bitterly. I survived ten years of torture yet look at me. I'm almost like the walking dead.

"Why do you hate Halloween?" My eyes darkened as I let out a bitter laugh, "It's such a long story that may even just turn your heart into stone just by hearing it."

"How so?"

"Baby doll my life story isn't roses and daisies. It dark, haunting, callous," my dark smirk returned, "Did I mention merciless?" She bit her lip removing her eyes from my face and instead focused them up on the sky.

"I don't know if I want to know," she said. Yet her eyes still sparkled with a bit of curiosity. "I may be curious but I don't know if I'm exactly ready to hear about it yet."

"Curiosity killed the cat but this time there isn't anything satisfactory to bring it back," I said as my wall came up just like that. I need to feel numb again. Too many thoughts and feelings were filling in my head again, "I have to go," I said as I stood up, "she seemed to notice my sudden change in emotion and nodded also standing up."

"It was nice seeing a side others don't see," she said giving me a soft smile. "Don't be mad at Nick for being happy. Believe me you will find someone out there that will make you happy too," she said before heading back to the way we came. The thing was she didn't even know how wrong she was.

"See you around, baby doll," I yelled out before she disappeared and she turned around saluting me. "You know it asshole," she winked with a smirk placed on her face before quickly crossing the road. I smiled wryly when I once again embraced the feeling of being alone again. I made my way down the sidewalk a few minutes later and took the two-mile walk. When I arrived, I didn't hesitate to pay for a whole bottle of whiskey before leaving. I was irritated that I had to pay a little extra but in the end, I let it slide.

Chapter 35

I slid down the wall in the alley and opened the bottle taking a long swig. I loved the burning feeling I felt when it went down my throat. After a few longer sips I felt numb again and smirked. Happy Halloween to me. This lovely day seventeen years ago I was six years old. I was a defenseless six-year-old trying to enjoy his Halloween. But it seems that doesn't matter to some sick, disgusting people. I mean that's the only explanation I've been able to come up with. The liquid slid down my throat again and I enjoyed and embraced the feeling it brought me.

It seems like I will never get away from the memories, I thought as a familiar scene flashed through my head.

"Caiden, darling, I would like you to meet my lovely baby sister, Samantha." The woman said to my thirteen-year-old self. I looked up at the blonde woman who only seemed to be about ten years older than me. Still she was obviously younger than my captor. Maybe I had a chance.

"Lisa, who is this?" The blonde woman Samantha demanded. Lisa flicked her curly brunette hair over her shoulder and laughed obnoxiously. Over the past seven years I've come to despise that laugh.

"This is Caiden. I adopted him six years ago. You don't remember? I thought mother passed on the message," she said and I snorted. Lisa's eyes pierced mine glaring. Her ice blue eyes dared me to say otherwise. She's knows I've grown a bit of a backbone now. I was no longer that defenseless six year old. I was smarter and faster and stronger.

Being locked in a basement for seven years does that to someone, I thought wryly.

"You hate kids," Samantha said narrowing her eyes.

"Sam please. You know I love the little things," she said with a fake ass smile on her face.

"You took this little boy, didn't you?" She hissed her eyes looking over at me.

"Honey? Did you get adopted by this woman?" Samantha asked me and Lisa looked at me daring me to tell her sister the truth.

"No, I was kidnapped on Halloween by this woman. The only relationship I have with her is she's my captor," I spit out my own hazel eyes turning into ice. In that moment spitting out those words were what changed me. I was no longer an innocent boy. I may have the bruises and scars on my body, but those were the only signs that would make people think I was weak.

"Let's go. I'm gonna get you back home to your family," she said trying to usher me over to her.

"No!" Lisa yelled, "Caiden is my son and you will not take him away from me. "I let out a bitter laugh and her eyes snapped to mine and her hand connected with my cheek so hard making it snap to the side. I glared at the brunette holding back the urge to hit her back.

"Leave him alone! He is not yours! He has a family at home that probably misses him! Look you made him bleed," Samantha yelled and I caught my reflection in a mirror on the wall across the room. My cheek had a scratch on it that was bleeding most likely from her nails and there was also a red hand print.

"I swear on mother's grave if you don't leave this house this insistent I will bury you next to her tonight and you will not tell anyone of my little Caiden," Lisa hissed her eyes dark and callous. I looked at the blonde woman praying she wouldn't listen to her. Though her sister must have known she wasn't kidding and only nodded heading toward the door not sparing a glance at me.

"I will make sure this boy becomes free to his family again. One way or another and you my dear sister will be put behind bars. I mean that is where you belong after all," she hissed before slamming the door. The hope that filled my heart from those two sentences diminished over the next three years as I never seen the blonde woman again until I was already free.

No, she wasn't the one who freed me. I freed myself.

Three years later

I looked down at the bloody face of the brunette woman who was on the brink of death. My body was shaking with anger as I stared at her disoriented face. My fists and arms were covered in blood. As you could guess it wasn't mine. Stepping around the bloody and bruised body I made my way toward the door. For the first time in ten years I felt the warm breeze, I felt the fresh air. I took a step outside relishing the feeling of warmth and heat as the sun shined brightly. This feeling was completely foreign to me. The only thing was I wasn't the same person I was when I entered this house. I was now a cold, heartless sixteen-year-old that just murdered a woman with his bare hands.

Chapter 36

Do you ever wonder why life has to smack you on the side of the head right when something is finally going right in your life? I mean it's like the world just doesn't want you to be happy. But besides that I guess I should get back to what was currently going on...

"Well this is an interesting sight." We both froze at the very familiar voice. Shit.

"Jax uh hey man," Nick said getting off me and standing up awkwardly rubbing the back of his neck. I sat up but didn't bother standing up. What? I'm lazy. Kill me if it's a crime.

"I would think you were just using Claire as a cover story to hide that you're gay, but based on the giggle and girls voice I heard my guess is that he is actually a she."

"I'm curious though why would a girl come to an all-boys school. Maybe Caiden is right. It seems as though you're a whore. Hm I wonder who all knows about this," Jax said tapping his chin with his index finger, before a smirk crawled its way up on his face.

"Uh, what the hell are you talking about?" I asked in my guy voice keeping the act up.

"Drop the act Claire," he said rolling his eyes, "Now I wonder how much trouble you both can get in. I mean Nick you really thought it was a good idea to keep this a secret? Girlfriend or not you can get kicked out of here for this," he said making a tsk noise.

"What do you want?" Nick said glaring at him before putting out a hand pulling me up.

"I won't tell your dirty little secret if you two break up with each other," he said and I didn't bother to suppress my laugh.

"Please explain this to me. Why does the world have a problem with me being with Nick?"

"You made the player into a one woman type of man. It isn't normal," Jax said, but I knew he was lying based on the evil glint in his eyes.

"That's a shitty reason," Nick hissed.

"I don't care if I get in trouble I honestly don't need this school. I'm staying with Nick," I said stubbornly. My dad flashed through my head and I bit my lip not knowing what to do about that situation.

"Well let's go talk to the dean. I'm sure Caiden's dad would love to properly meet you," my mind went blank not knowing what to say. Caiden's dad?

"What do you mean Caiden's dad?" I asked slowly.

"Caiden's dad is the dean here and his mom is the headmistress and the school next store," I felt completely and utterly stupid. How could I not notice the similarities? Although I've never talked to the dean here I should have realized the similarities with eye and hair color. Oh and their lovely personalities.

"Jax must you do this? I want to know the real reason," Nick said wrapping his arm around my waist and pulling me closer, "I don't care for your shitty excuse."

"Can you at least hear me out first before you blackmail me?" I pleaded, "In all fairness I don't really give a shit," he said shrugging. That mother fuc-

"But I'm curious and I have time," Jax said taking a seat on the grass and leaning back. He looked up at the blue sky closing his eyes. "I'm waiting," he said raising his eyebrow. I let out a sigh quickly explaining the whole reason why I was here. It only took about 10 minutes after answering all of his questions. He decided to try to end the conversation with,

"You're stupid as fuck."

"Excuse me?"

"You're trying to find out if you're dad's cheating, I get it, but holding off on your career for this is just plain stupid," my eyes narrowed at him as he stood up wiping off his black jeans.

"I'm not holding off on my career. I'm taking a business management class," I said defensively.

"You know what why don't we just hold off on telling the parents let's tell the son first," Jax said suddenly. "Caiden." He looked up and slowly made his way toward us with a blank face.

"What?"

"I have some information that you may just find interesting," he started, putting his hand on Caiden's shoulder which was quickly shrugged off.

"Claire just broke up with Nick and he really needs a best friend right now. "The words were forced out of my mouth bitterly. I couldn't stand to look at Nick's face. I knew if I looked at his face I would probably burst out into tears and I'm usually not one to cry. Right after that I walked away and headed toward the dorms. It seemed that was my only option. I was almost positive that if Caiden found out he would tell his parents or he would also blackmail me. Why does being a boy/girl suck so much? Wait that came out wrong . . .

"Jason!" Eddie yelled out making me pause. I almost wanted to just scream right then. Have you ever just wanted to lay in your bed and sleep away all the pain you feel in your heart? That's how I felt right now.

"Hey Eddie. I haven't seen you in a while. What's up?" I asked plastering a fake smile on my face.

"Nothing much. Do you want to maybe get some lunch?" He asked me and an apologetic, sad smile appeared on my face.

"I'm not feeling that great Eddie. Rain check?" I asked and he nodded not looking effected at all.

"Yea, sure. Feel better!" He said smiling before waving and walking away. I still couldn't believe that everyone is so harsh to him. Seriously he is the sweetest.

"All by myself," I sang loudly with an agonizing voice. I was all by myself and so I was watching one of Brendon Urie's vine on repeat. Okay we all already know I have issues. I mean for heaven's sake I talk to myself.

"Shut the hell up," Someone yelled knocking on my door before I heard their footsteps heading away from my door. "How about next time you don't walk past my door!" I yell back throwing my popcorn toward the door. If it wasn't obvious I was in a bad mood. I immediately closed my mouth when I heard two new voices outside the door.

"Yea man you know what they say hoes before bros," Nick replied patting Caiden on the back and Caiden just stared blankly at him as they walked in.

"You mean bros before hoes?" Caiden questioned and Nick frowned.

"What?" He responded confused.

"The saying is, bros before hoes," Caiden said shaking his head at him and shutting the door.

"Really?" Nick asked and Caiden nodded his head.

"Oh well then you know what they say man bros before hoes," Nick said and Caiden just shook his head.

"You're an idiot," Nick's eyes landed on my figure laying on my bed and stared almost longingly at me. I was sure I was staring at him almost the same exact way.

"What the fuck are you doing here and why is there popcorn everywhere?" Caiden hissed glaring at me.

"This is my dorm too," I retorted rolling my eyes focusing my eyes now on the TV where The Phantom of The Opera was playing.

"You're so fucking girly and I thought you finally moved out," he said shutting off the TV at the part where Christine started to sing Think Of Me.

"I was watching that!" I hissed throwing a pillow at him. Seeing that part of Caiden made my fear of him completely go away.

"Who the fuck do you think you are? You are a peasant in my eyes. Stop acting like you're higher than me," Caiden hissed, picking up my petite body by the collar of my shirt. Okay I lied I'm scared shitless.

"Caiden, just leave him alone," Nick muttered grabbing a Dr. Pepper out of Caiden's mini fridge. Caiden threw me back on my bed before grabbing a change of clothes and heading toward the bathroom. The second the door shut Nick was talking to me.

"So are we seriously going to let Jax get in between us?" Nick asked keeping his distance and talking in a hushed voice.

"What choice do we have?! Nick, I was here to find out about my dad. No, was I still am here to find out about him. Maybe after that is all figured out we can try again without anyone getting between us," I say softly walking over to him and grabbing his hand.

"If that's what you want then fine," he says pulling his hand out of mine.

"I just have to do one more thing," he put his hand on the back of my neck and pulled me in for a kiss. It only lasted a few seconds before we both pulled away.

"I'll definitely miss that," I murmured, sitting back down on my bed. Caiden exited the bathroom dressed in a nice buttoned up dark blue shirt and black jeans.

"You ready?" Caiden asked grabbing his car keys from his table by his bed.

"Yea, let's go."

"Where are you going?" I blurted out without thinking.

"Out," Caiden hissed at the same time Nick responded with, "Drinking."

"Oh have fun with that," I murmured turning the TV back on. As the door shut behind them I knew for a fact in that moment I was officially single again.

"Open this door this instant Martez." A familiar voice hissed about a half an hour later making my heart jump a little. Walking over to the door, being careful to not step on popcorn.

Click.

I unlocked the door and opened it slowly to see Nathan there, "Nate?"

"What did I just over hear in the elevator?" He demanded shutting the door behind him with his foot.

"It's rude to eavesdrop," I muttered grabbing a red Gatorade from my own fridge.

"Claire," he said in a warning tone and I bit my lip finally making eye contact with him.

"Okay Nick and I broke up. Now stop saying my name so loud. Someone may overhear you," I responded plopping back down on my bed and pausing my movie.

I'm sorry Phantom you always seem to get ignored.

You're talking to a TV. You really are a freak.

Don't hate. I pretended to wipe off fake dust off my shoulders making Nathan role his eyes as he sat down on the end of my bed.

"How are you dealing with it?" He asked me gently.

"It's only been a couple of hours and I haven't broken down crying. So I'm still staying not strong," I say holding up a fisted hand, Success.

"You aren't one to cry though. Especially over a breakup," he had a point there.

"I mean do you see yourself having a future with him?" I kept quiet for a moment, thinking about it. The whole time we've been together I never once thought about the future, I always thought about the present when we were together. It's been a couple of months now and everything been perfect I guess I could have had a perfect life with him in the future.

But you don't want a perfect life.

In a way that was true. My life isn't perfect. I'm dressed as a guy in a male university. I wouldn't call that a normal or perfect life. But in reality what is the definition of normal? How would I know if I was fitting the normal category anyways?

"No, I don't think I could see a future with him, yet, I still had plenty of time to figure that out," I told him licking my dry lips. "Hey Nathan I have a question for you," I say suddenly as I lay my head in his lap.

"Ask away."

"What is the definition of normal?"

"Hm, I guess it means to fit into society standard and expectations or to something that's just expected of you," Nathan said a minute later and I nodded.

"I'm not normal," I say looking up at him and he looked down at me and ended up bursting out in laughter.

"What?" I asked with a raised eyebrow.

“It's strange to see you as a brunette with your head down in my lap. And Claire, please tell me something I don't know. I've known you were normal since the day we met,” making me smile up at him. Not fitting into society's expectations seemed like a perfect life for me.

Chapter 37

"It's been a while man," Kyle said smirking as we all sat at the lunch table.

"What?" Tom asks raising an eyebrow as he took a bite out of his taco.

"Nick got laid last night."

"Isn't he with Claire?" Max asked and Kyle shook his head.

"Nah they broke up like a month ago," Kyle said causing me to stab my burrito.

"Hey man you know you're supposed to use your hands to eat that." Tom said laughing and I gave him a wry smile taking my fork out. Yes, it's been close to a month and Nick is taking advantage of being back on the market. I'm sure Caiden's glad to have his wingman back. They're only with different skanks every night. Before you ask no, I'm not jealous. I've been with... absolutely no one since. But I mean who's counting. Glancing at my dad who was sitting in the cafeteria with the blonde lady. It has turned into a daily thing. He was just talking and looking at her like she was the only one in the room.

"You all sound like a bunch of little girls gossiping," I muttered when I tuned in the conversation to hear them still talking about Nick. Standing up and leaving my tray, I exited the cafeteria doors only to bump into a hard chest, instead of their arms attaching to me they pushed me to the floor. "Thanks, I seriously appreciate that," I muttered rubbing my butt.

"Oh it's you," Caiden said looking down at me. I stood up rubbing my butt and glaring at him. I couldn't help but notice his hazel eyes weren't as threatening as they usually were toward me.

"Hey you busy?" He asked me suddenly making my eyes widen a little.

"No, why?" He didn't respond and only attached his hand to my wrist and started to pull me out of the dining hall. I was dragged down the hall and Caiden tried to open a closed door when we got into the lecture hall. It wouldn't open making him let out an irritated sigh. Taking a key out of his back pocket he stuck it into the door roughly.

Click.

He pushed it open taking the key out of the handle and pulling me in the dark room before letting go of my wrist. "Are you like trying to kidnap me?" Ignoring me once again he shut the door and flicked the light switch on. I took a seat on top of a desk and I swung my legs back and forth, whistling. I looking around at the unfamiliar classroom.

"Are you done?" he asked, making me look back at him. My whistle died completely when I saw him leaning against the desk with crossed arms showing his muscles. I could definitely see him as a hot professor one day.

"Yeah, now why am I here?" I asked, looking bored.

"You wanna know something?" he asked me, lighting a cigarette. Before I could say anything he continued. "I was suspicious when you first got here. You were okay with rooming with me and that was a first. After meeting your friend Claire I was almost positive that you two were the same person," he said blowing smoke out of his lips and letting out a chuckle.

"I even tried calling you Claire once but you didn't respond." When did that happen? "I must be crazy thinking you were a girl. But I figured it out. You definitely aren't Claire but I'm sure you wished you were." I raised an eyebrow at this. He doesn't seem to realize he's rambling but based on his slightly red eyes I could see he has been doing drugs or drinking.

"Where are you going with this?" I asked not even slightly amused. I was glad that he wasn't on to me but I had an uneasy feeling about this situation.

"You want to be a girl." I choked on my own spit for a good five minutes, dying of laughter.

"I'm perfectly fine with being a male," I said, amused.

"I want to hang out tomorrow. Just you, me and Claire. I feel since we are roommates and you're a dumb ass that can't take a hint when you're not wanted, we should try to be friends," "This caused me to freeze. What? I can't be Claire and Jason at the same time. And he wants to be friends? Who is this guy and what has he done with Caiden?"

"Uh okay."

"You're an idiot. Why would you agree to this?"

"Because I have to make sure he doesn't find out that Jason is actually Claire."

"Great. Tomorrow we can all go out for a beer at eight."

"Claire and I, aren't twenty one," I muttered looking down at the floor.

"I'll get us some fake IDs," he said, shrugging that off as he finishes off his cigarette and puts it out with his black boots.

"Can't wait till then." After that the conversation ended. Caiden left the room without another word. I didn't hesitate to take out my phone and dial Mia's number.

"Pick up, c'mon," I muttered tapping my foot impatiently.

"Hello?"

"Please tell me you're still home?"

"Yea, I told you I'm on break till January. I'm at my mom's."

"I could kiss you right now," I said, silently cheering.

"Why?" she asked slowly.

"Because you are going to talk and explain everything to your one friend Bethany and she is going to be Jason tomorrow," I said as I exited the classroom. I knew Mia couldn't do it because Jason doesn't have naturally tanned skin and she is taller than me. Her friend Bethany on the other hand could do the job perfectly especially because she was always the lead role in theatre when we were in high school.

"I can talk to her. She drove home with me," Mia told me making me full outbreak dance right in the middle of the hallway. Okay maybe I'm lying just a bit, but I did do the sprinkler.

Mia and Bethany went to the same college so since they came home together on Thanksgiving break, I figured they would do the same for Winter break.

"Thanks Mia! I appreciate it. I'll text you the details later along with an explanation," I told her.

"Bitch you didn't really have a choice in the matter. You were telling me sometime today or else I would hunt you down," she said making me smile.

"Of course. I'll talk to you later slut."

"Mkay, see ya whore." Hanging up my phone I slid it in my jean pockets. It seemed that tomorrow wouldn't be so bad after all. I just had to remember not to get drunk.

Chapter 38

"Okay, I'm sorry I'm a total a weirdo," I told Bethany as we sat in the dorm room waiting for Caiden to get out of the shower.

"It's cool, Mia explained it all to me."

"I feel awful having you do this, we barely even talk."

"For the billionth time Claire. It's all good. It will only be for a couple of hours anyways," she responded, rolling her eyes. The bathroom door opened making us stop talking. Looking over Bethany and I, both gasped.

"Put some clothes on!" I hissed looking away.

"You act like you're a virgin," Caiden responded rolling his eyes. "I'm sure since you're a slut you've seen plenty."

"For the last time, I'm not a slut."

"So you say," he smirked. About a minute later I look over to see him standing there in only a pair of briefs.

"There is a thing called pants you know," I said with a raised eyebrow.

"You know, Claire I'm honestly surprised you showed up with me being Nick's best friend and all."

"I had a good reason for breaking up with Nick," I defended, my eyes piercing his. "You know nothing."

"We should get going?" Beth interrupted. Her guy voice sounded exactly like mine, making me want to just hug her.

"Jason's right, get ready," I told Caiden and he rolled his hazel eyes grabbing a pair of black jeans and slipped them on, his black briefs showing a little at the top. I tried to hide the fact that I was checking him out. I could have done it plenty of times before, but I was supposed to be a guy and I couldn't risk it.

"You have a tattoo?" I asked noticing the black ink peeking out of the waistline of his jeans when he turned around to get out a shirt.

"Yeah, it's nothing special," he said, putting on a dark red shirt making me shake my head.

"Is that all you own? Plain t- shirts. You have to have something else in there," I said walking to his dresser. Opening the drawer he was just in I lifted up the plain shirts and sifted through the whole drawer.

"He only owns plain shirts. This guy is so dull it's almost boring," I told Beth or Jason.

"I'm going to drag you on a shopping spree you need like a flannel or making a nice button up shirt and a sweater over it," I said, looking at him intently. He slammed his drawer closed and sat on the bed slipping on his socks and black boots.

"What are you a fashion major?" he asked me.

"Kind of."

"What do you mean kind of?" he questioned and I shrugged.

"I was a business major, but something about that fashion class at the school next store is making me rethink my life decisions." I bit my lip as I waited for a response but he only nodded, not knowing exactly what to say.

"Okay, I'm ready," he said picking up his leather jacket off his bed.

"Finally, the sexual tension in the air is going to suffocate me," Bethany said standing up making my eyes go wide. Caiden sent a menacing glare toward 'Jason' one which I was used to, but I could see the fear flash in her eyes which were similar to my blue ones.

"There isn't any tension," I said slipping on my black heels again.

"I see you want to get laid tonight," Caiden said his eyes skimming over my body. I was wearing a black short dress that went to about mid-thigh.

I personally felt good about myself tonight. I know I said I hated dresses, but sometimes you try one nice one on and next thing you know you're in love.

Or it's just one of those days you actually feel like trying.

True.

"I wasn't planning on it," I said honestly. I just wanted to have a good night dancing and drinking. I wasn't going to get drunk I was just going to get a little buzzed. No harm would be done. Looking out in the hall I quickly rushed to the elevator pressing the button. Although, I've been in here as myself before I didn't want to risk getting caught.

"You don't have to sneak around when you're with me. No one will say anything." I didn't question it and only nodded.

"So I see the real reason why you wanted me here," Bethany said to Caiden. "You don't actually want to be friends. You just wanted an excuse to see Claire."

"Guilty as charged," Caiden said honestly making my eyes widen. Ding. The elevator opened and we all walked in, I pressed the lobby button and leaned back against the wall.

"Claire is free from the clutch of my good friend. Which means she is available and is back on the market."

"I'm not sleeping with you," I told him as we all headed out the elevator and out the building. The snow on the ground made me regret wearing heels. I grabbed onto Bethany shoulder to make sure I didn't slip,

"I figured as much." He shrugged opening his car door and sliding in, I slid in the passenger seat, while Bethany slid in the back. As soon as the car started, panic! At the Disco bared through the speakers making mentally cheer.

"I didn't know you liked them," I said, looking at him and he shrugged. "There's a lot you don't know about me."

"Shit I have to go. I have a family emergency. Sorry Claire I'll text you later and I'll just see you probably tonight whenever you get back to the dorm Caiden," she said getting out of the car.

Taking out my phone I texted her, 'You played your role well. I'm almost positive he has no idea that I'm actually Jason. You can just give those clothes to Mia. I seriously appreciate you doing this for me.'

"So what club are we going to?" I asked him once we pulled out of the parking lot.

"It's called \$even," he said smirking as he glanced at me. "You've probably never been to this club unless you were working. Usually sluts don't go there only the prostitutes do," I watched as all the different stores and restaurants start to disappear and it soon just becomes trees.

"Great," I said sarcastically. I had a feeling I should have worn a dress that covered every inch of my body. We arrived about fifteen minutes later and I slowly got out of the car along with Caiden. The ice made me grab onto his arm automatically as we waited in line.

"Let's see that fake ID," I said, holding out my hand and he shook his head.

"I don't have it." So much for having fun tonight. "I can't get in then. Unless this club doesn't sell alcohol."

"Don't worry about it," he said making me sigh. We made it to the front of the line in minutes and the guy didn't even question us he only made quick eye contact with Caiden before letting us in. The smell of beer, sweat and weed filled my nose making me cringe a little.

"What do you wanna start off with?" he asked me as we headed to the bar. "Sangria," he raised an eyebrow at my choice before telling the bartender my order along with his.

I looked around at the multicolored lights and the bodies grinding on each other. The DJ was blasting an unfamiliar fast beat song making me unconsciously sway a little. Caiden handed me my drink and I immediately thanked him.

Chapter 39

"You could have just done this with Nick you know," I said taking a seat on a stool.

"Yea, I could've but I didn't."

"How is he?" I'd only seen him when we had a class together and we'd never talked to each other.

"I didn't come here to talk with you about your ex-boyfriend," Caiden said dryly before drowning a shot. A new song came on and I smiled widely when I heard what it was, "Bang Bang" by Nicki Minaj, Ariana Grande and Jessie J. Grabbing Caiden's hand I dragged him out to where everyone was dancing.

"My goal was to drink a bit then get laid- not dance," he said not moving making me roll my eyes. I knew how to get him dance. "Fine you can go sit then," he looked at me with narrowed eyes. Turning around I let my eyes scan the room looking for someone cute to dance with. A guy that looked to be in his fifties smile at me making me almost gag. I saw a pretty hot guy leaning against a wall texting and my hot red lips curved up into a smirk. Walking over to him confidently with a little sway in my hips, the guy looked up, noticing my figure heading his way.

"Hey will you dance for me? It's kind of my first time here and my friend won't dance with me. I don't want to look like a loser," I said to him innocently and he nodded putting his phone in his pocket. I smiled smugly looking over my shoulder at Caiden who was now sitting at the bar with narrowed eyes. Pulling the guy over to the middle our bodies move together easily.

"Hey what's your name?" I yelled in his ear so he could hear me over the loud music.

"Taylor Jones. How about you?"

"Claire Martez," I said smiling at him looking at his dirty blonde hair that covered most of his green eyes.

"Is that your boyfriend over there?" he asked me, nodding over to Caiden who was currently giving off one of his oh so famous death glares.

"Nah just a friend," I said and he nodded.

"Wanna give him a little show?"

"Why not." I smirked. "Follow my lead," he told me with an evil glint in his eyes. He spun me around so my back was touching his chest. His hands moved down my body and I easily took the hint he wanted me to grind against him. Doing exactly that I glanced at Caiden to see him heading over here with clenched fists.

"I didn't recognize you at first," Caiden said, making us stop dancing and face him. Was he talking to me?

"Taylor Jones. It's been awhile. How's Jesse? Is he still sending you letters from prison?" Caiden asked, I noticed he was tense and his eyes would scan the room every few minutes. I automatically took a step away from the Taylor when I heard the mention of prison.

"Caiden Anderson, you're right, it has definitely been a while. Jesse's fine he only just arrived there not too long ago. Ask him yourself in nine years. "I intently listen to the conversation. I had no idea what this whole conversation was about and who this Jesse guy is.

"How do you two know each other?" I asked once we were all sitting down at a table in the corner of the club.

"We're old acquaintances," Caiden said his words came out almost menacingly.

"I take as you're still dealing then?"

"No, actually we are working on something for Jesse. He has a few things planned for after prison and he can only succeed with our help." Taylor says pulling out his phone when he got a text.

"They're in California," a girl said coming up to us making my eyes widen.

"Who are all of you?" I demanded tired of being left in the dark. The girl glanced at me before rolling her eyes.

"Just keep your mouth closed while the grownups talk," Caiden hissed quietly to me in my ear. Deciding to listen to him I stayed silent.

"Lilly, it's a pleasure to see you again," Caiden said and she smirked. "Is she your new whore?" I frowned, offended. In my opinion I didn't even look like a whore.

"Nah I'm not like you and Taylor," he replied, causing her face to turn red in anger while Caiden's face stayed blank of emotion.

"We have to go." Another guy came up to us making me groan obnoxiously. I'm never going anywhere with Caiden ever again. It was becoming obvious these people were in some type of gang or mafia thing.

"Why?" Taylor asked his eyes scanning the room.

"That Liam guy is here." What?

There are plenty of Liam's in the world.

But how many are involved with gangs?

"Liam who?" I asked my voice coming out calm. I was ignored as they continued their conversation.

"What running from another agent Chris?" Caiden asked a deadly smirk on his face.

"This one was working with that chick Riley that put Jesse in jail." Riley? Are they talking about Nathan's sister?

"We seriously have to get going before they find us again. I can't have them on my trail again. Let's get on a plane to San Francisco and talk to that girl Jasmin and her brother. We have business to take care of with them," the guy Chris said my eyebrows furrowed at all of these unknown people but Caiden seemed to know exactly who they were talking about.

I knew for a fact now that they were talking about the same Liam I dated a year ago. He was an agent in Europe and he was the first guy I fell in love with him. Part of me still loves him since we broke up for all the wrong reasons. Apparently you can't date anyone outside of the agency.

Realizing I was so lost in my thoughts I didn't even notice that everyone that was at the table left," I wasn't expecting them to be here," Caiden said honestly.

"Are you in some type of gang?"

"Hell no. I wouldn't get caught up in that shit," he said before snapping his fingers at a guy walking past the table. Tell that Jack guy I want a couple more drinks," Caiden threw two twenties at him and I shook my head.

"He's probably going to keep those you know," I told him.

"He won't even make it down the street alive." Sighing, I leaned back and jumped a little when I noticed Caiden's arm was behind me on the booth.

He needed to move that.

I didn't mind.

No one asked you.

I am you, so you didn't need to ask.

Sighing, I leaned back again, this time into his arm. "So what made you break up with him?" I looked up at the ceiling before closing my eyes, not responding at first.

"It was just something that had to happen," I told him not exactly lying.

"Have you ever had a girlfriend?" I asked and he snorted.

"I don't date. Girls don't deserve my time." I let out a laugh shaking my head. "Why am I with you right now then? And don't say because you want to get laid. If that was the case then you would have tried hitting on me more than once tonight."

"Something about you has me intrigued, baby doll," he said and I snorted. If only he knew that I contemplated putting a spider on his bed at one point. Our drinks were set in front of us and I mumbled a thank you to the man.

"That's interesting due to the fact that I'm a boring ass person."

"And I'm a fun ass person but that's beside the point," he said with a smirk.

He had the ass part right.

"What I truly found interesting and intriguing about you was when you came to the school dressed as a guy. I'll admit I didn't notice at first, though I probably should've based on your reaction to me being naked," he said sipping his beer. My whole body was frozen and the air in the room was almost suffocating at this point.

"Did you know that a cat has nine lives?" I asked nervously. Do you remember that time I told you I start to ramble about things when I get nervous? Yea, it's happening.

"Have you had sangria before? It's really good. I don't think it's strong enough for me though. I'll go get a few shots. You know what maybe just a couple bottles of whiskey," I said starting to slide out of the booth and Caiden grabbed my wrist stopping.

"No you're staying here. No running, I've waited a long time get this out of my fucking system." Sighing, I moved back into the booth, this time keeping quiet.

"I never told anyone your secret. I mean you obviously have reasons for pretending to be a guy." He chuckled making me look at him suspiciously. I drowned my drink down, emptying the glass. Do you think it would kill me to become an alcoholic at age nineteen? I mean I'll be in jail by the end of the night anyways.

"So I'm curious baby doll, why'd you do it? It has something to do with your dad the English teacher and that lady." I've had to explain this story to many times. I grabbed someone's drink as they walked past taking a sip.

"Bitch," the person muttered.

"My mom thinks my dad is cheating and sent me undercover to find out," I said taking another sip of the mysterious drink. Whatever it was burned my throat and made me instantly buzzed. No more drinks after this, I thought to myself watching Caiden drown his drink down also. After a

few minutes he still didn't say anything making me shift awkwardly crossing my right leg over my left.

"I wasn't expecting that," he said, making me raise one of my perfectly waxed eyebrows. "What were you expecting?" He simply shrugged. "I must give you props though for getting someone to act as Jason," Caiden said before sliding out the booth on the other side.

"Let's dance," he said and my jaw almost dropped.

"You want to dance after everything that just happened."

"I just said that. C'mon I like this song." I shook my head a small smile appearing on my face and slid out standing up.

"You are definitely a strange one."

You're a strange one, Mr. Grinch.

Those weren't the right lyrics.

Shut up. I make my own lyrics.

"Only because I like this song," I said as we made our way over to the dance floor. The song Jealous by Nick Jonas was playing but I could hear it was coming to an end, the song switched over to an old song you know the one talking about apples bottom jeans. I couldn't think of the name.

It was almost strange dancing with the one who I should hate for everything he's done to me, yet for some reason I don't. Of course we weren't ballroom dancing or anything special like that since we're in a club with upbeat music, but at the same time it wasn't something anyone would expect. I mean me, Claire Martez dancing with Caiden Anderson. The part that would surprise people the most is finding out that I got this man to show emotion other than hate.

Chapter 40

It'd been two days since the whole club thing with Caiden and I hadn't seen him since. Part of me was worried that he would tell his dad and I would face the consequences, yet the other part of me knew he wouldn't tell. He's known my secret for who knows how long and hasn't spoken one word about it to anyone. Jax hadn't spoken to me since the Nick situation and I was more than okay with that.

"What are you doing?" Caiden asked with a raised eyebrow. My eyes widened, surprised that he suddenly showed up.

"Oh you're back," I said looking back down at my books.

"Yea, I have to visit someone. What do you think you're doing?" he asked slowly, his eyes skimming over my body. I was in my grey soffe shorts and a black tank top.

I decided since he already knew that I was a girl there was no point in dressing as Jason when I had free time and am in the dorm. I had nothing to hide anymore.

"You already know I'm a girl so there's no point in dressing as a guy," I said, shrugging as I closed my book I've been studying from. Standing up and stretching I glanced at Caiden to see his eyes were on my legs. Rolling my eyes, I walked over unplugging the charger from my laptop and grabbing it off my small desk. "So I'm curious, are you going to tell your dad?"

"No, why would I? Do you know how many guys would kill to have a girl as their roommate," he said with a smirk, though his eyes darkening at the mention of his father. I couldn't help but wonder if the reason he was so closed off was because of his parents. Did something happen with them in the past to make him like this? I knew for a fact they were divorced because of that story that Leila told me about the dean and the headmistress.

Speaking of the headmistress, I was almost positive I was going to get kicked out of the school if I didn't focus more on my fashion class. That was the only reason they let me in there was because of my creativity and my art skills. She expected me to use those skills in that class she forced me into.

They needed their fashion program to be the best and for some dumb ass reason she thought I could make it the best. I won't lie though, at sometimes I did enjoy the class. It could be fun to draw different outfit designs and to learn about the easiest things.

Focusing on Caiden and I's, conversation I watched as he peeled his shirt off his body and laid on his bed, turning on the TV.

"What are you doing? Now that you know I'm a girl we should settle some rules. Keep your clothes on," I said as I took a seat on my own bed.

"Listen baby doll, things won't be changing around here. This is still my dorm and you are just simply a guest. If I want to relax in my own room and where no clothes then I will. If I want to have sex in my bed then I will," he said, in that moment I knew the old Caiden was back. "Things will go perfectly fine between us as long as you keep fucking mouth closed."

"You aren't in charge of me Caiden Anderson," I told him looking straight at him and his hazel eyes glanced my way.

"Are you sure about that? I see you simply as a puzzle piece in my puzzle."

"And I see you as a cocky son of a bitch, but I usually don't show my dislike for you." The insult came out of my mouth without much thought, but it didn't seem to bother Caiden as he simply ignored me, turning the TV volume up louder. Rolling my eyes I turned my own attention to my laptop and started to type my paper due in my economics class.

About an hour later Caiden surprised me when he suddenly started to talk to me once again. "I do have to apologize for my actions when you first came to this school. I didn't realize you were actually a girl at first. If I would have known I wouldn't have punched you."

"You picked me up by my shirt the other day and you knew I was well me," I pointed out dryly and he shrugged.

"I didn't hurt you though." He had a point there.

"Well it's fine. I'm over it."

"I don't abuse woman," he said his eyes swirling with darkness, he looked almost haunted by something. Did his father abuse his mother or something?

"Good to know," I said almost awkwardly. Saving my paper I closed my laptop and got under my comforter shutting off the light by my bed. "Goodnight Caiden," I said softly and he only grunted turning off his lamp too.

A question popped in my head wondering who the blonde lady was, but I decided to ask him tomorrow. My eyes became heavy and slowly closed themselves, I couldn't fight the feeling of tiredness that quickly swept over me and instead welcomed it and let darkness take over me into a dreamless sleep.

"I like to move it move it," I sung loudly as I shuffled across the floor of my living room.

"Claire, please," my mother yelled walking into the doorway of the room.

"Don't hate," I said plopping myself on the couch making her roll her eyes.

"And you think I'm the weird one," Jeffery said as he returned into the room with the popcorn. As soon as she walked out of the room I turned to Jeff smirking.

"She's just jealous I'm younger and cooler than her." I pretended to wipe fake dirt off my shoulders. Yea, definitely cooler than her.

I grabbed a handful of popcorn shoving it in my mouth. No one can deny their love for the movie Madagascar it was almost as funny as me.

"I don't know what guys see in you," Jeffery muttered, rolling his eyes. My thoughts drifted off to this morning when I woke up. Caiden was already gone so I didn't get a chance to ask him about the woman. My only option left was to ask him after winter break. Yes, it's already winter break. I've been undercover for far too long. I mean can you imagine being in my shoes right now. For heaven sakes, I'm a girl undercover in an all-boys school. That's not even close to normal.

Moving my thoughts off of Caiden I focused on the movie. Today I decided to spend the day with my little brother since I haven't seen him in a couple of months and he may not admit it but I will, I've missed the little punk. I haven't had anyone to tease and mess with in a while. I don't exactly think Nathan counts since he's boring to mess with.

"Hey you know how mom and dad are going out of town to celebrate their wedding anniversary?" Jeffery said randomly, keeping his voice in a hushed whisper.

"Yea, they do it every year. Why?" I asked suspiciously.

"Would you tell if I threw a party?" I thought about it for a long minute. It not like it won't be supervised, I am an adult.

"I'm not exactly what mom and dad would count as responsible in the first place so I guess so, but on one condition," I said with narrowed eyes glancing in the kitchen where mom was baking. "I don't want any drugs in this house."

"Fine Mom."

"Call me that again and I'll go tell mom your little plans," I hissed quietly and he held up his hands in surrender. We sat in comfortable silence again, the only sound coming from the TV. Jeffery wasn't even paying attention and was only texting. Of course, typical sixteen year old.

"Hey can you invite some of your friends?" This really caught my attention, my head snapped to the side looking at my brother.

"Why?"

"I don't want you trying to hang out with my friends the whole time." The evil glint in his eyes told me he was lying but I didn't comment on it. It became obvious the reason why he wanted my friends to come. They're older and they'll bring alcohol.

"I don't support my sixteen year old brother drinking. If the cops come and you end up in jail it will be bad for all of us," I warned him and he pushed my shoulder lightly.

"C'mon sis, lighten up. You sure you're still nineteen or are you fifty? Don't be lame. You're supposed to be the cooler older sister." He knew exactly what to say to convince me.

"I'll invite them, but when things get out of control don't come blaming me. I'm not looking after a bunch of drunk teenagers." Standing up I started to head upstairs, but paused turning around with my hands on my hips. "And just so you know I am a cool older sister. I mean look at this." I moved my hips in a circle pointing my thumbs at myself. I'm one cool cat. "Most people can't dance like this."

"Please tell me you won't dance like that," he looked honestly scared making me frown.

"I was actually thinking about doing the sprinkler or maybe we can even go back a few centuries and do the Charleston," my mom walked in just at the end of the sentence and her famous glare was on her face looking straight at me. Oops.

"The Charleston is not centuries old See I still do it," she said before starting to dance.

"Mom!" Jeffery yelled covering his eyes. The horror, my eyes were burning. I think I was going to be blind after this. She pulled out her hair tie and shook her hair making it go wild. Throwing off her apron she continued for another couple of minutes before I yelled at her to stop.

"You two are over dramatic. You must have gotten that from your aunt Katherine." She rolled her eyes pulling her blonde hair back into her ponytail. "I came in here to tell you the cookies are done." She made her way back into the kitchen and Jeff turned to me with a pleading look.

"If you do that tomorrow I will bury you," he threatened. "I will be known as the loser."

"You shouldn't care what people think of you, Jeff," I told him and he only shrugged focusing on the movie and the popcorn in his lap. I headed up into my bedroom, shutting the door behind me. Turning on my 5 Seconds of Summer CD, I laid back on my bed. What do college students do at home? In the past I would hang out with friends, but Nate was going to the movies with Mia. They of course invited me but I got out of it by making up an excuse. Mia had to realize they were meant to be together and grow old and live a happy life like some fiction book on Wattpad. I wish my life

was that easy, find a guy and live happily ever after. Plus besides all of that I have to keep my promise with Jeff.

Chapter 41

"Claire, you forgot your phone down here and some number is calling you. I'll answer it for you," Jeffery yelled from the bottom of the stairs making my eyes widen. I was out of my room in seconds, running down the stairs slipping on the last step because of my socks. This is why I hate wearing socks, they try to kill you. I lay there for a moment my face flat on the ground listening to the conversation to hear who it was. Lifting my face up and blowing the hair out of my way as I sat up.

"Claire hasn't mentioned anyone named Caiden before. Are you going to our party tomorrow?"

"Jeffery Martez I swear you have three seconds to give me my fuc--"

"Claire language!"

"--king phone if you want to live to see tomorrow."

"Oh no, I'm her handsome younger brother." I could strangle the little squirt. After chasing him around the house for five minutes I finally got a hold of my iPhone. Sitting on my brother I sucked air into my lungs before putting on a fake smile and placing the phone to my ear.

"Hello?"

"It really took you that long to get your phone back? You should try working out," his husky voice said making my eyes narrow.

"How did you even get my number Caiden?"

"I've been your roommate for months. It's not that hard," he muttered.

"That's an invasion of privacy."

"Can you get your fat ass off of me?" Jeff demanded and I stood up only after throwing some popcorn at him and stealing a chocolate chip cookie. I loved when my mom made these. They were the only good thing she could bake. She tries to make oatmeal cookies but I've thrown up every time I had one of those things.

"Look what you're teaching your brother," my mom yelled at me when I stopped in there and I shrugged.

"You said it in front of me and it went downhill from there," I gave her a cheeky smile before skipping steps up to my room, making sure to shut my door.

"So why'd you call?" I finally asked him. "Do you miss me already?" Caiden grunted and responded with,

"Definitely not. Did you take my phone charger?"

"Why would I take your charger? I have my own." Unzipping my suitcase I paused when I seen a white cord that wasn't mine. He had the iPhone four while I have the five.

"I had a feeling you had it since I have yours. What's your address? I'm coming to get it," If my dad seen him I might as well dig my own grave. If he hated Nick then he definitely hated Caiden more than anything.

"No, you can't!" I sputtered out, "I'll bring it to you." What did I just say? If I'm too lazy to walk to the bathroom then I'm definitely too lazy to drive to wherever he lived.

"Fine I'll text you the address." I needed a new plan and fast.

"Or how about I just mail it to you?" I suggested.

"I'm not going days without my charger. I'll see you in bit." The phone line went dead and I silently sulked glaring at the ceiling. Looking down at my attire I debated whether I should change or not. I was only going to be there for a minute at most.

Slipping off my shorts I exchanged them with skinny jeans and put on a maroon tank top with a blue jean jacket and a grey scarf. Looking in the mirror I figured this was good enough since my blonde hair was already brushed and wavy. Grabbing my keys and the charger I exited my room and went downstairs peaking my head into the living room where my brother was already playing grand theft auto on his Xbox.

"Would you mind if I headed out for a little bit? I'll be back soon and I'll take you out for ice cream after." I knew it didn't really have to bribe him but I felt bad since I was supposed to just hang out with him.

"Yea, go ahead. I'll see you later," he responded and I nodded heading over and slipping on my grey ankle boots. "Bye Mom, I'm heading out for a bit," I yelled, before stepping out into the cold winter weather. I should've known it would be in the low thirties before I left, I thought frowning slightly. Quickly rushing to my car I started it and gave it a moment to warm up with the heat blasting. Taking my phone out of my pocket I checked to see the same unknown number from earlier texted me. Looking at the address I put it into my GPS and groaned when it said it was 60 minute drive. Where did this guy live? Narnia?

When I turned on the radio nothing interesting was playing like usual making me take out my fall out boy Cd. My fingers tapped to the beat of the old song "Tnks fr th Mmrs," Looking in the mirror, I backed out of my driveway and headed the way the stupid GPS directed me.

An hour later I arrived at a large apartment building I'd never seen before. Did he live on his own? Taking my keys out of the ignition I quickly walked to the glass doors, hating the feeling of the bone chilling wind. Double checking the number, I headed up on the elevator to the tenth floor. When I found the room I was looking for I hesitantly knocked. It took exactly three minutes before he came to the door, of course he ignored me knocking for two of those minutes. I knew the ass took his time on purpose.

The door opened and a smirking Caiden looked at me, he only had a black towel hanging lowly on his hips which he was holding with his free hand.

"Take your damn charger," I muttered irritably, holding my hand out with the charger sitting on my palm.

"Why don't you come in for a minute?" he suggested and I shook my head. Rolling his eyes he continued to push. "You just drove a long way just get a drink or something for a minute while I grab your charger." Grudgingly I dragged my feet into his apartment.

"See that wasn't so hard baby doll," he said shutting the brown door.

"Put some clothes on while you're at it," I muttered, slipping off my boots by the door before heading over and sitting on his black couch not caring if he minded.

"Why? I know you like me like this." He winked and headed down a small set of stairs to what I guess was his room. What apartment building has stairs in the rooms?

The ones that rich people live in.

My eyes scanned the room on their own accord and I noticed how nice his apartment really was. It seemed to be themed black and white which wasn't very surprising. The carpet was white and the table in front of the couch was glass. Who knew this guy could keep something so nice and clean and matching? The kitchen was only a couple of steps from the living room and from what I could see has black marble counters.

My eyes fell on the neatly typed paper on the table in front of me. Glancing back at the stairs he went down I grabbed the paper and seen it was titled humanity. The poem must have been for school since it was next to a textbook and laptop. I let my eyes read over the poem,

Humanity, one word that brings so many thoughts, yet so many emotions. The human race, they get so many chances to fix their errors, their mistakes. But give it a few years their mistakes will be

repeated. It won't matter how many times it happens, they never learn. It's like a dog chasing its tail, it never gets it yet it still continues to chase it. They haunt my thoughts and dreams. This is why the human race will be the cause of earth's destruction. Three simple words explain it all, they never learn.

The poem was deep and I was surprised to see that he wrote this. I knew this poem wasn't due till the first day back after break, but for some reason he finished it weeks earlier.

Chapter 42

"What are you doing?" I set the paper back on the glass as if it burned me and turned back to him.

"Oh nothing, just admiring your nice apartment," I said smiling at him and he narrowed his eyes. Walking over he grabbed the paper and closed it into the book and moved that and the laptop onto the kitchen counter. My eyes set onto his chest that was still not covered. He was only wearing a pair of black basketball shorts. Does this man believe in color?

"Here's your charger." He handed to me the white cord and I thanked him standing up.

"Well I should get going," I mumbled already heading toward the door.

"Leaving so soon?"

"Yes, I have plans."

"With a guy?" My eyes snapped to him when I heard almost a hint of possessiveness and jealousy.

"Possibly."

"So you're finally going to move on from Nick?" Caiden asked as he sat on a stool eating some chips.

"I've been over him for a couple of weeks now," I say defensively crossing my arms over my chest.

"And I've never had sex," he retorted with a snort. "If you were truly over him you wouldn't of stayed sulking in the dorm room for this past month."

"Who are you hanging out with anyway?" I didn't know if I should lie or tell him the truth that it was just my brother.

"That doesn't concern you," I said, huffing.

"So you admit you're just trying to leave. And I thought we were going to try and be friends," he said mimicking a fake hurt expression.

"I guess I could stay for a few more minutes. I have some questions anyways," I say heading over to the high stool next to him in his kitchen.

"Who's that lady always with my father?" Caiden only rolled his eyes as if he expected that question.

"She's my father's wife. In other words my step mother," he said with no emotion in his voice. I could tell he didn't want to go into it anymore and refrain myself from asking anymore questions. Even though the questions were piling up and were like a ticking bomb waiting to go off.

"Do you live here alone?" It was another question that had been bugging me since I got here.

"I'm twenty-two. Do you really expect me to still be living with one of my parents?"

He had a point.

"No, but I thought you may have a roommate or something."

"You should know by now I definitely don't do the whole roommates thing." A knock on the door sounded through the apartment and Caiden didn't seem curious only irritated.

"What Macy?" he asked opening the door while I watched the interaction with curiosity.

"Do you have any sugar? I ran a little short for my cookies." The petite girl asked brushing her long curled hair off of her left shoulder. Her face and eyes gave her an innocent look which only spiked my curiosity.

"No." He slammed the door on her face which made my jaw drop. Especially noticing the jar of sugar he had sitting on his counter.

"You're such an ass! You couldn't spare any?" I asked glaring at him.

"She bugs me every time I'm home."

"So?" I grabbed the jar and ran toward the door to see her about to enter her apartment a few doors down.

"Hey!" I called out and Caiden watched me from the doorway.

"What are you doing?" he hissed at me and I sent him a glare.

"I'm doing what you should have done," I harshly whispered and he only shook his head at me an amused smirk appearing on his face.

"Yes?" Macy asked me, her eyes flashing with jealousy when she noticed I was coming out of his apartment. Her eyes studied Caiden's bare chest behind me for a moment as I talked.

"It looks like he did have some sugar," I said sending her a polite smile. The way she was looking at me was annoying me to no end, I tried not to narrow my eyes and glare at her.

"Can you just bring it back when you're done?" I asked and she gave me a tight, closed mouth smile. She no longer looked innocent.

"Actually I can just pour some into my bag now." She held up her little Ziploc bag and I nodded handing the sugar to her. She poured some in and quickly thanked me, slamming the door behind her. Turning around to face Caiden I frowned when I noticed him laughing at me. His deep, husky, laugh echoed through the hallway making me huff as I walked past him back into his apartment.

"She only likes you. That's the oldest trick in the book! I mean no one goes around asking for sugar these days!" I said, throwing my hands up, not hiding my irritation. My phone vibrated in my pocket and I took it out glancing at the text.

Jeffery: Hey sis since ur busy i'm going to hang out with Sam for the rest of the day. I'll probs c u tm. Love ya

"Well my plans are canceled," I say sitting down on the stool again.

"Hang out with me for a while then," Caiden suggested standing in front of me and leaning his hand on the counter behind me. He was so close that when he would talk his minty breath would blow on my face. I was thankful that I put a piece of gum in my mouth on the ride here. It would be embarrassing for him to smell my popcorn/cookie breath when I talk. His hair was still a little damp and a small drop of water fell off of his hair and dropped onto my jeans. He didn't seem to notice and if he did he didn't care.

"What? Don't have a hookup appointment waiting for you?" I didn't know where that came from but I promise you it wasn't asked out of jealousy. I didn't like Caiden like that, he's a player and I've already dealt with his best friend.

"Why jealous much?" he retorted, his eyes challenging.

"Of course not," I responded, rolling my blue eyes before deciding to change the subject. "Well what do you do around here by yourself usually?" He stayed silent almost as if he was unsure. Pushing himself off the counter he headed in the kitchen and grabbed a water from the fridge.

"Well if I'm hanging out here for a while you could at least put a shirt on," I told him awkwardly after a few minutes of him not answering and watching him as he gulped half the water bottle down in one single gulp.

"If it seriously bothers you that much then I guess I can. If it's because of my eight pack then you can touch them if you'd like."

"Just go."

"I see someone's sassy as usual," he muttered heading back downstairs. A couple of minutes later he returned in a pair of pajama pants that hung low on his waist, so low that you could see his V lines, but no shirt.

"Did you lose your shirt on the way?" I asked with a raised eyebrow and he shrugged.

"It's already five. I'm staying like this till I go to bed," he told me and I grunted knowing that I couldn't exactly argue since this is his apartment. He got a smug look on his face and sat down on the couch putting his feet on his table not caring that it's glass and pats the spot next to him.

"So I take it we're watching a movie?" I said sitting a few feet away from him on the couch. He narrowed his eyes at the space and nodded.

"I know you have some weird obsession with musicals so i'm getting this out in the open now. We're not watching anything with singing." I sighed and rolled my eyes.

"Fine let's just watch that," I said, pointing to the screen at the preview that was playing on DirecTV cinema.

"You sure you can handle Annabelle?" he asked teasingly. It seemed as if Caiden was a completely a different person when it was just us. It was like he just relaxes around me. I wanted to question it but I was afraid he would close up again and place the mask back on his face. My goal was to keep that cold facade, his mask off of his face.

While he was setting up the movie I decided to add his number to my contact and I even gave him a special ringtone. I didn't play it out loud since it was from Chicago the musical and he'd probably be pissed if he knew what it was. It may mention stabbing or something like that.

"Why are you looking at your phone with that creepy smirk?" he asked me causing me to jump a little.

"Oh no reason," I said, flashing him a smile showing my straight, white teeth and putting my phone away.

"You're definitely what many would describe as weird," he mumbled and I shrugged. That wouldn't be the first time I've heard that one. He paid for the movie and then pressed play.

"I'm turning off the lights, try not to get to scared." I've never been one to get scared easily, but I decided not to comment on it and only rolled my eyes. Caiden sat back down but this time next to me. "What are you doing?"

"Sitting on my couch," he replied putting his arm behind me and letting it rest on the top of the couch. He must have some type of habit with putting his arm behind me.

"Whatever," I muttered grumpily and focused on the TV.

My eyes slowly fluttered open as I felt my body moving. "What's going on? Where am I?" I asked, my voice a little groggy. I was one of those people that when I first wake up from a nice sleep I don't even know what day it is.

"You're still at my apartment. You fell asleep at the end of whatever stupid ass movie you put on," Caiden told me as we headed down a set a stairs.

"Where are you bringing me?" I asked, snuggling closer to his chest and shutting my eyes. I was cold and I like to cuddle. Please kill me if it's a crime.

"To my bed, my couches aren't made to be slept on," he said and I almost scoffed. Those couches are like pillows. My body was laid down on a bed and I almost moaned from how comfortable his bed was. Was it made out of clouds? I let out a long yawn and cuddle underneath the comforter.

"I have to text my mom," I said, the tiredness evident in my voice.

"I already did," his warm body lay next to me but kept his distance.

"What never sleep next to a girl before?" I asked peeling my eyes open for a moment to glance at him. My jean jacket was uncomfortable just like my scarf so I sat up for a second in the dark and threw them off onto the floor. I'd worry about grabbing it tomorrow, just like I'd worry about that fact that I'm in the same bed as Caiden and that he touched my phone.

"Actually no I haven't just slept with a girl in my bed like this," he admitted awkwardly and I scooted closer to him so that our bodies were almost touching. He didn't seem to believe in heat.

"I figured as much." The end of my sentence was probably hard to understand from another yawn releasing from my mouth. I wondered what time it was.

"You're still an ass," I muttered as he wrapped his arm on my waist pulling me so I was flushed against his bare chest.

"And you are still a slut, baby doll." I felt his hot breath on my ear as he muttered the words. He tucked my head underneath his chin and I couldn't help but think, how did we even end up like this?

Chapter 43

My eyes slowly fluttered open and I blinked a few times to let my eyes adjust only to come face to face with a chest. I was being held close to Caiden still, my head underneath his chin. Pulling back a small gasp almost escaped from my lips when I saw he was already awake. Why was he still holding me? It was so unlike him.

Pulling all the way back from him so we're no longer touching. I sat up looking around the room for a clock. Clearing my throat I finally spoke, "What time is it?" I asked him and he simply shrugged sitting up next to me. The blanket dropped to his waist showing off his bare chest once again.

"I'm not going to lie, I never in a million years expected to wake up in the same bed as you," I told him and he ran a hand through his hair making it even more messy. I was thankful I had the luck of almost always waking up with my hair straight and not frizzy.

"Yea, I never expected this either," he said standing up and stretching, my eyes didn't leave him. If he could always check me out then I could do the same to him.

"You aren't wearing pants," I stated. How could I have not have noticed this?

"You of all people should know I don't sleep in pants," he said a smirk slipping onto his face.

"Now let's talk about why I'm even in your room Anderson," I said with narrowed eyes as I leaned against the headboard piece, stretching my legs out.

"There isn't much to it. You were tired and fell asleep so I brought you in here. I don't allow people to sleep on my couch, it's floor or bed." He shrugged, making his way toward the bathroom that was connected to his room. He had one strange apartment.

"Yea, but you didn't even try to wake me up!" I hissed and he came out the bathroom a couple of minutes after only rolling his eyes at me.

"Get over it. I'm sure it's not the first time you slept in another man's bed." He started to make his way toward me, walking so slowly he was like a lion watching his prey.

"I'm not a slut," I replied, pulling my blonde hair all to one side to block the sunlight. The sun's rays of light were trying to say hello and peak through the window. Caiden responded with only a grunt and continued to walk slowly toward me.

"What are you doing?" I asked him and he didn't respond. He didn't stop walking till he was standing right next to me.

"What the hell?" I hissed when suddenly when I realized he was now sitting on me. "Get your fat ass off of me."

"Not until you stop being a little bitch and just thank me already," I scoffed. I had no reason to thank him.

"Looks like I'll be here for a while then," he said and I bite my lip lightly when I realized I said that out loud.

"Fine! Thank you for being a gentleman for once," I muttered quietly after five minutes of agonizing pain from his ass sitting on my legs.

"Eh good enough." He shrugged standing up. I stood up and stretched my legs. I cringed at the sickening sound of my bones cracking a little.

"You hungry?" he asked me, opening a drawer and I nodded.

"Something you should know is that i'm always hungry," I said and he didn't respond- only headed to his closet. An idea suddenly popped in my head making me head over to him with a small bounce in my step.

"Can I pick your outfit?"

"Over my dead body."

"That shouldn't be too hard to arrange. I already have the hole dug," I said keeping my face serious.

"I'm not surprised," he said and I licked my dry lips before sticking my lips out and giving him that puppy dog look. It's a look that every person has done at least once in their life.

"Fine. But only from my dresser," he said slamming his closet door closed before I could peak in there.

"Nope, I want to see what's in there," I said, putting my hands on my hips.

"I'd rather you not." His deep, husky voice said, his eyes looked mischievous. This only heightened my curiosity and before I knew it I had my hand on the door and was sliding it open. My eyes widened in surprise at what was in it. Clothes. No, not any ordinary plain clothes. They were nice expensive clothes. Toward the back there was black and grey tuxedos and toward the front there was different colored nice shirts and sweaters.

"This can't be your closet," I was still gaping at the different selection of clothes. "There's actual colors and designs!" I sputtered out and he rolled his eyes.

"Just fucking pick something," he snarled, but by the look on his face I could see he didn't really care less. While I was looking through the closet, Caiden seemed to disappear somewhere for a few minutes before returning.

"Here I have some sweatpants and a t-shirt you can wear. They were the smallest pair I could find," he said, setting them on the bed. I was relieved since the skinny jeans I was still wearing from yesterday were uncomfortable as they continued to cling to my body. I knew I would be okay in the tank top I was currently wearing so I only responded with a nod, once again thanking him.

"Go put these on," I said pushing a pile of clothes into his bare chest, a sigh released from his mouth before he started to slide the clothes on right in front of me. I grabbed the sweat pants and exchanged them for my skinny jeans. It was odd how comfortable I was becoming around Caiden. Just like how he was relaxing around me I was doing the same thing. This whole situation felt almost normal.

"Do you have any extra toothbrushes?" I yelled knowing he could hear me.

"Top drawer on the left," he responded and I opened the drawer to see a few extra toothbrushes. I took time to quickly brush my teeth before leaving the bathroom.

My eyes landed on Caiden's figure, I stayed silent only staring at him. I blinked once, twice and even three times before finally snapping out of my amazement.

"You should wear color more often. It looks good on you," I said awkwardly and he glared fiercely at me.

"You just had to go with the pink shirt didn't you." I responded by giving him a sheepish smile. He honestly looked handsome and looked like a different person with his pink shirt, tie and sweater. The jeans weren't anything new but the vans definitely were. All he seemed to wear were those heavy black boots.

My eyes caught onto a slight change in his hair and I moved closer to him to inspect the change.

"Did you do something different with your hair?" I asked. It was coiffed, which I knew he only did sometimes.

"Wait a second you're not actually a blond," I stated as I realize the difference was it was almost darker. "You're a brunette." I went to touch one of the dark strands of hair and he swatted my hand away.

"So I dye my hair blond. So what? It's not a big deal."

"Why would you change your hair color? I can already tell you would look good with your normal hair color." My eyes widened when I realized I just complimented him. His ego is going to rocket to the moon now.

"It's my way of showing I'm a new person. It shows I won't go back to ever bring the person I use to be." He took a step away from me and headed upstairs. I folded my clothes up in a pile and left them sitting on Caiden's bed before I headed upstairs. A phone went flying toward me as soon as I got to the living room, putting my hands out I easily caught it. It seems basketball and baseball actually came in handy.

"Don't you dare put that facade up again," I hissed when he kept his face blank and closed up again.

"You don't know or understanding anything, Claire," he responded, his voice void of emotion.

"Why don't you just go home?"

You just had to ask about the hair.

How was I supposed to know that he was going to close up?

"This is ridiculous!" I exclaimed throwing up my hands. Pointing a perfectly painted blue nail at him I said, "You told me that you would tell me another time about your past. What's a better time than now! I'm here at your apartment, it's just us two and no one is waiting on either of us."

"If you want to know so badly then I'll tell you. But don't expect some happy ending," he said, grabbing some eggs out of his fridge. He cracked a couple and added a few ingredients. I sat on a stool watching him make breakfast and waiting for him to begin.

After he was done cooking he brought over two plaited eggs and sat one in front of me and one in front himself. Sitting on the stool across from me, he looked straight into my eyes.

Chapter 44

"At age six on Halloween night I was kidnapped and was brought far away from home. I was abused and that tattoo on my back was something I got to hide the scars the woman gave me."

"Your captor was a woman?" He let out a dark chuckle. "Her name was Lisa and don't look so surprised. Women aren't as innocent as they seem. Even the kindest ones have black somewhere in their heart." The name was spit from his lips as if it burned him to say her name. I almost couldn't believe what I was hearing. This man was taken and abused at age six. Who could live like that?

"When I was locked in that basement of hers I use to think if I became stronger I would get out of there. I couldn't let the feeling of her knife or finger nails carving into my skin get to me. At age eleven I realized that." Caiden clenched the fork he had in his hand. "I should have realized it sooner. God damn I would have been out of there faster," he said, throwing his fork across the room. No, he didn't try to hit me, the fork went the opposite way. I set my hand on top of his lightly and squeezed it. He seemed surprised almost as if he momentarily forgot I was there.

"She would play fucking games with me. Having me run and try to escape, but I would never get out of that door. It didn't matter how fast I moved. Then she'd punish me for trying to leave almost as if I suggested it." His voice was now icy and I was almost scared to speak. Based on the look in his eyes he was probably reliving his nightmare over and over again.

"One hand would hold tightly to my arm to keep me still while the other would be holding something that could cause me pain, a bat, a knife, scissors. It all just depended on the day," he said, a cold, cruel smirk on his face. He didn't turn to look at me again and only looked at the wall. I wanted to tell him he could stop but I think he needed this. These emotions were all bottled up and if they weren't released then he would eventually explode.

"I can still feel to this day her carving her fucking name on my back. Her exact words would be, 'I'll make sure you never forget me. I am after all your mother.' The disgusting woman would never be my mother. She never could have kids so she thought by kidnapping it would fix everything for her." His hands clenched into fists but I didn't let go and only held his hand tightly. It seemed to be soothing him a little as I continued rubbing my thumb over the top of his hand.

"When I left that horrid place at age sixteen I got a tattoo over her name. It's just a skull but it's enough to cover it. Every time I look at it, it reminds me that she's dead and she isn't ever coming back." The smirk was still placed in his lips and his hazel eyes darkened.

"How'd she died?" I asked hesitantly and keeping my voice soft. Another dark chuckle escaped his lips. "I had a feeling you'd ask that question. I killed her with my own bare hands. I let my fists

connect with her face over and over again, not stopping till she was struggling for breath. Even then I helped her by squeezing the rest of the air out of her lungs." My hands started to shake a little from the thought of Caiden being only sixteen and strangling a woman to death.

"How did your parents react when you reunited with them?" I asked after a moment of silence.

"My once happy parents were divorced when I got home. My dad gave up hope after a year and my mother was the only one who believed I was still out there somewhere. How were they supposed to know to look across the country? That alone split them apart. My father cared for a split second that I was home before he signed me up for his school and sent me off. The room we have is one I've had since age sixteen," he said, his voice not losing the hard edge to it.

"He didn't want to deal with a broken teenage boy. My mother cared for a while but she eventually gave up when I wouldn't tell her what happened in captivity. We do talk every once in a while but she knows that happy little boy she use to know wasn't coming back." I stood up and went to the other side of the counter and wrapped my arms around the now standing Caiden who was pulling at his hair. I didn't release him even when he struggled against my arms. He didn't want pity, I know that but I could see he needed help. He may not want it but he needed it.

"I'm sorry you had to go through all of that," I whispered in his ear. Our food wasn't touched and only went to waste since it was now cold. "No one deserves all of that." His arms slowly made their way around me and held me only pulling me closer to his body.

"I dyed my hair not only because I didn't want to be reminded of the old me, but because I didn't want to look at the man I call my father. His new wife, my stepmother is the sister of my captor. The blonde woman's name is Samantha," he told me and I felt myself freeze. What? Why? How? So many questions were forming in my head but I didn't want to ask them since he already started off with a torturous morning.

"I'm so sorry, Caiden," I whispered again, slowly pulling away from him.

"You apologize yet you don't look at me with pity. You definitely are something Claire Martez," he said slowly unclenching his fists and just breathing.

"Have you ever thought about getting someone to help you get through this? You shouldn't live like this. You'll never get on with your life. Especially if you hate every person you cross paths with."

"I don't hate Nick." I rolled my eyes. "I don't hate you," he added after thought. "I mean for some damn reason you accept me for who I am."

"That sounded a bit cheesy," I teased, trying to lift the mood and he managed to crack a small smile.

"Hey since you look all nice how about tonight you come to the party I'm letting my little brother

have. I don't want to hang out with a bunch of sixteen and seventeen year olds," I suggested, completely changing the conversation and he shrugged.

"I didn't have anything planned for today anyway," he said and I smiled brightly.

"Great!"

"I'll come if you spend the night again." my eyes widened at this. Why would he want me to spend the night again? Is this the same man that hates roommates?

"I'm sorry I think I heard you wrong. Did you just say you want me to spend another night here?"

"Yes, surprisingly I can tolerate your company," he said and I placed my hand on his forehead.

"Are you feeling okay? Maybe I should take you to a doctor," I said honestly, worried and he only rolled his eyes. Removing my hand from his forehead he grabbed our plates and threw them out.

"Since these went to waste let's go get some fast food," he suggested and I nodded just as my stomach growled. A light hearted chuckle released from his lips making me give him a sheepish smile.

"I should have a change of clothes in my car," I told him and he nodded. Telling him I would be right back I headed out the building and went to my car. I always keep some extra clothes in my trunk for certain um reasons. Grabbing a pair of skinny jeans and some nice looking shirt I knew would match my boots.

I should just change in my car, I thought to myself. Looking around at the parking lot clear of people I did exactly that. I quickly changed, only struggling a little and hitting my head on the window twice. I left the sweatpants and exited my car, locking it.

"Claire?" a familiar voice says almost questioningly.

"West! It's been a while," I said, surprised and wrapping my arms around him in a quick hug.

"How've you been?" I asked and he shrugged.

"I've been okay. I didn't know you lived here. I've never seen you here before," he said and I rocked back and forth on my heels.

"Yea, I'm visiting a friend," I said just as Caiden came out.

"What are you doing? I didn't know it took fifteen minutes to grab some clothes," Caiden said but the whole time he was looking at West with narrowed eyes.

"Oh Caiden this West, West this is Caiden." They shook hands, their grips tight. Caiden moved to stand next to me and put his arm around my waist, surprising me when he pulled me to his side almost possessively.

"How do you two know each other?" Caiden asked his voice suspicious.

"He stole my yogurt at the store," I said, immediately causing West to laugh.

"Sure, that's what happened." Caiden's grip tightened a little before saying, "We should get going now, it's already ten." I nodded my head and I said my goodbyes to West before Caiden led me to his car.

"What was that all about?" I asked him with a raised eyebrow but he didn't respond. Ladies and gentlemen, I think I have just experienced seeing the one and only Caiden Anderson jealous. Too bad I didn't have a camera with me.

Chapter 45

Claire's Point of View

Caiden helped me bring in the plastic cups, bottles and bags of chips into my house.

"Claire! Where have you been?" Jeffery asked me rushing downstairs and following us in the kitchen. "Who's the nerd?"

"Jeffery!"

"That's it I'm changing."

"You look nice!" I tried telling him but he shook his head, already making his way toward the door.

"Claire, this isn't my look. I only wear this shit for important meetings," he told me and I sighed knowing there was nothing I could say to change his mind.

"You don't have any extra clothes," I said, a smug smile crawling its way on my face.

He scoffed. "You must have been so entranced with that West guy that you didn't notice I was holding a pile of clothes." He shook his head after a minute of me not responding he said, "Of course." The smug smile slipped from my face and instead my jaw dropped.

"I was not entranced with him and we're only friends! If that!" I yelled to him from the door.

"Is he like a new boyfriend or something? I always thought you'd end up with Nathan," Jeffery said watching me with curious eyes.

"Ew no. Nathan and I, will never be anything more than best friends," I said, scrunching up my nose in disgust.

"Whatever. It's already seven and party starts in an hour. We have to pull this off," he told me as Caiden passed us, heading upstairs.

"First door on the right!" I yelled, before looking back at my brother. "Jeffery, trust me. I've been throwing parties for years. You have some pretty high party expectations which is why I brought this," he followed behind me curiously. I turned and extended my arm, pointing at the counter that had about fifteen different types of alcohol bottles on it.

"Yes! You fucking Rock sis," he said throwing his arms around me, giving me a quick hug before letting me go as if I was on fire. "Let's pretend I didn't just do that." Awkwardly, he scratches the back of his neck. Caiden cleared his throat, making our eyes snapped over to him. He changed back into his typical black jeans and a grey shirt.

He's wearing so many different colors it's just blinding.

"Oh good, so you aren't actually a nerd. That would ruin the party," Jeff said making me elbow his side.

"Be nice. He's the one that bought the alcohol."

"I would be the last one to ruin the party," Caiden said, an arrogant smirk on his face." I invited some friends by the way."

"You did what!?" I exclaimed.

"Just Kyle and Tom. Oh and Jax. I'm sure you invited Nathan and that chick," he said rolling his eyes as he leaned against the wall.

"This is just perfect. I swear if Jax cause any problems I will-"

"Okay Mom. Can we worry about bigger problems like I don't know getting music going," Jeff interrupted, making me narrow my eyes. Caiden chuckled a little. I didn't have to look at him to know he was smirking.

"The DJ will be here any second. Calm yourself." I waved him off and started putting the chips in bowls. You're lying to yourself if you say you don't like food at a party.

"One more thing," Jeffery started, making me groan obnoxiously. "Please change into something more party like. I mean Claire you're a college student you should know that's not how you dress when you're going to a party." I scoffed, rolling my eyes.

"Why don't you go and mind your own business before I cancel this whole thing. You should know how I am. I mean I wore shorts and a tank top to graduation and a dress and converse to prom."

Caiden watched me with an amused smirk and chuckled. "Even I looked nice for prom."

"I looked nice," I said defensively, "I just wore a pair of converse instead of heels that's all."

"She also didn't ride with her date who got a limo for them and instead just took her skateboard." It surprised me to hear his deep laugh echoed around my quiet house for a good five minutes. Especially since Jeffery was around. I secretly glanced at him, there were small crinkles by his eyes and he also had dimples. Who knew he could be so carefree at times.

"I'm definitely right you are a bitch." I simply shrugged not disagreeing, everyone knows it was true.

"I'm going to get ready. Keep an eye out for the DJ," Jeffery said, walking out of the kitchen leaving only Caiden and me in comfortable silence. I thought back to our surprisingly calm day. We didn't

fight once. Okay maybe I'm lying, we fought a few times but it was just simple bickering. I thought back to one particular moment when we stopped at the park.

"Why do we always go to the park to talk?" Caiden asked me, leaning back on the bench and looking up at the surprisingly clear sky. "I mean it's like forty degrees."

"That's better than negative five. Stop whining like a little girl," I said, rolling my eyes. "And I like the park, it's calm here."

"There's children everywhere," he said distastefully.

"Get over it grandpa. You're always so grumpy."

"If I'm grandpa then who's the grandma?"

"Maybe there isn't one. You'll probably die single at this rate," I retorted and he smirked.

"You may need to take a second and check out this body again. I won't die alone trust me," he said, now looking at me instead of the sky, "I guess you could be the grandma for now."

"Why are we even discussing this?" I asked him, letting out a small laugh.

"You're the one that started the conversation when you called me a grandpa," he said.

"And you called me a grandma!"

"Technically I called you my future wife." He winked making me nudge his shoulder lightly with mine.

"Um how about no?" I responded flicking a piece of my blonde hair out of my face. I should really get my dead ends cut off. I thought to myself, lifting up one of my ends.

"Don't get all flustered, baby doll. You and I know that will never happen. I don't do relationships. Though if it's an incredible one night stand you're looking for i'm always here for ya," his arm moved behind me again and I narrowed my eyes.

"I'm not even remotely close to being all flustered as you put it and only in your dreams would we have sex."

"One day you'll give in." Caiden winked, making me roll my eyes. I wouldn't ever give in. Right?

"Claire?" Caiden interrupted my thoughts and I frowned looking at him.

"Sorry I got lost in my thoughts," I told him. I can't fall for him ever. I can commit to a relationships but he can't. It will only end up like Liam all over again.

"The DJ is setting up. You might want to go get ready." I nodded and went up to my room without another word, leaving him alone. I undressed and took a quick shower, loving the feeling of the warm water. When I was done I dried off and put on a dark pink dress that had ruffles on the

bottom and a pair of black tights. I added a black leather jacket before putting on a pair of black heels. After blow drying my hair straight I quickly brushed through it and left it down before putting on some lip gloss, eyeliner and other light makeup.

I looked at my reflection in the mirror and frowned. Caiden was being completely serious when he said he doesn't do relationships.

All guys say that.

Something in my stomach told me he actually meant it, though.

You never listen to me.

Because you never know what you're talking about.

Whatever.

And people wondered where my bitch side came from.

Music started blasting downstairs and I immediately knew the party started. I didn't like Caiden so it doesn't matter if he is ever in a relationship.

I grabbed my key from my bedroom and put it in my bra, shutting and locking my door. I'm not walking in later to see two teenagers having sex on my bed.

"It seriously took you an hour to get ready? I had to talk to your brother," Caiden said, narrowing his eyes at me.

"Suck it up. You're the one that agreed to come," I said rolling my eyes. My eyes skimmed the room to see it didn't take long for people to get here and get the party going.

"Claire and Caiden. I never expected to see you two standing next to each other and not biting each other's heads off," Jax said, putting his arms on our shoulders. Just like that Caiden's cold exterior was back in place. His face was emotionless as he shrugged off Jax's arm.

"I hope you don't mind. I invited Nick. His plane home got delayed till tomorrow so I thought why don't we all hang out here. I'm sure it's been far too long since you two have talked anyways Claire." I narrowed my eyes also shrugging his arm off. What was he playing at now?

"Where the fuck is Tom?" Caiden asked him, his irritation could be sensed from miles away.

"Kyle went home for break and Tom's parents are making him stay home and have a nice family outing," he said in a mocking tone. Caiden snorted and walked away leaving me with the douche himself.

Thanks Caiden I really appreciate it.

Chapter 46

"How have you been Claire? I've barely seen you since that day. Does Caiden know yet about you being a guy?" Looks were casted our way when he said the last part obnoxiously.

"Yes, he found out and he isn't going to blackmail me."

"Hey, I did to you a favor. You could at least thank me. I mean look at Nick now. He's back to his old ways. Did you really think the player would change for someone like you? I'll admit it sweetheart you definitely have the body and looks but you wouldn't be good for anything besides sex," he said, his face centimeters from mine.

"You're a fucking asshole."

"No sweetheart that's Nick and Caiden. I'm not an ass if I'm only being honest."

"Stop calling me sweetheart," I hissed. "I don't know what you want from me, but whatever it is you're not getting it from me. Now you have only been here for ten minutes and you've already managed to irritate he fuck out of me. Go somewhere or leave," I snarled and he only smirked.

"How cute. You think you're actually intimidating." He chuckled. I ignored him and let my eyes skim the packed living room. I watched my brother talked to a group of girls, all of them giggling.

He just has that Martez charm.

Or nah.

"Claire," Nick greeted, nodding his head at Jax and me.

"Nick, how have you been?" I asked with a tight fake smile. Talk about awkward. Caiden where the hell did you go?

"I've been good. How about you?" he asked me rubbing the back of his neck awkwardly also.

"Surprisingly everything's been okay since Caiden found out about me."

"Caiden knows?"

"Yea, since he found out we've been able to tolerate each other somewhat," I said, noticing the jealousy and anger that flashed through his eyes for a quick second.

"Don't look so jealous Nick. I don't think they've had sex just yet. Or wait maybe they have. She's probably his new toy." That's it! I slammed my fist into his right eye and grabbed someone's drink and poured it all of his head. To top it all off I then kicked him where it hurts.

"Claire?" Nick asked, making me look at him. Okay so maybe that didn't actually happen. I only considered it. "Are you actually sleeping with Caiden?"

"What? No! Of course not! Where did you get that idea?"

"You didn't deny what Jax said."

"Jax is a fucking idiot. I'm not sleeping with the slut." Caiden joined us making me let out a sigh of relief, but then narrow my eyes. So we're back to that name again. Of course, he's with his friends.

"I need to get fucking laid. I'll be back at twelve to get you Claire," Caiden told me before leaving out the front door. My jaw dropped at this.

"Why is he picking you up?" Nick had an accusing look on his face making me want to scream.

"We're just going to hang out at his apartment."

"What?" This time that was both Jax and Nick. I raised an eyebrow in questioning.

"Caiden doesn't bring anyone to his apartment. And I've known that guy forever, yet I still haven't seen that place," I didn't know what to say and only kept silent. I need an excuse to leave. I could go with:

A. I need to make sure my brother isn't getting any girl knocked up.

B. I need a drink.

C. I don't want to be near them anymore.

D. Jax is a douche and I need to get away from him.

"Listen I'd love to stay and talk about Caiden's mysteriousness, but I need to get away from the douche." I went into the kitchen to get myself a drink. Yea that was a good excuse. Not even a minute after I poured my drink Nick was standing next to me.

"Claire. Now that Caiden knows Jax can't blackmail us," Nick said to me, looking straight into my blue eyes and setting the palm of his hand on my cheek.

"Nick, the only thing you've done since we broke up was sleep with other girls. Those feelings that were once there have disappeared. I'm sorry," I told him.

"I understand. But can you tell me one thing. Is it because of Caiden?" I snorted.

"Definitely not," I said. "I just came to my senses that's all." A hurt look flashed across his face. "No! Wait! I didn't mean it like that. I just meant that I decided to not let my heart get broken. If I continued to wait till we can be together then I would only be hurt when you're with your new toy

of the day." Someone bumped into me and almost spilled their drink. They stumbled over to the bar which one of Jeff's friends was in charge of.

"Just remember Claire. Caiden is worse than me. He treats girls like they are horrid creatures." Only because he was kidnapped and abused by one, I almost said. "I may not know why, but please before you do fall for him just keep your distance." I only nodded not promising anything. I wouldn't fall for Caiden.

"Nick trust me when I say nothing will happen between us," I told him seriously. He just shook his head and walked out. Taking a small sip of my drink and letting the liquid burn my throat. I leaned against the counter. Whose idea was it to have a party again?

"Let's go," a husky voice said from behind me. I turn around and raised an eyebrow at Caiden.

"Don't order me around. The party hasn't cleared out all the way," I said, narrowing my eyes.

"I'm sure your brother can handle the rest."

"Thanks for leaving me with Jax and Nick," I hissed, glaring at him as I suddenly remembered how awkward this whole party was.

"Whatever. Are you coming or not?" I hated this Caiden. The one who didn't care about anything. The one who was nothing more than a heartless beast.

"No," I said stubbornly about to walk away. His hand latched onto my wrist. "You said you were going to stay over."

"I told the Caiden that showed me emotion that I would stay over not the heartless one." He glanced around the almost empty living room and dragged me outside in my front yard.

"Listen Claire the guy you seen earlier isn't coming back. You shouldn't have seen me weak. I am not a weak man."

"Showing emotion doesn't make you weak. That only makes you stronger. You're afraid to feel anything," Caiden stared me for a moment before stepping closer to me.

"I may not show my emotions but I do feel them every day. It's almost impossible to just block out everything without drugs and I don't do that shit."

"I promised myself I would help you get through what happened to you. It's been seven years Caiden. If you don't want professional help then that's fine but I will personally help you get through this myself." I was determined to do this.

"Fine you can try," he said reluctantly.

"Hey we're leaving. I'll see you guys after break," Nick interrupted, I stepped away from Caiden in a hurry, surprised to see someone else outside. I glanced at him to see Jax hanging off of Nick's shoulder looking drunk.

"Everybody wanna steal Nick's girl. Everybody wanna take her heart away," Jax sung obnoxiously, winking at me and Caiden took a step closer to me again, his hand twitching a little before clenching into a fist.

"It was nice seeing you Nick." I sent him a polite smile and he nodded in agreement. Caiden didn't say anything to his friends and just waited for them to leave. As soon as they were gone he focused completely on me again.

"C'mon baby doll, just stay over. My apartment feels actually alive with someone else there." He didn't beg he simply gave me one look and I caved in. He didn't need to beg. I could detect the hidden meaning behind his words. He hated being alone.

"Fine, let me go pack a bag," I muttered and went back inside to the almost empty house.

"Seriously sis I owe you," Jeffery said, putting his arm on my shoulder and I rolled my eyes and threw in pajamas and clothes for tomorrow in my bag.

"In the bathroom in the way back of the closet there is a box. That will have everything you need to clean up. Stuff for throw up and spilled drinks and all that fun stuff including garbage bags. You have about twenty four hours to clean up. Have fun." I kissed his cheek and he groaned. I hurried up down the stairs, skipping every other step.

"Ready?" Caiden asked me and I nodded. He led the way to his car and I followed silently after him.

"How come you don't invite people over to your apartment?" I had to ask.

"What are you talking about? We're on our way there now." He was silently glaring at the cars in front of him.

"Nick and Jax told me that even they haven't been to your apartment before. You've known Nick since he was sixteen!" I exclaimed and his fists clenched the wheel.

"Put on your seatbelt," he said ignoring my last statement.

"Not until you answer my question." Yes, I could be stubborn sometimes. I was tired of playing this question and sometimes get an answer game. He let out a frustrated sigh.

"I just don't."

"That's not a real answer." He pulled over to the side of the road and unlocked the door.

"Out," he hissed and I frowned.

"You're not gonna actually make me walk right?" I stared at him and blinked a few times my jaw almost dropping when I got no response. "Caiden?"

"I thought you were different. You didn't push me for answers before. I was obviously wrong. You can walk home. We're only about two blocks." I froze, he was right. This wasn't me. I didn't force answers out of people. I respected the privacy of others.

"I'm sorry, you're right. I'm not that type of person. You don't have to answer the question." I was about to get out of the car but his hand grabbed my wrist.

"You don't have to actually go," Caiden said, and I nodded, hesitantly sitting back as he started driving again. I turned up the radio and let the small murmur of music flowed into the air.

Chapter 47

I hesitantly sat up on the bed and glanced around the familiar room I was in. I looked to my left to see the bed was empty besides me. The covers were messy so I knew Caiden slept in here again with me. I checked the time on phone to see it was already noon. That explained why he was not in there.

I peeled the covers off of me and grabbed my clothes and headed in the bathroom. A minute later a knock on the door sounded. "Baby doll, you in there?" Caiden's gruff voice asked and I nodded. "Hello?"

Oh right. "Yea, I'm gonna take a shower. Do you have an extra towel?" I yelled back as I turned on the water.

"Yea, give me a minute." The opposite side of the door became silent so I got in, shutting the glass door and letting the warm water make its way down my body. I heard the door open and gasped.

"What are you doing in here?" I hissed over the sound of the water.

"You said you needed a towel." I could picture the smirk on his face and only rolled my eyes keeping my back facing the door of the shower. I knew it was almost pointless to face the opposite way since he had one of those tall see through glass showers, but I still did it anyway.

"Just set it down and leave," I told him over the sound of the water.

"You know I need to shower too. I could always join you."

"Okay," I responded.

"What?"

"You said you could always join me, we'll go ahead," I told him and I could hear the surprise in his voice,

"Really?"

"No. Now get out." He chuckled and left the bathroom, purposely turning off the lights on his way out.

"You're an ass," I yelled.

"Get used to it, baby doll," he yelled back. I hurried up and finished my shower in five minutes. As soon as I stepped out and wrapped a towel around me I turned the lights back on. I was thankful that I was never one to be afraid of the dark, but that didn't change the fact that it's creepy

"Your phone is ringing," Caiden said, just walking into the bathroom with my phone in his hand. I glared at him and snatched it from his palm.

"Do you believe in knocking?" He simply scoffed, still not leaving.

"It's my apartment." I took a deep breath, don't punch him, don't punch him don't pun - "Unless you want to take another shower and this time with me I'd get out." I grabbed my pile of clothes and stormed out of the bathroom, my shoulder bumping with his.

He shut the door behind me, not before winking of course. I checked my phone and seen it was a missed call from West. Glancing at the closed door I clicked on the call button on his contact.

"Hey yogurt girl," West said and I smiled instantly at the nickname.

"Hey West," I responded.

"I was wondering if you wanted to do something today. Maybe go ice skating or something?" he suggested and I thought about it for a moment, my eyes glancing at the bathroom door.

"Sure. What time?" I asked, biting my lip.

"How about at six? We could get some dinner before if you'd like."

"Yeah, that sounds good," I responded, holding the phone up with my shoulder and ear while I changed. I slipped on my undergarments before I put on my light blue skinny jeans and dark red shirt. Leaving my black leather jacket off for my now I focused on the conversation again.

"So I'll pick you up at six then."

"Uh actually. I'm actually not home right now so how about I just meet you at the restaurant at six. Text me the details?"

"Yeah. See you tonight." We said our goodbyes and hung up. I let out a deep breath taking a seat on Caiden's bed and leaning back, not caring that my hair was wet.

"Well I was gonna offer to see a movie later on tonight but I guess you already have plans," Caiden said, his face void of emotion. I quickly sat up, surprised to see him leaning against the bathroom door with his boxers hanging low on his waist. "That's cool I'll just find some chick to go with," he said.

"Maybe another time," I suggested and he just shook his head. He threw a t- shirt over his head and then slipped on a pair of jeans.

"Actually, I just remembered I have plans today. You can show yourself out right?" I nodded my head slowly, a little annoyed at his rudeness. "See you later baby doll." He walked out right after that and I glared at the doorway. So much for hanging out today. We were supposed to go sledding

but I mean if he has plans that's cool too. Scowling, I put all of my clothes and stuff in my bag and got ready to head back home.

After locking his door and leaving the apartment building I stood outside for a minute only to realize that Caiden brought me here in his own car. I shivered at the feeling of the bitter wind nipping at my face and neck.

Stop being a dumb ass and call West.

But then he'd know I was with Caiden.

You're not dating him so that's not a problem.

For once my conscious had a point. Taking out my phone I clicked the call button on West's contact.

"Hey Claire," he greeted.

"Are you home?" I asked him rocking on the heels of my feet and hugging my jacket closer to me. It was freezing out here.

"Yeah. Why?" he asked me, the curiosity leaking from his voice.

"Do you think you could give me a ride home? I was at my friends', but they had to go so now I'm kind of just stranded," I said awkwardly.

"Of course. I was going to run to the store anyways. I'll be down in a minute. Just text me the address."

"Thanks West." We ended the call and I stepped inside the building again, waiting for him after I texted him the address. I wasn't going to get frostbite standing out here. I waited a few more minutes before I heard the elevator open and West's handsome figure walked out.

"Hey beautiful. It's been a while. What have you be up to?" he asked me, wrapping his arms around me. I wrapped my arms around him too and enjoyed the comfort. It'd been far too long since I've just hugged someone. Caiden didn't count since he was him. He didn't want to be near me unless it was for some sexual reason.

Chapter 48

You know that's not true. You spent half of your break just at his house.

Yes, but that's only because he didn't want to be alone.

"I've just been hanging out with friends and spending time with my family. Nothing big," I responded shrugging as we pulled back from our embrace. We left the building and he led me to his car.

"That sounds enjoyable," he said sending me a smile and I nodded.

"Yeah I'm just not ready to return back to school," I said and he nodded, starting the car and blasting the heat.

"Hey you should come with me next Saturday to my cousin's fashion show. My mom's making me go for support so I thought I'd bring a girl who actually would enjoy it," West suggested and I bit my lip thinking about it. I remember he said once before that his cousin was the famous Clover Thompson and I mean that fashion class I'm taking at the girls' university is growing on me.

"Sure, I'll go," I answered and he smiled in return. I could be girly sometimes. "I don't have to dress up right?"

"Just wear whatever," he told me and I nodded. The car filled with comfortable silence and me being me I just had to ruin it by turning up the music.

I clapped my hands together. "It's time to bring this car ride to life!" I said, before gasping when I heard what song was playing.

"Make a dragon wanna retire man. I'm too hot hot damn. Say my name you know who I am I'm too hot hot damn." West laughed at my obnoxious singing and my dancing.

"You never fail to surprise me yogurt girl," he said and I smiled, flipping my blonde hair over my left shoulder.

"Hey you know what I just realized."

"What?"

"Your house is near where I work."

"Oh yeah I know you work at Mr. Hero right?" I asked turning down the music a little.

"Uh yeah how do you know that?" My whole body froze and I remained silent for a minute.

Shit I was Jason when I saw him there.

"Yeah uh my friend knows who you are because of your cousin and he just said you worked there." I put a fake smile on my face hoping he would believe my lie.

"Oh right." He nodded and the car filled with almost awkward silence. After that we only shared a few more words till he dropped me off at home.

"Hey thanks for the ride. If you don't mind I'll take your offer on picking me up at six," I said facing him.

"Yeah sounds great. I'll see you then." He smiled and surprised me by pecking my cheek. His lips were cold against my warm cheek and something about the small act of kindness just didn't feel right. Just the thought of going with him tonight didn't feel right.

I forced a smile and got out of the car shutting the door behind me. I made my way inside, glad to see the house was clean and didn't smell like alcohol. I went upstairs, skipping every other step and stopped at the end of the hall by Jeffery's room.

"Oh hey sis. I thought you were spending the day with your boyfriend?" he asked me, raising an eyebrow.

"Caiden isn't my boyfriend. He's just a friend of mine." I mentally scoffed. "And just calling him a friend is a stretch," I added and Jeffery snorted.

"Claire I didn't know you were so naive. I'm sure that he likes you. I mean most guys aren't possessive over his friends," Jeffery said rolling his eyes. I swear at times this boy acts like he's been through it all.

"I don't know why he's so possessive, I guess it's just his personality, but I know for a fact Caiden doesn't like me in any other way then a friend," I said confidently, moving my purse higher on my shoulder.

"Sure, whatever you say sis," Jeffery said before focusing on his video game. Rolling my eyes, I headed to my bedroom and let out a sigh as I jumped back on my bed. I let out a piercing scream and accidentally rolled off my bed when I turned my head to see Caiden Anderson, the one man that seems to consume my thoughts lately laying there.

"What the hell do you want?" I demanded, standing up and glaring at him. I frowned at the small stinging pain the fall left. That actually hurt my ass.

"I came here to tell you to get over the whole me kicking you out thing. I was only pissed. I did come back to get you but it seems you got a ride with my low life neighbor," he said, sitting up so he was leaning against my headboard to my bed.

"You can't just tell me to get over something and think all is forgiven," I said seriously, standing my ground. I knew he wasn't one to apologize but I didn't really care. This wasn't a little thing. He was about to make me walk a distance that would take an hour drive.

"Well then what the fuck do you want from me? I don't want to deal with your pissed off attitude after break. Let's just settle this now," he said, staring intently at me and waiting for a reaction.

"Okay fine. I think this whole hanging out thing needs to stop. If being your friend involves you flipping out on me all the time then this isn't going to work. We are just two different people Caiden."

"God dammit Claire." His hands clenched his hair before he let go and stood up. "I'm only fucking irritated that you were going to go with Wesley," he said moving so he was right in front of me. I ignored the fact that he called West Wesley and instead crossed my arms over my chest.

"I won't apologize to you," he added. I sighed I didn't expect an apology but I still haven't changed my mind. I don't want to be involved with him.

Yeah, you say that now.

I snorted. "So you were jealous and thought it would be a good idea to just push me away."

"I push everyone away, get over it. You can't save everyone from their demons Claire."

"I don't care what you say I will help you face your past. You can't go around pushing everyone out your life who tries to get close to you," Caiden's eyes darkened even more if possible and his large hands grabbed my face and his lips were suddenly pressed against mine and I was left in a state of shock.

Caiden Anderson was kissing me. This wasn't right. I should have pulled away. I should have kicked him out of my room. But the funny thing was I didn't. Nope, instead I wrapped my own hands around the back of his neck and I only let him pull me closer. I let myself relax and enjoy the kiss. I let myself kiss him back with the same amount of desire and passion.

I thought it was over when one of Caiden's hands let go of my face but I was wrong instead his left hand grabbed onto my waist and brought me even closer so there was no room in between us. He moved his lips away for a quick second to let us both take in air before they were back on mine.

I didn't even realize we were moving until I felt my back hit the wall. Our lips moved together almost passionately and his grip on my waist tightened.

"He's not my boyfriend," I heard Jeffery say from the doorway in a high-pitched voice. I tried to push Caiden away almost immediately, but I failed and only stood there; my hands slipped from the

back of his neck to his chest. We both stood there with our chests moving up and down as we tried to let air fill our lungs again.

"Get out," I said after a few seconds not even looking toward my younger brother and keeping my eyes on Caiden's. I didn't get a response and took that as a signal that he left.

"I don't want to lose you from my life baby doll," Caiden said to me, his right hand was still placed on my face. I felt his thumb almost stroke my cheek as he moved it back and forth slowly.

"You can try to help me but like I said earlier my demons won't just go away." His hands dropped and he took a step back, his hands turning into fists. "You don't need me in your life. Your life was fucking perfect, you had the perfect boyfriend and the perfect friends everything was perfect until you decided to talk to me." His eyes flashed with anger when he mentioned Nick. I stayed silent. I didn't think I'd ever heard Caiden say so many words to me.

"I will make sure when the time comes and you fight your demons you will win," I started slowly. I didn't know exactly what to say to all of that. "And Caiden I stopped having a perfect life the day I pulled into that university."

Chapter 49

"Make sure your paper is in MLA format! I won't accept it if it's not," my father told the class. I simply rolled my eyes at this, he acted like we're in middle school.

"Do you have something you want to say, Jason?" he asked me with narrowed eyes.

"Nah," I said, waving him off and he only shook his head at me.

"If you have a problem with my class then the door is right there. Some of us are trying to learn," he said and I raised an eyebrow. All of this just because I rolled my eyes.

"You know what just stay after class we'll talk about this then." My eyes widened, first day back from break and I was already getting in trouble by my own father.

I glanced next to me at Nick who was already looking at me and he mouthed, "What are you going to do?" I simply shrugged.

"Jason for the last time stop disrupting my class. Next time I have to tell you you're out," he said sternly. Right as he was about to continue talking about the essay he got cut off by the sound of a knock and the door opening.

"Sorry to interrupt Mr. Martez," the dean said, his eyes skimming the room before landing on me and Nick.

They narrowed a bit before he continued, "I need to speak with Jason, Nicolaus and Kyle." The three of us shared a look before standing up.

"Jason come to class early next week. We'll talk then," my dad said while watching along with the class as we grabbed our stuff and followed after the dean.

"Hey Mr. Anderson," Nick said and the dean only glanced at him.

"Hello Nicolaus." He made a face at the use of his full name and Kyle snorted.

We all remained silent as we followed after him into his office. When we arrived I noticed Jax and Tom were there too.

"Have any of you had contact with Caiden recently?" the dean finally asked and I narrowed my eyes. This was what he called us down for. All the guys shook their heads and I simply shrugged.

"Jason I know you're his roommate so you must have had some contact with him," he said and everyone in the room looked at me.

"Caiden hates him," Tom said rolling his eyes. Oh how I wish that was completely true.

"If any of you hear from him I want you to tell him that his father would like to have a word with him," the dean said waving us off. I noticed his eyes were as cold as Caiden's which made me wonder. Why was it so important to find him? I mean I haven't seen him since that day he came over before my awful date. That was a week ago.

Oh right I should probably explain. My date with West went terrible due to that fact that the waiter tripped and all of our food went all over us. It was funny now but it obviously wasn't then. Now that I thought about it I hadn't talked to West since that day.

"Caiden has probably been skipping too many classes again," Tom said laughing.

"I don't think that's it. The dean wouldn't have requested all of us down there if that was the case," Kyle said, grabbing a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket.

"Man you really shouldn't be doing that stuff. It could kill you," I said, my voice still deep. Kyle snorted and all the guys burst out laughing.

"Why don't you leave the real men to hang out while you go spy on your daddy," Jax said and the laughter slowly came to a stop as they all looked at us with curiosity. I was glad we were already out of the building because at this point I didn't really know what would happen.

"Jax shut the hell up," Nick hissed and Tom raised an eyebrow.

"Man what are you talking about?" Tom asked and he shrugged.

"Don't look at me. Why don't you ask your good friend Jace?" If looks could kill Jax would have been six feet under.

"Jason!" Nathan yelled, waving. A huge smile crawled its way on my face at the sight of my best friend. I hadn't seen him or Mia in what felt like forever.

"Nathan, perfect timing!" I said and Nathan started to slow down as he gets near all of us obviously sensing the tension in the air.

"Hey Jace," Nathan said, putting his arm over my shoulder.

"Nathan I'm sure you know. Don't you think little Jason here should stop hiding his secret?"

"What secret?" Nathan asked, acting confused.

"Don't go playing dumb Nathan," Jax hissed.

"I don't know what the hell you're talking about," Nathan said, narrowing his eyes at Jax.

"I'm done with this little act. You've already told me your reason for being here. I think it's time everyone knows, I mean you should know by now if your daddy is cheating," he said and Kyle, Tom and Nick stared at me curiously.

He was right, I should know by now. I have overstayed my welcome at Johnston University.

C'mon Claire, I thought you had a backbone. Since when is it okay for some guy to push you around.

I do have a backbone, I told my conscious.

I mean I've been here for months now. I've made friends and enemies and as soon as I tell them it may change. I wanted to get into that girl's school so I knew if something went wrong with my mom's plan I would at least have an education still.

I need to find Caiden and then that woman.

"Who's your dad?" Tom asked me, breaking me out of my thoughts.

"It's Mr. Martez right?" Jax asked.

"Martez only has a daughter and a son in high school," Kyle said, rolling his eyes.

"Oh that's right. I mean if Mr. Martez was your dad that would mean that your name would have to be either Claire or Jeffery," Jax said and I glared at him with hatred. I don't know what I ever did to him to deserve this. He must have some motive for making my life a living hell.

"I can't do this," I muttered running away. I couldn't bear to see their reactions.

My body collided with another making us both fall on our asses. Just great this why I should watch where I'm going.

"Oh Jason I'm so sorry!" Eddie said, standing up and helping me up. I brushed off my baggy jeans and my tee-shirt and waved him off.

"It was my fault don't worry about it," I said and he nodded. I frowned when I noticed the bags underneath his eyes. He looked like he hasn't slept for days.

"Hey Eddie are you okay?" I asked him and he immediately put a fake smile on his face.

"I'm perfectly fine why?" he asked, pulling on the end of his long sleeve shirt.

"You seem sad," I said as softly as I could in my guy voice.

"I'm fine. Listen I'll see you later," he said grabbing a book off the ground. He rushed off and my eyebrows furrowed as I watched his figure leave. I've been so focused with myself I haven't taken time to try to help Eddie. I guess I really can be selfish.

Chapter 50

I lay on my bed patiently waiting for Caiden while watching a rerun episode of The Walking Dead. I'd been waiting for him for hours now. I jumped up, surprised when I heard the door slam shut.

"Caiden we need to talk," I said, only to realize he brought company. He seemed to be too occupied with the brunette to respond and only pushed her body on his bed. Lovely. It was nice to see that the kiss we shared meant absolutely nothing to him.

"Caiden," I said louder not even taking time to try to hide my girl voice. I sighed, frustrated when he continued to ignore me. Standing up from my own bed, I walked over and tapped him on the shoulder.

He pulled back and looked at me while the girl continued to kiss his neck and attack the side of his face.

"What?" he snapped.

"I need to speak with Samantha," I told him and he pushed the brunette away from him and stood up.

"Why?" he asked me and I took a deep breath.

"I've overstayed my welcome here. It's time I find out if my dad's cheating and then leave. Too many people are finding out my secret. Nick, Kyle, Tom, Jax, all of them know," I said determined to speak with the blonde woman.

"Caiden." The girl moaned, standing up and wrapping her arms around his torso and he looked at her with disgust and pushed her off.

"Fine be that way! I have more respect for myself and I won't allow you to treat me like this," she said standing up and fixing her shirt before leaving the room, making sure to slam the door behind her.

"We'll go right now then," Caiden said and I nodded.

"Then I'll just change and we'll be on our way." I opened my suitcase and pulled out a girl's outfit which consisted of dark skinny jeans and a shirt. I pulled off my wig and brushed my blonde hair and pulled some of it back so I looked like I at least tried.

"I'm ready," I told him and he nodded grabbing his keys. I poked my head outside the door to make sure no one was in sight before quickly rushing toward the elevator. Caiden purposely took his time getting over here which made me scowl.

"You know we never talked about that kiss Caiden," I said looking at him when the elevator doors closed as we made our way down.

"What's there to talk about?" he asked, keeping his cold facade up.

"You kissed me! Don't you dare tell me you didn't feel anything because no one can kiss someone like that and not feel a thing," I hissed, just before the door opened. Hiding my face, we quickly left the building and made our way to his car.

"You're right. I did feel something," he said not looking at me.

"Mr. Anderson you better be taking that girl off campus," a teacher yelled and he simply ignored him. We got in his car and he started the car up and pulled out of the parking lot.

"I don't do relationships Claire. So if that's what you want then I guess I'll just be disappointing you too," he said and I didn't respond. I didn't know what to say. He suddenly grabbed my hand and squeezed it, which surprised me.

"I just ask one thing if it's not a relationship you want," I said after a moment. I knew he was only afraid of commitment. He didn't trust any female. Which makes sense, I mean he has only faced the worst in his life.

"What?" he asked, glancing at me. The look he gave me made me hesitate. I couldn't ask him to stop bringing different girls to the room if he doesn't have feelings for me. I mean who cares if we both felt something during one small kiss. We were just caught in the moment at the time.

"Never mind," I said, before turning up the music. It took about twenty minutes to arrive at an office. I raised an eyebrow in questioning.

"She's working," he said, taking his keys out and getting out of the car. I followed his lead and also got out, looking at the sign, I read it out loud.

"Sam's weddings."

"She's a wedding planner," Caiden said before walking in. My eyes widened at this. So that day with Nick when we stole those wedding papers they were for her job. I quickly followed after him and went inside.

It was a large place with decorations, dresses and cakes.

"Hello! Welcome to Sam's Weddings! Are you two here to book a wedding with us?" the lady at the front desk asked and Caiden snorted.

"No, I'm here to speak with Samantha," he said, just as a familiar blonde walked out with a tape measure around her neck and a dress in one hand. The other hand was occupied with a little ball with needles in it.

"Caiden?" she said, sounding surprised. This was the lady who simply sat by and watched as Caiden was beat and tortured. This was the lady who was possibly with my dad.

"I'm so happy to see you!" She dropped all of her stuff on the desk and pulled him into a hug. He simply stiffened and left his arms by his side. Sensing that he wasn't going to hug her back she stepped away from him, a smile still plastered on her face.

"Who's this?" she asked, looking at me.

"Claire meet Samantha," he said, keeping his voice void of emotion.

"Hello," I said, shaking her hand.

"It's nice to meet you. I didn't know Caiden had a girlfriend," she said seeming genuinely surprised to meet me.

"I'm not-" I tried to say but I was cut off by Caiden.

"This whore is not my girlfriend. You already know any chance of me ever letting a girl in my life is slim," he hissed and her smile disappeared.

"Caiden you know we never really have had a chance to talk about what happened," she said glancing at me, before looking back at him.

"There's nothing to talk about. You simply left me to be tortured," he said, his hands clenching at his sides.

"You know I couldn't help you," she said, looking pained. "You shouldn't let your past stop you from having a future. Please let your father and I get you help."

"I'm not here to discuss this. I'm only here for her." He nodded his head toward me. "She wants to speak with you." She focused her attention on me and tried to give me a smile.

"What can I do for you?" Samantha asked me.

"I was wondering what you are doing with my father, Daniel Martez," I asked, not beating around the bush.

"Oh your father is a lovely man. He's one of my most recent clients. Didn't he tell you?" she asked, her eyebrows furrowing.

"No, I've only seen you two sneaking around and him coming home late from work and sneaking in early mornings," I said almost accusingly. She gasped and shook her head.

"Oh Claire, sweetie it's not what you think. Your father was planning a special event for your parents' wedding anniversary. He wanted to surprise her. I was helping him plan it." I felt completely and utterly stupid.

"Was?" Caiden questioned.

"Yes, I haven't met with him in weeks now. Since their anniversary was in December," she said and I stared at her. Could the floor please just open up and swallow me whole?

"I am so sorry!" I said embarrassed. "I just thought - I mean I didn't realize -" I stuttered.

"It's perfectly fine. I'm sure Caiden would wonder if I was cheating if he seen me sneaking around," she said and he snorted.

"I wouldn't be surprised if I found out you were cheating." I could see that hurt her and she didn't respond.

"Now that that's settled, we should be heading out. You have bags to pack," he said, leaving out the door. I looked at the blonde woman and gave her an apologetic look.

"I'm sorry about this," I said and she waved me off.

"You're fine. Please take care of Caiden. I can see he cares for you," she said and I only nodded before leaving.

Once we were in the car again I finally spoke. "She's right you know." He glanced at me for a quick second, his hands clenching the wheel.

"You really shouldn't let your past stop you from having a future," I said and he didn't respond. We sat in silence, neither one of us in the mood for music. Once we arrived back at school I thanked him and decided to head to the Starbucks across the street. I had to call my mom.

Taking out my phone I dialed my mom's number after ordering a drink.

"Hello?" she said and I sighed.

"Hey Mom," I responded. "I have good news," I said and I could picture her raising an eyebrow.

"Oh?"

"You know how dad surprised you on your wedding anniversary?" I said.

"How'd you know about that?" she asked curiously.

"That's why dad was sneaking around he was working with a wedding planner," I said and she squealed like a little girl.

"So this means your father isn't cheating on me?" she said almost questioningly.

"Yes, Dad is loyal. He isn't cheating on you, Mom."

"Hell yeah!" she yelled and I could imagine her fist pumping. "Thank you so much Claire! I appreciate that you did this for me. I will get you anything you want," she said, sniffing. I smiled, obviously happy for her. Part of me was excited that my life would go back to normal but the other half of me was disappointed. I wasn't ready to lose everyone. I knew I probably would lose contact over time if they were to forgive me for hiding this from them.

"Claire?" I heard Eddie say and I looked up from my drink and smiled at him.

"Join me, take a seat," I said looking at him. He nodded and sat down in the seat across from me.

"How have you been?" I asked him since we had to miss our weekly bowling outing and he gave me a small, fake smile.

"I've been better," he responded honestly.

"Are your friends speaking to you again?" I questioned curiously, last time we were together he told me they were all getting to a good point again. He laughed and plastered another smile on his face.

"Yeah it only took them about a week to look past our differences," he said and I nodded.

"I'm happy for you, Eddie. You deserve to be happy! I hate how everyone in that damned school treats you like you have so disease," I said disgusted. It was ridiculous.

"Thanks Claire! I'm so happy to have a friend like you," he said and I put my hand on his and smiled.

"I'll always be here for you. Now what about your parents? How are things with them?" I asked, taking a sip of my drink.

"They still aren't speaking to me. But it's okay I know they will eventually open up to the fact that I am gay," he said almost positively. Something about the way he was acting was off.

"Are you still seeing that therapist?" I asked him. I was seriously worried about him.

"Yes," he was lying through his teeth. I could tell by the way he was speaking.

"Eddie I'm gonna come straight out with it. I'm worried about you. You're sickly pale and you have bags under your eyes," he simply shrugged.

"I'm fine," he responded standing up. "Listen I have to go." He was about to leave I grabbed his hand.

"Eddie, you should know something," I said and he shook his head.

"Claire I already know you've been going undercover in my school. I don't know your reasoning, but I know it was obviously important. Believe me when I tell you, I'm not mad." When he spoke those words I felt my heart calm. He wasn't mad. If there was one person in the world that I was afraid of losing it was Eddie.

"Thank you," I whispered and he nodded, before leaving the cafe.

I only had one thing left to do since everyone close to me knew. Well besides West, but there was no reason for him to really know.

Last thing on my list was I had to pack my bags and move out.

When I reached the dorm room I opened it and quickly rushed in shutting the door behind me. I was getting good at making sure I'm not spotted when coming up here as a girl. I heard someone clear their throat and I turned around and gasped when I saw who was standing in Caiden and my dorm room.

"You have a lot of explaining to do young lady."

Chapter 51

"Please explain to me why on earth you would be pretending to be a boy," the headmistress asked, halfway sitting on the dean's desk.

"Do you understand how bad this will look on my school!?" the dean hissed, his eyes colder than ice.

"Your school!? What about mine! If word gets out that I allowed a cross dresser into my school it's finished," she responded, glaring at her ex-husband.

"How could you keep this a secret from me?" the dean hissed, looking at his son in the seat next to me. Caiden simply shrugged.

"Hello sir. I heard you requested to see me," my dad said, knocking and opening the door. He didn't hide his surprise when he saw me sitting in the chair.

"Mr. Martez you have been a teacher here for years. You have taught at this school since it was a school for girls and boys so I must ask. Why wouldn't you tell us about this?" My poor dad looked confused to no end.

"Tell you about what?"

"That your daughter Claire has been going undercover as a boy in my university!" The dean was furious, he didn't even hesitate to spit out each word.

I should probably explain how I got here. It all started when we got back from talking with Samantha. It seemed that someone left an anonymous note telling the dean and the headmistress that I was here undercover as a boy and so they decided they wanted to greet me back at the dorm and me walking in as a girl only proved them right.

"You must be mistaken, sir. My daughter would never do something like that. Tell them that this is all a misunderstanding Claire," my father said and I gave him a guilty smile.

"Anyway, why are you even here? Shouldn't you be at Chicago?" he said after a minute of me not responding.

"Dad, I never applied for any college in Chicago," I said and I could practically see the steam coming out of his ears.

"I would like to apologize to big of you for this whole thing. I will have her pack up her stuff and I will take care of this," my dad said, his face blank.

"No, you see Mr. Martez I can't just let this go. Your daughter stole someone's identity. If the word got out we would have to contact the police," the Dean said and my eyes widened.

"It's really not that big of a deal," Caiden said rolling his eyes.

"Did everyone know about this?" my dad said almost throwing his hands up to show his irritation.

"C'mon Martez part of you knew all along. No guy it as feminine as Jason Lockwood. I mean half of the time she couldn't even pull off a guy's voice," Caiden said and right as my dad was about to respond I interrupted.

"Can I talk?" I yelled, standing up. Everyone was in their own damn arguments but not once has anyone really listened to me.

"What more do you have to say?" the headmistress said, rolling her eyes one it was silent. I will never like this woman.

"I didn't just wake up one day and say hey I'm gonna pay thousands of dollars and go to an all-boys university. I came here to find out if you were cheating on mom," I said pointing at my dad.

"Why on Earth would you think I cheated on your mother?" he asked, appalled.

"You were sneaking around and coming home late at night. I now know I was wrong after talking to Samantha she said that she was only helping you," I said, muttering the last part.

"I'm sorry I gave you that idea, but I would never cheat on her. You should've talked to me instead of dressing up like a guy at a private university!" he said, narrowing his eyes at the end.

"I can't believe that was your reason," the dean said shaking his head and I sighed sitting back down.

"I don't even know what to do about this," the headmistress said, sliding her hand down her face, frustrated.

"Just let it go," Caiden said looking annoyed.

"You have no room to talk young man. You knew about this for who knows how long and didn't tell us!" The dean hissed at his son. Caiden didn't even flinch at his harsh tone or his cold glare.

"I technically didn't steal anyone's identity since the name was completely made up and even if someone does have that name I didn't like take all his information so..," I trailed off and the dean just shook his head again.

"I want you to go to your dorm room and pack up all of your belongings. I never want to see you even in the parking lot of this school. I expect you to be out of this school by ten pm the latest," he

hissed, standing up and I nodded. "I swear if word gets out about this to anyone then we will have some serious problems, Miss Martez."

I stood up and was getting ready to leave, but the headmistress called my name. "Claire you are very talented and I still need someone like you at my school so I won't expel you. Don't make me regret this," she told me and I nodded. I don't know how I got out of this without punishment but I wouldn't complain.

"I am so disappointed with you Claire," my father said and I almost snorted, join the club. "I have a class to teach, but I do expect you to follow his orders." We went our different ways and it didn't take long for me to get back to my room. After a text to Nathan it didn't take more than five minutes for him to get over here.

"I'm sorry Claire-bear," Nathan said grabbing my hands and I shrugged.

"The funny thing is i'm not. I've met so many different people and I've made so many new friends that if I had the option to do this all over again then I would," I said honestly. I sighed when I felt my phone vibrating in my back pocket. The name Eddie flashed on the screen and I held up a finger to Nathan as if saying one minute.

"Hey Eddie!" I said and from the other line I could hear someone sniffing. "What happened?" I asked.

"Oh nothing. I'm fine. Claire do you think we could meet up in about an hour? I really would like to show you something," he said and I frowned knowing he obviously wasn't okay if he was crying.

"Yeah, sure. Where do you want to meet?" I asked.

"Meet me at the roof of your building?" he suggested and as soon as I agreed he hung up. It was a weird place to meet but he probably wanted it to be private.

"It looks like packing is going to have I wait," I said and Nathan raised an eyebrow.

"What's wrong?" he asked, noticing how stressed out I was.

"Something's off about Eddie. He sounds panicked or like he's been crying and I'm seriously worried about him. He wants me to meet him in an hour," I said biting my lip. Nathan pulled me in a hug and I didn't hesitate to hug him back.

"I can come with if you want and just keep my distance," he suggested and I nodded.

"That would be great, but he just wants to show me something. Thanks for the offer Nay-Nay." I kissed his cheek as I pulled away and stepped back. I started to throw all my clothes and stuff all in my suitcases and was glad that there really wasn't much to pack.

"Where are you meeting him?"

"He wants to meet on the roof of this building," I responded after a minute of thinking through a conversation.

"Why the roof?" Nathan asked with a raised eyebrow and I shrugged.

"I guess I'll find out. I should probably leave a few minutes early just so I know I won't be late. I don't want him to think I'm standing him up," I said and Nathan nodded slowly.

"You know Claire it's already seven. Maybe you should see if he'll meet you somewhere else." I quickly shook my head, pausing what I was packing for a minute.

"For weeks now he's been coming in this building and going upstairs so I have to see why."

"Maybe his dorm is here."

"I've been to his dorm before to hang out. I know for a fact it's not even in this building," Nathan sighed not having an argument and reluctantly agreed.

Chapter 52

I walked up the stairs slowly. I'd never been up here before so it was a foreign area. I was relieved to reach a door that said roof on it. This stairway was dark as hell.

"Eddie?" I said, looking confused. When I noticed someone standing there. I could barely make out the figure.

"Claire you're not supposed to be here yet," Eddie said, his voice shaky.

"What do you mean? You wanted to meet at eight?" I said, confused.

"Yeah and it's not eight yet. Dammit Claire. You shouldn't be here! I was making it easier on you! I was going to leave one simple note!" he said stepping back.

"Eddie careful! Remember we're on a roof. Now what are you talking about? You're scaring me. Why don't we go see your therapist?" I suggested, taking a few steps closer.

"See you don't fucking understand Claire. No one will ever understand. I can't go on. This is why you weren't supposed to come up here early. I never wanted you to see me like this," Eddie yelled at me, tears sliding down his cheeks. His whole body was shaking and his teeth were chattering. I was surprised at the use of the curse word and paused for a minute. It seemed as though every time I took a step forward he took one back. My heart was beating so fast I didn't know what to do. The side of my mind knew what he was thinking and I had to help him. I had to. "Thank you Claire for everything. The last few months have been the best months of my life."

"Eddie don't do this," I whispered, keeping my voice soft. He took one glance off of the roof and shook his head. He was now standing on the edge. He took a note out of his pocket and threw it toward me. I didn't even take the risk of moving forward to grab it.

"Eddie please," my voice cracked, but it didn't stop me. "You are so young. You have a long life ahead of you. You don't want to give it all up now. Please Eddie, if you can't find it in yourself to step down from that ledge for me then step down for yourself. Please."

"I'm sorry, I have to Claire. I have to." I didn't know those would be the last words I would ever hear from Eddie Sterling.

Time seemed to slow down in the next moment as I ran as fast as I could trying to get to him. But I never expected to watch a knife slide across his throat faster than a blink of an eye right in front of me. His body fell backwards off the building, but my arm stayed frozen in the air even after I heard the sound of his body landing on the concrete below.

I expected my best friend to get through this. I expected him to live a long happy life. I never expected him to commit suicide right in front of my eyes.

Ear piercing screams were filling the air and it only took the feeling of someone shaking my body to realize they were my own.

"Claire?" The screams didn't stop as my knees hit the floor of the rooftop. "Claire!" Drops of water fell from my eyes and slid down my face nonstop. "Claire! What's wrong?" The feeling of someone's arms wrapping around me started to disappear as my body became cold and numb. "Claire!" My name that I heard from someone's lips faded into silence as my eyes closed on their own accord and I slipped into unconsciousness.

My eyes struggled to open due to the feeling of the light shining down on my eyelids. I blinked a few times before my eyes opened completely. I knew I was in a hospital almost right away when I caught sight of the white ceilings and walls. The smell of soap and bleach was strong making me scrunch my nose up.

I grimaced when I noticed the needle that was poking my arm. Leaning over I pressed the nurse button on the remote next to me. Why was I in a hospital? I'm not in any pain.

For once my conscious didn't respond. My eyes snapped to the door and I was surprised to see Caiden standing there. He looked at me wearily and hesitantly walked toward me.

"How are you?" he asked me, taking a seat in the chair next to the bed.

"I'm fine. Why am I here?" I asked him, sitting up.

"Claire, try to remember what happened before you passed out," he told me and my eyebrows furrowed, trying to remember.

"I remember meeting Eddie at our usual spot. He told me he had something important to tell me, but then he started crying as soon as I showed up. He started thanking me for everything and then he started talking about things that didn't make sense," I told him and Caiden grabbed my hand and squeezed it.

"He told me I didn't understand and he had to before he - before he -" I broke out in tears and started hyperventilating. No, that had to of been a dream. I couldn't have lost my best friend.

"I'm sorry Claire," Caiden said, his eyes held pity and I shook my head.

"Why? Just why?" I couldn't breathe as I choked the words out between sobs. I was gasping for breath. I watched my best friend take his own life. The vision played over and over again in my mind, he slit his throat and his body fell backwards off the building. I couldn't save him.

"Baby doll you need to breathe. You're still in shock. You've already been out for a few days. You're lucky your friend was there to find you when it all happened," he told me and I tried to listen to him. Caiden let me pull his body toward me and I wrapped my arms around him.

The comfort helped me calm down enough to breathe. "I'm okay," I whispered, my voice hoarse. Caiden pulled away at the sound of someone knocking before walking in.

"Claire, I'm glad to see you're up. I'm a doctor, Cliff. I'm just going to check a few things and you can be released whenever you're ready," the doctor told me and I nodded.

"If you need someone to talk to about what happened just call a friend of mine, Dr. Jerris and make an appointment. He can help you." He handed me a card and I thanked him.

It didn't take long for him to release me and for me to sign the papers. I was soon dressed and on my way back to my house in no time. Apparently both schools are giving everyone a few days off since it happened there and there were other people who were in the parking lot that witnessed what happened.

"Do you want me to stay with you?" Caiden asked me quietly when we arrived and I shook my head.

"No, I need to be alone," I said after a moment. He seemed hesitant to just let me leave but he nodded.

"Call me if you need to talk," he said and I nodded stepping out of the car. When I opened the door to my house I didn't look at anyone and only went straight to my room.

As soon as I was safe in my own confines I broke down. I don't know how long I sat there or laid there crying it could have been hours or even days. It didn't feel real. It should, since I watched the whole thing, but it doesn't.

I watched it all happened from beginning to end. I fucking knew he was depressed and yet for some reason I believed him when he said he was getting help. He showed every single sign and I simply brushed it off like the idiot I am. As of right now I knew for sure of one thing.

I would never forgive myself for letting this happen. His blood would forever be on my hands.

Chapter 53

I jumped in surprised when I heard a knock on the door. Sniffing, I tried to wipe all my tears off my face.

"Yeah?" I called out not moving from my spot on my floor.

"Claire, honey Nathan stopped by. He dropped this off. He thought you may want to have it," my mom said and a piece of paper slid under the door. I didn't respond and simply crawled over grabbing the folded piece of paper. I was grateful that my family was giving me time by myself to grieve.

The first thing I read had me choking on my tears.

To my lovely best friend, Claire.

I knew immediately it was Eddie's handwriting. This was the note he was going to leave me. I gasped for breath. I could do this, I told myself.

Dear Claire,

I'm sorry. Yes, I lied to you. I was never getting help from anyone. I can't go around and act like everything's okay. My parents still hate me just like my friends. You were all I had. Nothing was getting better. But, it's pretty funny if you think about it. I mean you would think that's all I would need is a lovely great best friend who pretends she's a guy. (Yes, Claire that was meant to make you smile) I wish my heart would accept that. I really do, but for some reason it doesn't. It begs for forgiveness from my parents. It begs for forgiveness from my friends. It begs for a day that allows people to see being gay is not a disease. Every day I would wish that I wasn't born with such a curse because of how I was treated. I know if I was there with you right now you would scold me. As I'm writing this, I could picture you shaking your head and placing your hand on mine telling me that I'll get through this, telling me that you're here for me no matter what and there is nothing wrong with being gay. I know you would show me that gorgeous smile that you have and just tell me all the great things life will have in store for me. This is why I apologize to you, Claire. I tried so hard to stay with you but the bullying was the final straw. I broke, I felt myself dying inside each day. Once a tree falls it can't get back up. I do hope that you can find it in your heart to forgive me for this. Please do tell my parents that I will always love them and I will always be with them. Claire, please remember that I will always be with you too. I will watch you grow and be successful and I will watch you bring happiness into others' lives as you did to mine. Not once did I ever regret meeting you on that basketball court all those months ago. I will leave tonight with my heart being forever in your debt. Thank you, Claire for all you've done.

Sincerely, Edward (Eddie) Sterling

I tried to wipe the tears from my eyes, but they wouldn't stop. No words could describe the agonizing pain my heart felt as it clenched and screamed and cried for Eddie all at once. For once I couldn't be strong. I folded the letter up and curled myself in a ball on my floor and cried my heart out.

Chapter 54

"Thanks for stopping by Claire. See you next week," Dr. Felix, my therapist said, shaking my hand as I stood up from the couch. I thanked her before leaving her office then the building.

It'd been two weeks since the incident. Over that time I'd been to his funeral and I'd officially moved out of the boys' university with help from Caiden. I haven't spoken to any of my friends since then. Nathan and Mia have tried calling me every day, but I think they're finally getting the hint I wasn't going to answer. Yes, I knew it was bad I was pushing my friends away, but I couldn't help it. I didn't want to hear all of their BS about it not being my fault. I didn't want to blame myself, but no matter what Dr. Felix said I couldn't help it. I didn't get there in time. I could have stopped him, I could have save him, but I didn't.

Stop thinking.

I clenched the wheel tighter and continued to drive to school. Trying to distract myself with the music I realized I had class in thirty minutes. You know there's nothing worse than going to the school next door to where my best friend took his life. At times I even wonder if I never went up there and watched it all would I have moved on faster. Would I still be depressed?

I pulled up at the school and parked. I quickly fixed my makeup in the mirror making sure I showed no signs that I was previously crying. I stepped out of my car and gasped when arms wrapped around my waist.

"Nathan put me down," I hissed smacking his hands, but he didn't let me go.

"You've been ignoring all of our calls for weeks." Nathan frowned his hands still on my waist even after he turned me to face him. "Claire-bear I've missed you."

"I need space, Nathan," I said pushing on his chest, but he kept his hands firmly on my waist.

"I won't let you push me away. I know you, Claire. You'll push everyone away until you're alone to wallow in your tears. Just like you did when Liam left," he said and I looked away from him. Nathan was right. It was what I did. I mean after all I've learned that was what I was best at.

There's nothing easier than pushing everyone away from you. You don't have to deal with the pitiful looks, the long speeches, you don't have to deal with reality.

"Nate I can't deal with it. I'm trying to fix myself. I see a therapist now for my depression! I'm trying okay!" I almost yelled at him and his look of pity started to show.

"I love you, you know that right?" he said, his hands cupping my cheeks now. "Mia and I will forever and always be by your side no matter how hard you try to push us away. I'm glad you're getting help. What you saw was tragedy. Not many people could be sane after seeing that. And I don't want you for one minute to feel alone through all of this Claire-bear."

"I love you too, Nathan," I mumbled putting my head on his chest embracing the hug he pulled me in to.

"I don't know how you are so strong," he mumbled, setting his head on top of mine.

"That's the thing though. I'm not strong, inside I'm just a broken girl."

"I think you need to talk to Caiden," he said after a few minutes.

"And I think that's a terrible idea. I haven't spoken to him since the day he dropped me off at my house," I said, pulling away.

"Hasn't he tried calling you at all?" Nathan asked me with a frown and I shrugged.

"A few times," I said, pulling my purse higher on my shoulder. "Listen I have class. I'll talk to you after. You better go over by your school before a teacher sees you." I gave him a quick hug before heading toward the building my class was in.

"You better call me missy or else!" he yelled after I was across the parking lot. For the first time in weeks a small smile slipped on my face. I'll admit it, I missed my best friend.

I walked into the classroom that only had about ten girls in it at most and took a seat in the front. I remember how strange it was to be in such a small class, but some girl immediately cleared it all up. I thought back to our conversation.

"Claire right?" The strawberry blonde asked me and I nodded. "You look confused. Need help with something?" she asked me and I almost scowled. Couldn't she see that I just wanted to be alone when I sat away from everyone else?

"No, not really. I'm just curious, why isn't there very many girls here?" I asked curiously and she laughed.

"You do know this is like an Ivy League school right? It's hard to get in here which is why we were all surprised when you joined out of nowhere. Not many people make it in here," she told me, flipping her hair over her right shoulder.

"But I heard the boys university had tons of guys," I said and she simply shrugged.

"As much as I hate to say it, if a family was deciding between their son and daughter to take over their family business, they would most likely choose the son. Almost every guy over there is taking

over some family company," she said rolling her eyes. She looked at the time and gasped. She unbuttoned her blouse a little making her cleavage show a little. She pulled her skirt up a little and frowned when she looked at me.

"Why are you doing?" she asked and I raised an eyebrow and glanced around the room to see everyone doing the same thing as the blonde.

"What do you mean?" I asked, not even hiding my boredom. This was why I got along with guys easier.

"Mr. Keith will be here any minute," she said after reapplying her makeup.

"Oh I must be in the wrong class. I thought this was Mr. Woods design class," I said, starting to gather my books and she shook her head giggling.

"You're in the right class. We just all call him by his first name here," she said smiling and I just stared blankly at her before nodding.

"Is there a reason you all are trying to make yourself look good for a teacher?" I asked and another girl pitched in. She had long, beautiful curled hair and had perfectly tanned skin; almost like Mia.

"Just wait till you see him Claire. This man is hot, single and straight."

"But you can't even have a relationship with him," I said frowning and a few girls chuckled.

"I just want sex."

"When I finish this class I can date him."

Different answers came from the girls and I shook my head at them. Either way they shouldn't be making themselves look like whores. They all are beautiful in their own way. If this man only liked the girls for their bodies then he wasn't worth it.

"Claire!" Kayla, the strawberry blonde said snapping her fingers in my face. "Mr. Keith will be here in one minute. Get ready." I rolled my eyes and shook my head.

"C'mon Claire. At least give yourself a sexy look. I mean you somehow made your uniform look freaking adorable just finish it off. Mess up your hair or something," she insisted, frowning. I messed up my blonde wavy hair a little and bit my lip. I almost laughed when she didn't realize I was pretty much mocking her.

"That'll do. I still suggest unbuttoning a few of these buttons and losing the bow tie, but whatever," Kayla said, winking at me. The door opened and everyone's eyes turned to Mr. Keith.

He was indeed very handsome, but I knew to not get involved with him in any way. He was my teacher and I couldn't use any male to make me forget what happened.

"Kayla can you take a seat, please?" he asked and Kayla nodded taking the seat next to me. I rolled my eyes when she sent me another wink. I wiped my thumb across my teeth to make sure there was no lipstick on them before focusing on the teacher.

"I have a huge assignment for you all. Do you think you can all handle it?" he asked, showing off his charming smile.

"Of course," a few girls shouted from the back with grins on their faces.

"I want you to design a wedding dress. I want you to draw it out and then actually make it. My new step sister will pick the dress that she likes the most and will wear it for her wedding."

"What else does the winner get?" Kayla asked him flirtatiously.

"I was getting there Kayla. The winner will receive a 10,000 check and an internship at her friends fashion company," he announced and everyone gasped and started whispering excitedly. I'll admit that did sound great.

"Class quiet down now," Mr. Keith said, leaning against his desk with his arms crossed on his chest. "I have all of her measurements here. After, you design the dress I will need a list of supplies from you so I know what I have to buy. Ladies please remember you are here in this class because you want go into the fashion industry. Well if you want to make it far you have to accept competition. That means take this seriously and work hard," he said as he passed out the paper with all of the measurements.

"You have the rest of the class to work on this. I expect you to have your designs and lists at least ready for me by next week's class," he said sternly.

"Oh my god! This is gonna be so cool! I'm almost positive I'll win this," Kayla said, flipping her blonde hair over her shoulder. She looked at the picture of his sister and squealed so loud I'm sure Nathan could hear it from his school.

"This cannot be your sister!" she yelled and Mr. Keith raised an eyebrow in surprise.

"She's my new step sister," he said nodding, and Kayla stood up and started jumping up and down.

"I'm making a wedding dress for the Tori Crystals!? Since when did she have any siblings?" she said almost accusingly like she didn't believe him.

"Since her mom got married to my father last year," he said before asking her to take her seat again.

"Oh my god. Claire, can you believe this!?" Kayla asked holding up the picture and I stared at it blankly.

"I have no idea who that is," I said seriously and she gasped again.

"She's like one of the hottest models right now from Victoria Secret! Her and her friend Clover are seriously like the definition of perfection," she said, fanning herself.

"Oh that's cool I guess," I said nodding, before pulling out a blank sheet of paper.

"That's not just cool that's freaking incredible! I can't even process this," she said putting her head on the desk. I rolled my eyes before taking a look at the picture of her and trying to imagine her in the perfect dress. I didn't even realize my hand was already sketching something until I focused on the paper. The pencil moved with my hand as I made the smallest details in the dress. I took another glance at her picture and knew exactly what to do.

Chapter 55

I pulled my hair up into a ponytail and walked across the street to the Starbucks. They probably made thousands daily just from being across two colleges.

I stood in line waiting for my drink and it only took me about two minutes to realize who was sitting at one of the tables in the corner.

"Tom?" As soon as his name escaped my lips I regretted it. I didn't know if he wanted to even speak with me after all that happened.

"Claire," he said surprised, glancing at the door. "What are you doing over here? Don't you live on the opposite side of town?" he asked me and I shook my head just as they called my name. I grabbed my drink and cookie and walked over to the chair across from him.

"Do you mind if I sit here for a minute? I think we should talk," I said and he nodded gesturing for me to go ahead. I sat down and bit my lip looking down, not knowing exactly where to start.

"I'm not mad," he said and I looked up from my drink, surprised.

"You have every right to be. Why aren't you mad?" I asked, frowning.

"Your friend, Nathan explained it all to us and made us see it in a different point of view. Although that is a really stupid reason to give up your whole life choices," he said shaking his head and I smiled at him.

"I knew from the start I wasn't giving up anything really. I didn't really have another option for college once I found out that I didn't make it into Princeton and I think my mom knew that. Maybe there was another crazy reason why she had me do that, but I don't regret it. I've once said it before, I would do all of it again if I could. I was there for almost a full school year and I made incredible friends, and some interesting enemies," I said honestly and sincerely.

"Maybe I should dress up and be a guy undercover in an all-girls school," he joked and I rolled my eyes.

"You would be one muscular, buff girl. I'm sure someone would suspect something when you get a hard on after five minutes of being in a classroom. Some of those girls are crazy." I winked and he groaned.

"Don't tease," he grumbled, scowling at me.

"Aw Thomas! Don't get all grumpy with me now," I said leaning over the table and pinching his cheek. He swatted my hand away and just shook his head.

"You're a strange one, Martez."

He has no idea.

Oh great you're back.

I never left.

The door was opening and closing as people kept coming and going and I would only glance times out of pure curiosity, but I never expected his handsome figure to come in here. He was wearing a tight fitted black shirt with a pair of blue jeans and boots. His eyes skimmed the room as if he was looking for someone.

Those hazel eyes made contact with my blue ones right away. My stomach clenched at the intense look on his face and my heart started to beat faster. It was strange to think that in reality I haven't really went more than a few days without him. The only physical difference was he was now a brunette. Emotionally we were probably close to the same. He went through something tragic and I watched something tragic. Yes, his may have been more severe, but either way both left us broken inside. Looks like I wouldn't be able to fix the tear in Caiden Anderson's heart anytime soon.

He looked over at Tom and frowned. He walked to us and his body towered over our sitting figures.

"Hey man. I see you're finally here." Oh so that's why he was sitting here by himself. He was waiting for Caiden.

When Caiden didn't respond and only kept his piercing eyes on me, Tom continued. "Thanks for letting me borrow that cash the other day. I did find my wallet so it's all good now." He took about a hundred dollars out of his pocket and handed it to Caiden who simply nodded.

"Okay well I'm just gonna go to practice now. Will you be at the courts later?"

"Yeah," his deep voice finally responded and I let out a breath I didn't know I was holding. Tom got up and threw the rest of his drink away and waved from the door before walking out.

"You've been ignoring my calls," Caiden noted and I nodded, not bothering to deny it.

"I needed to be alone," I said and he grunted.

"C'mon," he muttered, nodding toward the door. I grabbed my drink and my cookie and followed him out. We started walking down the street both of our hands in our pockets.

"I didn't know what happened at first. I didn't know if you were dying or in a coma or something, but I was fucking worried," he said, not once looking at me. I didn't know what to say. I never thought Caiden would worry about my wellbeing.

"Thank you for caring, but I was only out for a few days because of the shock. I'm okay now."

"Maybe physically, but not emotionally. You're too delicate, Claire. You may not be very innocent, but you have a good heart. A heart I don't want to darken." He suddenly stopped talking and just shook his head, not wanting to finish.

"I'm willing to take the risk," I told him and he didn't respond. He led me across the street to the one place that seemed to haunt my dreams. I snuck up to his dorm or well my old dorm and shut the door behind us.

"This will be the only time I'm ever going to do this, but we are going to spend the rest of the day watching movies and shit and you are going to pick them out." A huge smile appeared on my face as I jumped on my old bed.

"If I'm seen up here I'll be in so much trouble just so you know," I said, making myself comfortable. I was suddenly picked up and brought over to Caiden's bed. He set me down in between his legs.

"This is my only request for the day," he whispered in my ear. His hot breath fanning the side of my face. "I really like this schoolgirl outfit."

"It's my uniform. Your mom thinks that apparently girls cannot dress properly so we had like six uniforms given to us for the year." I rolled my eyes as I looked through the movies and shows on Netflix.

Chapter 56

We lay on Caiden's bed watching *The Vampire Diaries* on Netflix. His face was nuzzled into my room neck and he was not paying attention to the screen at all. My back was against his chest with me sitting in between his legs. His usual cold exterior seemed to disappear into an affectionate exterior as he continued to let his nose nuzzle my neck. I watched as Elena and Damon kissed passionately making a small frown appear on my face. "Caiden, what are we?" I asked softly. I didn't want to ruin the moment since we'd had such a peaceful day and he'd been so nice, but I had to know. Earlier he made it sound like he wanted to be something.

He pulled away a little with a small frustrated sigh and said, "Claire, you know I don't do relationships. They are pointless. It's just a stupid shitty title." My eyes narrowed at the screen and I pulled away a little turning to look at him.

"A shitty title?" I said, coldly and his blank. His cold facade was back, but I ignored it getting up off the bed.

He groaned, "Baby doll, where are you going?" He stood up, frowning. "I told you I was going to give you a nice day."

"Well since it's just a shitty title and we are technically not a couple I decided I'm in the mood to have sex," I said simply. Caiden raised an eyebrow obviously not having a problem with what I said.

"Well then baby doll, I'm all yours," he told me wrapping his arms around my waist and I shook my head pulling away. He's been all touchy feely all day and it was strange, but I didn't mind it till now.

He lives for sex.

Okay that's true; maybe, it wasn't that strange after all.

"Nah I'm good it would be awkward you know," I said and he shook his head.

"Everything will be the same."

"Oh you mean we can just make out whenever and not have that shitty title." I crossed my arms over my chest and he nodded.

"You know I care about you, baby doll. That's why I was at your side at the hospital." I scowled.

"There's a difference between caring for me as a friend and caring for me so much that you're able to see galaxies in my eyes."

"I thought you wanted to have sex?" he said, confused, ignoring my last statement making me narrow my eyes.

"No, not with you." The glare he gave me was as dark as the ones I would receive when I was Jason.

"Then with who?"

Think of someone who will make him mad.

"Jax," I said smirking when he clenched his fists.

"That is the last thing you're going to do," he growled out between clenched teeth.

"But we don't have one of those shitty titles so i'm a free woman," I said grabbing my keys.

"How many times are you going to use my own words against me?" He said running his hands down his face. I opened the door to his room and he grabbed my wrist.

"If you have sex with him I won't forgive you," he told me his eyes staring intensely into mine. I pulled my wrist out of his hand rolling my eyes.

"How old are you five?"

"Why are you still here? Just go fuck him already. But don't expect me to be here waiting for you to get back," he hissed and I shrugged.

"Oh trust me I won't be waiting for you! In reality I never have to see you again." I was almost positive anyone in the building could sense the sexual tension in this room.

"I'm sure you would just replace me with someone like the Wesley guy!" he yelled at me and I rolled my eyes.

"So you're really back to calling me a whore?" I wasn't even surprised. In an argument he would always go for the words that hurt the most.

Doesn't everyone though?

"Just leave Claire," he finally said.

I looked at him straight in those beautiful eyes and just shook my head turning toward the door.

Conceited, selfish, arrogant, ass

I understand that he doesn't do relationships, but if he doesn't do them then I refuse to sit here and allow him to treat me like this. These strange feelings I feel with him will not change that.

But he doesn't treat you like a slut.

Either way he needed to learn. I stopped with my hand on the door handle.

"I get that your past was rough. It was tragic and painful and I understand if it haunts you, but treating all of the females in the world like they're nothing isn't going to fix what happened."

"There's nothing that can be fixed. You don't fucking realize it Claire! I will never see a woman as my equal," he told me turning me around and holding my arms.

He dropped them, but kept his body in front of me. "The world today is disgusting. If I were to see a woman as my equal and we grew old together and got married, had kids, I would be ashamed to tell them the society I lived in. I lived in a world where they don't care. When I went to the cops they investigated because it was their job not because they care. You know they wanted to try to charge me with murder. I was kidnapped for years and yet they wanted me to still suffer. "His hands were clenched into fists as he talked. He backed away from me shaking his head. He sat on the edge of the bed his elbows on his knees, and his head on his palms.

"I don't want to be happy. I don't deserve to be. You think the world is this great, beautiful place, but it's not. You need to open your eyes and stop living in your dreams," he told me, looking me dead in the eyes. I knew there was a frown on my face, but I didn't realize there was a tear streaming down my face till he walked over and wiped it.

"I'm sorry," I mumbled, wrapping my arms around him. I wish I could explain our relationship, but I really can't. One second we're cuddling next, we're yelling then, we're hugging. I can't explain something so complicated. You either understand it or you don't.

It's kind of funny actually, because I've always been that girl that always has something to say. I'm sassy, sarcastic, over confident, good hearted and a complete bitch. Caiden made me someone different though. He brought out a side of me I never knew existed. A more sensitive, sweeter side of me.

"Caiden you're allowed to be happy. It's time you get help and move on from your past so it becomes nothing more than your past," I said and he stepped back and dropped his arms.

"I got help after what happened. It's helping me slowly, but surely," I said honestly.

"I didn't know it affected you that bad," he said softly. Replacing the cold look with a surprised one.

"All I ask is you try," I said and he hesitated.

"I'll try, but not for me or anyone else. Only for you Claire," he told me looking me in my eyes before placing his lips on mine. This was the second time we kissed and I loved the feeling.

He pulled me close to his body and I entangled my hands in his now brown hair as he moved his right hand to cup my cheek. I don't know how long we were kissing before the door burst open cause you know it's impossible to kiss in peace.

"Claire?" Nick said, making me try to move away from Caiden, but he kept his arm firmly on my waist. It was in almost a possessive way and screamed she's mine.

"Hey," I said, waving awkwardly.

"What are you two doing together?" he asked us, glancing at Caiden's arm.

"What the fuck do you want?" Caiden demanded with a scowl.

"I wanted to see if you were coming to the courts, but I see you're busy," he said his voice almost monotone.

"Yeah, I am."

"I didn't know you two were an item?" he questioned and Caiden stiffened.

"We're not, she's just mine," he said and I looked at him in surprise.

"So you two are dating then?" Nick asked slowly, obviously confused.

"No, you know I don't do relationships. She's just mine."

"She's not an object," Nick said frowning.

"She is standing right here," I said narrowing my eyes.

"She's not an object," Caiden agreed. "She's just my everything right now."

"Claire Martez is the only one that's keeping me sane." The words that left his lips left me dazed and confused. I looked at him waiting for him to laugh or something, but he never did.

Chapter 57

"Hey, Eddie, I know it's been a while since I've last saw you and I just wanted to see how you're doing," I said smiling as I waited for a response.

Silence.

"I was looking through my pictures on my phone earlier and I came across a picture we took once when we were hanging out. It was a long time ago toward the beginning of the year, but one look at it made me cry like a baby for hours, yet at the same time smile for hours. You were sitting there with the biggest smile on your face and I was right next to you making some disgusted face at the camera and standing there in the back was the guy from Steak & Shake looking like he was in the middle of twerking," I told him wiping the tear that threatened to fall.

Silence.

"I-I miss you." My voice cracked as I stared at his gravestone.

"I hope you're happy up there because if not I'll make sure to come up there and kick someone's ass if needed," I started again after a minute of calming myself down. "You know Caiden finally admitted he doesn't hate me. I know you always thought he would end up some alcoholic or he would die by the time he reached twenty-five, but I like to think if I keep trying to convince him he will go and finally get some help. You know I got some help, I can't say it's definitely working, but recently my therapist keeps telling me I'm improving and getting better." I looked up as I felt a few drops of water on my face and then watched as it started to pour, water immediately soaking me. I embraced the feeling of the ice, cold water hitting me and finally let myself cry again.

I don't know how long I sat there talking to Eddie, but I knew it was time to go when it was pitch black with very few street lights on. I kissed my hand and touched the gravestone and gave a shaky smile. "See you soon," I whispered, before standing up and not even bothering to wipe my puffy eyes.

Pulling my black leather jacket closer to my body, I walked to my car. I unlocked it and took the twenty-minute drive back to school. I parked in my usual spot and slowly walked to the building with most of the dorms. Pausing at the doors, I looked back and the only school that was in walking distance from this one. I've been at this school for about four weeks now and final exams were coming up quickly, yet I was never in the mood to study. I wanted to go out, I wanted to live for the moment, and I wanted something, anything in my life to go right. I needed something that I know would stay.

I let out a deep breath and opened the doors, after sliding my card and went up to the main elevator, heading up to my dorm. I unlocked the door and walked in to see my roommate, Kayla sleeping peacefully. What surprised me was Caiden leaning against my headboard staring at me.

"What are you doing in here?" I hissed quietly, glancing at the open window that just so happened to have a huge tree next to it. Oh, the perks of having a dorm in the back of the building.

"I was worried," he said and I scoffed, shaking my head.

"You know I do get tired of hearing those words from everyone. I'm not some fragile little girl who can't handle anything. I've been grieving, Caiden. It's something everyone has to do in life if they want to move on," I said, quietly sitting on the side of my bed, so I was next to him.

"Yes, but sitting at the cemetery for most of the day without eating or drinking anything is unhealthy. I won't let you become this empty shell. You don't want to be some bitch who doesn't care about anyone or anything, Claire. You think you can live without friends or anyone around you, but it will only make everything worse," Caiden said turning, so he was sitting next to me on the bed.

"You're such a hypocrite!" I whisper-yelled. "That's all you do and look at you now."

"Exactly, look at me now. Everyone can barely put up with me, parents included. I'm not going anywhere in life at this rate," he interrupted.

"Claire? What the hell is going on?" Kayla asked, turning on her light next to her bed. Her eyes widened when she caught sight of Caiden next to me. "Oh wow. I definitely didn't take you as the type to sneak guys into the dorm." When she sat up the blanket that was on her pooled around her legs, showing off her tight tank top and her boobs. Of course, it didn't bother her since she enjoyed showing off her boobs 24/7. She decided to remove the blanket from her long, tan legs and show off her underwear too.

"Kayla," I hissed giving her a look and looking at her boobs then up again. She quickly understood what I was saying and only smirked.

"Chill Claire, you're the one who broke the rules here. I mean I'm just trying to peacefully sleep in my own dorm," she said innocently and I narrowed my eyes at her before looking at Caiden only to see he was only looking at me.

"Acting like a slut won't get you anywhere besides a corner in New York City. So I'd highly advise it if you'd stop with the whole fake persona thing because it will only lead you to get kicked out of the school for trying to seduce the headmistress's son," Caiden said, his voice void of emotion and Kayla's eyes widened.

"You're her son?" she asked, trying to secretly pull the blanket up on her legs again. Which I had to admit was pretty funny.

Caiden didn't bother answering and only pulled me onto his lap, not caring that I was still soaking wet from the rain. "For future reference, I wouldn't suggest always seducing the first guy that you see because it can result in you looking desperate as well," I added and she glared at me. She quickly stood up, turning her back toward us and slipping on a pair of shorts and a hoodie. She slipped on a pair of moccasins as well before leaving the room.

"You always seem to get stuck with the best roommates, huh?" Caiden said with a half-smile and I let out a small laugh and nodded, leaning my head against his.

"I'm sorry. I don't mean to be such a bitch lately, but nothing is getting better. The pain I'm feeling isn't going away Caiden. It's been a month! It should be gone by now," I said, more tears welling up in my eyes, "B-but it's not," my voice cracked and he only grabbed my hands in his large ones and sighed.

"I can't tell you when it will get better, but I can tell you that the only way the pain will subside is if you stop pushing everyone away. You have to let people in your life, you have to focus on your future and who you are. Don't make my mistakes. You can't let one tragedy change everything," Caiden said squeezing my hands and I smiled, pulling my head back a little to look at him.

Our eyes met for about five seconds before they closed as our lips connected. He held me tightly to him as we kissed, almost afraid to let one another go and I couldn't help but enjoy every minute of it.

Pulling away, I looked into his hazel eyes. "You're not a screw-up, Caiden. You're graduating this year from an Ivy League school with multiple degrees that most people wish they had. You can go far in life if you just try," I told him and he didn't respond. He pulled me down on the bed next to him and we just laid there in silence. For how long? I wasn't sure, but I wasn't ready for it to ever end.

Chapter 58

"You know for someone who was kicked out of college you sure seemed to be okay," Tom said, standing by the seat in front of me and I gave him a small smile. "How are you?" he asked.

"I've been better," I replied honestly and he smiled.

"Hey, Tom?" I asked after a moment, he looked at me expectantly as if telling me to go on. "Where would you start if you wanted to make a change in the world?"

"It depends on what type of change you want to make," he said and I looked at him for a moment not sure what to say. Tom seemed to notice my loss of words and continued. "I would say you should start from the beginning," he told me before sending me one last smile and leaving the small cafe.

"Start at the beginning, huh?" I whispered to myself before quickly standing up and rushing out of the small cafe.

"Woah, Claire? You okay?" a man asked when I ran into him, looking up I noticed it was West and pulled him into a hug.

"I'm fine, great actually," I told him with a fake smile.

"Well, it's been awhile since I've seen you. We should do something soon," he suggested and I nodded.

"That sounds great. I really have somewhere to be right now, but just text me sometime. We can go get coffee or something," I said holding up my coffee cup and shaking it a little as an example.

"Okay, see you soon," he said sending me a smile and I nodded.

"Yeah."

I walked over to my car and got into it, heading to the one place it all started, the place where everything began. About twenty minutes later I was there, standing in front of the large building that usually would have tons of boys crawling out of it. Tom said to go where it all started and this was it. I should have known that the second I stepped onto these school grounds my whole life would change. This is the place I met Kyle, Max, Tom, Nick, Caiden and even Eddie. Sure this wasn't a school for girls, but if I had the chance to do it all over again then I would.

"Claire-bear?" Nathan's familiar voice asked standing next to me and I didn't turn to look at him.

"People try to change the world all the time. What makes me think I can?" I asked aloud and he chuckled.

"What would you change?" Nathan asked and half smile appeared on my face as I took the familiar path the basketball courts and I could sense Nathan's hesitation.

"I would change the way everyone sees other people. I think it's time that everyone stops judging someone because they're wearing shoes with holes or a designer Michael Kors purse or whether someone's gay, bisexual or hell even pansexual. I'm tired of this world being so judgmental," I said shaking my head, my fists clenching.

"The world will always judge people no matter what anyone does. You can't stop someone from expressing their opinion, Claire."

"I know, but I truly do want to show the world how wrong bullying it is. I want everyone to be put in every single situation. Of bullying. I want everyone to see the eyes of a bully and the eyes of someone who's innocent."

"Claire Martez, you truly do have a heart made of gold," Nate said smiling. If you ever do get the opportunity to make a change expect me to be with you every part of the way." He placed his arm over my shoulder as we walked.

"You know if you get caught here you'd be in a lot of trouble." I didn't respond and only continued walking. As soon as I took a step onto the court, I paused and really looked at it. I examined the peeling green paint and the brown picnic table with words written all over it. I let my eyes skim over the tall hoops that were perfectly intact, so perfect anyone could do a slam dunk if wanted.

"This is where I met Edward Sterling," I stated loudly, not caring who would hear me. Nathan didn't say a word and only watched me as I looked up at the sky.

"And this is where I'll let him go," I closed my eyes and let out a long breath I didn't know I was holding. Caiden was right. I needed to focus on getting my life back on track now. I needed to let him go. I love Eddie as my best friend and sure we had so many great times, but I don't think he would want me to live my life depressed and alone.

Nathan's arms wrapped around me just as my legs collapsed from underneath me. He kneeled to the ground and let me lean my whole body on him as he stroked my hair. This is something Caiden never got to do. He never had anyone to really be there for him after everything, he never got to face it all.

"I don't think I've ever seen someone mature so fast in my lifetime," a man said and I slowly opened my eyes to see an elderly man standing there with glasses on the end of his nose.

"Excuse me?" Nathan asked the old man and he smiled shaking his head.

"Not even grown adults could do what you just did," he stated and I stared at him.

"Do we know you?" I asked quietly and he shook his head.

"Probably not. I'm a new teacher here and I was taking a walk when I heard you talking. I should be yelling at you for being here but I can't bring myself to do so. You're Claire Martez aren't you?" he asked and I frowned but nodded.

"I'm Mr. Berman, but you can call me Cael. You want to make a change, huh?" he asked.

"Hey, I've heard of you," Nathan said pointing his finger at him and he nodded.

"Yeah, how do you know that?" I asked softly, watching him with a bit of suspicion since he wasn't yelling at me for being her and he smiled.

"Let's just say I've been behind you for more than a few minutes. I would like to offer you an opportunity to speak to this school about what happened to the young man, Edward Sterling. I want you to speak to everyone and tell them how you met him. Share his story with the world that's how you'll make a change. "

"You're not the dean, you can't decide that," I said and he sent me a smile, looking down at my figure still sitting on the ground in Nathan's arms.

"You're right, but this school will be sold pretty soon and I do have a goal to make it something it was once before," He said looking up at one of the buildings.

"A co-ed school?" Nathan asked and Mr. Berman smiled.

"Yes, but that's not all. I want a new generation to begin, starting at my school. I think you can do that for me Claire Martez," he said and I stared at him, waiting for him to be kidding. Was this man serious? Caiden's dad really is going to sell the school?

"What do you even know about Eddie?" I asked almost accusingly.

"Not much, but I have heard all about a woman named Claire Martez pretending to be a boy here for months and the tragic death of a boy." I looked down at my hands, biting my lip. "I'm not asking you to do this anytime soon Claire. I haven't even bought the school yet, but believe me, when I do if you're interest you will be contacted," he said seriously and I looked at him carefully.

"I am interested," I said without hesitation as I stood up. People didn't have to want to hear about him, they needed to hear his story, they needed to see who he was. They have to.

"Great, how about I contact you when I think it's a good time for you to come talk to them?" Mr. Berman asked, holding out his phone and I hesitated just giving my number out in case he was lying. "You can trust me, Claire. You can even do a background check on me if you want to."

"That's unnecessary," I said before grabbing his phone and adding his number, also mentally taking note of his number. "So you'll just contact me you're finally put in charge?"

"Yeah."

"Sounds good," I said, handing him his phone back.

Feels good.

Because now is the perfect time to quote an album.

It's always the right time.

"It was great talking to you, Ms. Martez." He held out his hand and I shook it. "See you soon." I nodded and watched as he walked away.

"That was weird," Nathan noted.

"It's a chance, a chance I need," I said, watching his figure walk away.

"Hey, what are you doing? It that a girl with you?!" a teacher yelled and a light smile appeared on my face as I looked at my best friend whose arms were still around me.

"Nah, it's just my boyfriend," Nathan yelled back and I lightly slapped his chest.

"Okay, you keep doing whatever you were doing then," the teacher yelled awkwardly from the distance before turning around.

"I guess I should go tell Caiden," I said frowning at an adorable smile appeared on Nate's face.

"Should I schedule my doctor's appointment now or later?" he joked, raising an eyebrow as I slipped out of his arms and stood up.

"Probably now," I held out my hand and he grabbed it, lifting himself up causing me to almost stumble.

"You're so fat," I said scrunching up my nose in distaste and he started flexing.

"I am, huh?" I lightly pushed his shoulder and he frowned and rubbed it.

"That hurt."

"I didn't even punch you," I said looking at him incredulously and he smiled.

"I know." He grabbed me and flipped me over his shoulder causing me to squeal.

"Nathaniel Marx! You have five seconds to put me down or else!"

"My full name isn't even Nathaniel," he said pausing and I pounded on his back.

"Whatever. Just let me go you big ostrich!" He set me down on the ground and bent over.

"What's wrong?" I asked, confused, and he looked up at me and just burst out laughing and bending over again.

"Out of every animal, you went with an ostrich. Why are we friends again?" he asked and I put my arm around his shoulder and squeezing him against me before placing a sloppy, wet kiss on his cheek.

"I don't know. You must adore my hate for you," I said and he rolled his eyes and pushed me away, wiping his cheek with the sleeve of his shirt.

"Yeah, that's it. Maybe next time do me a favor and don't leave your spit on my face. Thanks," he said and I quickly pecked his cheek one more time before running toward my school.

"What a bitch," he yelled and I stuck my tongue out before I slowed down my pace and continued the rest of the way walking. I didn't know what I'd do if I ever lost Nathan too. He was my rock and although I do love Mia very much my friendship with Nathan was one hundred times stronger because of how long we've known each other. He made me truly believe that I could get through this, I could get through this.

Chapter 59

One Year Later

I sketched a new design carefully. Making sure to not make one mistake. I jumped when my name was suddenly called and I scowled at the line that was now laying across the shirt. "Claire?" she repeated and a tight smile appeared on my face.

"Yes?" I asked and Valerie Thompson let her eyes skim over my figure.

"If you ever want a raise or a permanent job here you're going to have to start working a lot harder than this," she told me and I let a tight smile appear on my face. Times like this I regretted ever accepting the internship. I was about six months through it since it took a while for the internship to actually start and now I'm halfway through sophomore year of college and doing something I never imagined in my future. I could only hope this experience could help me get a higher spot with another company or maybe even run my own company one day.

"Thank you for the advice, Mrs. Thompson," I said and she nodded.

"Just bring me back your spring line of clothes by tomorrow. You can go home now," she said before walking away.

"Thanks," I muttered sarcastically, knowing she was out of earshot. I threw my sketchbook in my bag before moving it on my shoulder. I took the elevator down multiple floors before finally exiting and leaving the building.

I took the long drive to Caiden's apartment and sighed in relief when I arrived. Since Caiden was in his last year of college he graduated last year and now had multiple degrees. I unlocked the apartment with the spare key he gave me and entered. "Caiden?" I called and I heard his voice muffled as he yelled something.

"What?" I asked, walking into the living room where he sat with a black pencil in his mouth as he sketched out something. "What are you doing?" I asked curiously and he removed the pencil from his mouth.

"I'm making a blueprint."

"For what?" I asked and he stared at the paper a little longer before looking at me as I took a seat next to him.

"For my company. What do you think about Anderson's manufacturing?" he asked, holding up his hands as if he was imagining the sign right in front of him.

I cleared my throat. "Uh, that sounds great and all, but how on earth are you going to make that work?" I asked him and he smirked.

"C'mon, baby doll. I can do anything," he said and I raised an eyebrow. He grabbed my waist and brought me onto his lap. I automatically put my legs on either side and I felt my red lips curve into a smile.

"Oh really?" I asked, turning my head a little to the side and he didn't respond and only brought his lips closer before they were directly on mine. The kiss was sweet and simple as I held onto to his face with my hands, almost worried that he was just going to disappear on me.

"Be mine," Caiden murmured against my lips and I pulled my head back, dropping my hands.

"What?" I asked not believing I heard him correctly. "I thought we established a long time ago that I am yours."

"Be my girlfriend," he said and I snorted.

"You don't do relationships," I stated as a fact and he groaned before pushing his lips against my again and quickly pulling back before I could respond to the kiss.

"I love you, Claire," he said and I just stared at him. Did he just-

Yeah, I think he did?

But-

Yeah, I don't know anymore either.

"What?" I asked, staring at him like I was stupid. I got off his lap and started pacing. I brought one hand up to my forehead and left the other on my hip. "I'm sorry, I think that shot I took from Joe, from the office may have made my head a little foggy. Did you just say you love me?" I asked stopping to look at him and he stood up and walked directly in front of me.

"I don't know how or when it happened but somehow got me to fall in love with you with all of your little charms and that stupid laugh of yours. Every time you stay over and sleep next to me you always end of forcing me to cuddle with you. Sometimes when you're cooking and you think I'm downstairs you start dancing around the kitchen and start singing with a spoon and as amusing as it is I always find myself wanting to tell you that I love you and only you. I don't just simply care for you; I love you. And Claire, you know I never experienced love in my life. Not even the love you give to your family, yet I am almost positive this emotion I am feeling is nothing but absolute love and adoration for you which is why I want you to be mine. Be my girlfriend because I love you," Caiden said, staring at me with a look I've seen many times, yet I never truly understood till now. "Fuck I sound like a sappy ass teenager," he muttered after me not responding right away.

I couldn't form any words and just stared at him almost not believing this was the Caiden I know.

Yes, the Caiden Anderson said that.

You know the one that hit me as a guy and the one that called me a slut or a whore almost every other the day? The one that hit me in the face with a basketball on purpose when I first met him? The one that tried to break my boyfriend and me up? You know the one that is bipolar and every two minutes can't decide if he actually wants to be with me? You know the one that was an ass about 99.6% of the time? You know the one that got kidnapped as a child and has major trust issues? The one who said he won't ever think of a girl as his equal?

No, this was the same guy who held me as I cried at Eddie's funeral. This was the guy who had started seeing a therapist in the past year to try to get himself better for me. This was the guy who beat the shit out of Leon for even suggesting sex again. This was the guy that beat the shit out of Jax for what he caused Eddie to do. This was the guy who cried in front of me when sharing a part of himself. He was the guy who freaks out over someone laying on his couch. This was the guy who moved me to his bed when I fell asleep. This was the guy who cooked me eggs because I was simply hungry. He did it all for me. That's the man I knew.

"I-I love you too," I said and he turned around, facing me again. He walked forward and grabbed my face before pressing his lips roughly against mine. I kissed back with the same amount of force and smiled when he pushed us back on his couch. "Are you sure it's okay to even to lay on your couch?" I asked, pulling away and he smiled, a real dimple-showing smile.

"I'll let it go for now as long as you're my girlfriend," he said before pressing his lips against mine again. My heart pounded in my chest from the electricity that followed from the one kiss. Things began to get heated as I shrugged off my jacket. He pulled back and just stared into my eyes, his expression filled with lust as he pushed a piece of my hair out of my face.

"Well, it's a little late for that. I'm already yours," I whispered and he smirked.

"I love you so fucking much," he whispered before pressing his lips against my jaw and slowly moving down to my collarbone. Not liking the shirt on me he quickly pulled over my head before quickly pulling away from me.

"What's wrong?" I asked and he just smirked.

"Get ready." I was confused by the statement, but he moved my legs up so they wrapped around him and he picked me up from the couch. Somewhere along the way, I lost my bra and he lost his shirt.

"I've waited far too long to do this," he said looking down at me from on the bed and I bit my lip seductively.

"I swear if you pause one more-" I was cut off by his lips slamming onto mine.

"Baby doll," he groaned when I rolled him over and started kissing down his chest. "That's it," he muttered before rolling us over once more and well I'm sure anyone could guess where that lead to.

Chapter 60

"So Anderson's Manufacturing," Caiden mentioned again as we sat on the stools in his kitchen. Me wearing nothing but his shirt and him nothing but his boxers.

"Aren't you worried that won't start up right? I mean if doesn't work out you're losing thousands of dollars. Your whole life savings account will be gone," I said worriedly as I took a bite out of toast. Nothing like a middle-of-the-night snack.

"Sometimes you have to take risks and let's be honest could you really see me working beneath anyone?" He asked and I couldn't help but laugh at the thought. Caiden would probably punch his boss the first time he's asked to do something.

"Very true," I said still smiling.

"What about you? You've been doing this fashion thing for a while. Are you planning on sticking with it? Making your own clothes line?" he asked and I smiled.

"I'm not sure yet. That sounds cool, but I can't see myself actually making my own clothes line one day. Plus, I'm not rich like your family. I'm going to be sitting on those student loans from this school and the boys' university for the next thirty years," I said and he rolled his eyes and placed one hand on my cheek, rubbing his thumb up and down it.

"When did you turn into such a pessimist? You're always the optimistic one," he asked and I shrugged.

"I guess when life started to get hard," I said causing him to frown.

"You know there is still so much from my past that you have no idea about. Are you sure you still want to do this?" He asked curiously as he leaned against the counter. My eyes drifted to his arms before back to his face.

"Caiden, I don't care what happened in your past. It's over now and I'm not going to force you to relive it or bring it back up," I said and he snorted.

"Yeah, so you're telling me you're not curious about what happen with Leon and me?" He asked and I bit my lip to stop myself from asking any questions. I showed the last bite of my toast in my mouth. Chewing very slowly.

"Nope, not at all," I said pursing my lips and shaking my head.

"You're lying to me, but I think I'm going to be thankful this time," he said before kissing my pursed lips.

"I'm gonna go back to bed. I have class early tomorrow morning and then work," I said and he nodded. "I love you," I whispered softly and a smile that I've grown to love appeared on his face.

"I know." He smirked causing me to slap his chest.

"What an ass," I muttered as I started walking downstairs.

"Baby doll," he yelled and I didn't respond. "I love you too."

"Mmhm," I muttered before jumping on his bed face down and closing my eyes. So much has happened with Caiden and yet here we are somehow getting through it all; facing the impossible.

"Leon and I have a bad past that goes with my parents. Some shit down with him and it just left me to hate him. There's not much more to the story," Caiden said, lying next to me and I couldn't help but smile. He knew me so well. The curiosity would get to me.

"Thank you," I said placing my head on his chest.

"For what? Telling you about Leon?" he asked chuckling and I smiled.

"Yes and for trying. You didn't give up on yourself and because of that, I can see you'll have a bright future," I told him softly and Caiden didn't say anything. He placed a kiss on the top of my head and murmured good night.

We were going to be okay. Caiden and I could overcome his past. I had overcome mine and I could now officially move on from last year thanks to my therapist. I can admit that Eddie committed suicide right in front of me and it was not my fault. I was thankful Nathan, Mia, and Caiden helped me through it all and I could only look forward to the future at this point. Hopefully, a few years from now I'll be successful along with Caiden.

Chapter 61

I waited impatiently, my nails tapping my cheek as I waited for the results of what Mrs. Thompson thought of my new designs. This was nerve wrecking.

"Claire?" I heard her assistant call and I abruptly stood up.

"Yes?" I asked, walking over to her and she smiled.

"Mrs. Thompson is ready for you," she said and I nodded, heading into her office. Sitting there was another blonde woman who looked very similar.

"Claire, I'd like to introduce you to my daughter, Clover. I was very impressed with your work here and although I never stay in a place too long before the end of your year as an intern you will have a chance to make real clothes instead of just doing sketches. You will watch your clothes get modelled and you will see the real fashion industry for what it is. Clover here has specifically agreed to model this line of clothes if you're willing to make them," Mrs. Thompson said and I only could stare at her. Was she serious? I didn't know how famous her daughter was or how much experience she had when it came to being a model but it sounded like a good enough offer to me.

"Wow, uh thank you so much," I said shaking her hand and her daughters.

"You're very talented, Claire. I hope to see your work in the future," she said smiling and I returned the smile.

"Thank you again," I said before letting Mrs. Thompson dismiss me as I walked out I bumped into a familiar face.

"West?" I asked surprised and he smiled throwing his arms around me.

"Yogurt girl! It's been awhile. How have you been?" he asked and I shrugged.

"I've been better. What are you doing here?" I asked, surprised to see him at a fashion place.

"My cousin kind of owns the place," he said and I gasped. West's last name was Thompson. How could I be so stupid?

"Oh, wow I feel really stupid right now," I said nodding and he only chuckled.

"It's cool. What about you?" He asked and I held up the little folder in my hand.

"I kind of work here now. Only as an internship," I said awkwardly.

"We should catch up soon. I'm in school now so my schedule's a little busy, but I'm sure I can fit in a cup of frozen yogurt for the one and only," he said and I couldn't help but smile.

"Sounds great. Just text me sometime soon, okay?" I said and he nodded before giving me one last hug. I returned to my station as he went inside his cousin's office. Everything was slowly turning out great and I don't think I could be happier.

Chapter 62 Epilogue

9 Years Later

I felt the cold rain hit my skin, one drop after another as I stepped out of the car. I opened my umbrella and smiled as I looked up at my company.

To be honest I never thought I'd own my own fashion company especially because I was never one to care so much about fashion. In high school, I'd wear whatever. If I wanted to look classy and wear a dress for the day I would, or even if I felt like wearing sweatpants then I would. I didn't dress to impress anyone but myself, yet here I am everyday dressing to try and start a trend.

My smile widened at the beauty of the tall building at night. It was kind of funny if you thought about it. I didn't even realize how much I loved fashion until the wedding dress project Mr. Keith assigned. When I won that and got to be an intern I was ecstatic. It was such a great experience working for Valerie Thompson. She's actually the reason I was where I was.

As for the speaking thing with the new dean at Johnston Boys University, it did happen about a year and a half later and my speech hit quite a few people around the world as I ended up spending my summer months traveling and speaking at different places. That was where some of my fame came from.

Still I guessed it was a good thing I got kicked out of the boys' university all those years ago since it led me here. Someone suddenly bumped into me and my butt hit the ground from the hard impact.

"Excuse you," I said sarcastically.

Some people.

"Sorry, I didn't see you there," a male voice said, holding out a hand. I couldn't see the face of the man because of the blinding light from the building, but I still accepted his help.

Once I was up I thanked him before finally looking at his face. He was definitely handsome. I thought silently as I bit my lip and at least he had the decency to apologize.

"Sorry again, I wasn't paying attention to where I was going. Although I should've been because you are definitely one of the most beautiful girls I've ever ran into," he said, flashing a charming smile.

"What do you do this often?" I asked jokingly and he shrugged putting his hands into his pocket.

"Only on Saturdays," he said and I laughed before holding out my hand that wasn't holding the umbrella for him to shake.

"The name's Claire," I said smiling and he shook my hand.

"It's a pleasure to meet you Claire. I'm Jesse," he said and I nodded as he released my hand. "So this is just out of curiosity. But was there a reason why you were just kind of chilling on the middle of the sidewalk?" I laughed, nodding while taking down my umbrella when I realized it was no longer raining.

"Yeah this is my building. I like to look up at it sometimes and appreciate that I own it and think about how I got here," I said, looking at building again.

"Wow, I wasn't expecting that. You must be pretty famous then," he said making me look at him again.

"You must not be from around here then. Most of Seattle knows who I am and I don't mean that in a conceited way," I told him and he chuckled.

"Yeah, well it's nice to know there's still hope for the world today if there's people who don't take everything for granted." I smiled at him silently agreeing. "And you're right I'm not from here. I live in LA."

"Oh how come you're here if you don't mind me asking?"

"I'm visiting an old friend," he said, a familiar dark look appearing on his face and I nodded. I've only seen a look that dark on one man before.

"Hey, I know we just met and all, but by any chance would you like to go to dinner sometime?" he asked me, changing the subject and I gave him an apologetic look.

"Sorry I didn't mean to give you the wrong impression, but I have a boyfriend," I told him and he nodded.

"I'm not surprised. Of course, a beauty like you would. How long have you two been together? If you don't mind me asking."

"About eight years," I told him and his eyes widened.

"And he still hasn't put a ring on it?" I let out a small laugh, nodding.

"He has a bit of commitment issues. I'm sure he will soon though." The last part didn't come out as confident as I wanted to, but I still plastered a smile on my face. It took an extra year after Eddie's death for Caiden to ask me out. We both needed time to fix ourselves. He did end up getting a therapist for three years once he saw how much mine helped me the year that I had her. Although he still is sensitive about his past he's not such an ass all the time.

"Understandable. But, Claire as much as I have enjoyed talking with you I have business to take care of. If you ever want to take up my offer maybe as friends, then here's my number," he said, taking a piece of paper and pen out of his jacket and scribbling something on.

"I'll definitely take you up on your offer sometime soon." I smiled and he nodded before stuffing his hands in his pockets and walking away.

I looked down at the paper he gave me to see his number and his full name, Jesse Farone. It had a nice ring to it. I walked inside the building and headed up the elevator to my office. I looked at my assistant at her desk.

"You can and the rest of the office can go home for the day. I expect you here by five in the morning tomorrow. We have multiple orders and shipments that have to be gone through tomorrow," I told my assistant, Elena getting straight into work mode.

"It's already eleven," she complained frowning and I raised an eyebrow.

"If you're not here by five tomorrow you'll be fired," I told her and she nodded. I walked into my office closing the doors behind me.

After working on some new design ideas I decided to call it a night when the clock reached 1:30. My cell phone rang on my way out, making me sigh.

"Hello?" I answered, tired not even bothering to check who was calling.

"Hey, baby doll," Caiden's voice made me smile and relax a bit. "Are you coming home soon?" he asked.

"Yeah, I'm actually leaving now," I told him, shutting off the lights.

"Good," he said before hanging up the phone. I frowned looking down at my cell. Believe it or not his social skills have gotten better ever since he became the CEO of some huge manufacturing company.

Thirty minutes later I was finally home. I opened the front door and walked inside, locking it behind me. I threw my keys and purse on some table and kicked my shoes off.

"Long day?" Caiden asked, peeking his head out the living room. I jumped, putting my hand on my heart.

"Geez way to scare me," I muttered. "And you already know the answer to that. I've been running around all day." He came over to me and wrapped his arms around my waist pulling me against his body. When I felt his muscular chest I knew he wasn't wearing a shirt. I turned myself around in his arms and smiled.

"How was your day?" I asked, wrapping my arms around his neck.

"Great now that you're here," he told me before pecking my lips a few times. "I attempted to make us some dinner," he said and my smile widened.

"What? The Caiden Anderson made dinner? I'm surprised. Who knew you even knew how to use the stove." He rolled his eyes before removing my arms and grabbing my hand, leading me to our kitchen. When I saw the candles and the beautiful dinner placed out in front of us I was almost positive tonight was the big night.

We sat down eating and enjoying our dinner for a while before he sighed standing up and bring his plate to the sink. He leaned against the counter and looked at me.

"You're so beautiful," he said making me smile and stand up.

"And you are so handsome," I told him walking over to him. He kissed my lips letting his hands rest on my waist again. A few minutes later when we were both breathing hard he pulled away.

"I'm suddenly in the mood to go to bed. Care to join me?" he asked smirking, and I rolled my eyes.

"I guess," I said pushing his chest a little signaling for him to let me go. I grabbed my plate placing it in the sink and followed him upstairs.

No, that night he didn't propose to me. A few weeks later I came to figure out that maybe he just didn't want to marry me. Sure I was happy being his girlfriend, but in reality how long could I be happy never having a ring, or even kids? If he wasn't ready for marriage then I was sure as hell knew he wasn't ready for a family.

His past was to blame for this. He would never want true commitment like marriage or a family because of what happened to him. I could still be happy with him right? I mean if I can go undercover in an all-boys school then I can definitely face my future with Caiden Anderson.

Right?